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CONTENTS

LEAVE OF ABSENCE 3101
Member for Arafura 3101
VISITORS 3101
Malak Primary School 3101
BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FIDELITY FUND) BILL 3101
Serial 45 3101
MINISTERIAL REPORT 3102
Dire State of the NT Electricity System 3102
MINISTERIAL REPORT 3119
Safer Schools, Stronger Classrooms 3119
NOTICES 3120
PETITION 3120
Petition No 18 – Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 3120
QUESTION TIME 3121
Domestic Violence Prevention – Roadmap 3121
Arafura Nolans Rare Earths Project 3121
Electricity System 3122
Agriculture – Economic Growth 3123
Corrections – Rehabilitation Programs 3124
Darwin Port – Pilotage Services 3125
Gill Netting – Phase-out 3125
Vocational Education and Training 3126
Electricity Tariff Subsidy – Local Government 3127
Bayview – Rezoning 3128
Domestic Violence Prevention – Roadmap 3129
Systemic Racism Audits 3129
Local Business – Economic Growth 3130
Crocodile Industry 3131
Censure of the Deputy Chief Minister – Not Accepted 3132
National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob Funding 3133
National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob Funding – Supplementary Question 3133
NT Health – Commonwealth Funding 3134
MOTION 3134
Economic Value of Regions 3134
PAPER TABLED 3169
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Report of 3169
Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications 3169
ADJOURNMENT 3169

Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Arafura

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Arafura be granted leave of absence from the Chamber today and tomorrow, Thursday 23 October, due to personal reasons.

Leave granted.

VISITORS
Malak Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Years 5 and 6 students from Malak Primary School accompanied by their teachers. Welcome to Parliament House. It is great to see you.

Members: Hear, hear!

BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FIDELITY FUND) BILL
Serial 45

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Building Legislation Amendment (Fidelity Fund) Bill 2025, Serial 45, 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 *Building Act 1993* and Building (RBI and Fidelity Fund Schemes) Regulations 2012 to enhance transparency and accountability in the operation of approved fidelity fund schemes.

Consumer protections are provided for people building or renovating their homes. While the legislation provides residential building cover through either an approved insurer or fidelity fund scheme, we have only one approved fidelity fund scheme operating in the Territory, which is the Fidelity Fund NT (the fund).

The fund is a last-resort scheme. It provides coverage for the completion of building works and the rectification of defects in cases where a builder dies, disappears, becomes insolvent or is no longer registered. The fund is a not-for-profit trust that gives peace of mind to Territorians who are building their dream home.

I acknowledge the service the fund's trustees have provided to Territorians and the fund's critical role in supporting robust housing growth.

The legislative amendments outlined in this Bill will strengthen the administration and operation of the fund. By doing so, this government aims to restore industry confidence and provide better protection for Territorians, particularly homeowners and builders who rely on the integrity of this scheme.

This Bill forms part of a broader package of regulatory reforms to support builders and homeowners. It continues the work of this government to deliver on its commitment to rebuild the economy through a range of reforms that enable economic growth within robust regulatory frameworks.

Importantly, this Bill responds directly to feedback from industry stakeholders who have called for improvements to the operation of the fund. They have expressed a clear desire for greater clarity and efficiency in how the fund operates.

As the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment who oversees the fund under the *Building Act 1993*, it is my responsibility to ensure the fund operates efficiently to support the Territory's economy and housing supply growth.

I turn to key changes that this Bill will deliver. The proposed changes to the Act provide for the minister to approve appointment of trustees before the appointment takes effect and includes ability to revoke an appointment. It also provides power for the minister to appoint a minister's observer and to request information relevant to the broader operation of the fund and its compliance with the Act and regulations.

The proposed changes to the regulations outline the process for the minister to approve or revoke approval for appointment of a trustee of the Fidelity Fund scheme.

The amendments contain practical and sensible administrative efficiencies and provide for a good-governance approach of critical consumer protections for people building a home in the Northern Territory. Importantly, it is a step forward in ensuring that the fund continues to operate effectively and fairly and remains a trusted mechanism for protecting Territorians in times of uncertainty.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 20 November 2025.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Dire State of the NT Electricity System

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I deliver the ministerial report on the dire state of the NT electricity system, notified on 21 October 2025. This report is to update the Assembly on the clear and immediate challenges facing the Northern Territory electrical system.

I introduced two Bills during the September sittings that will be debated this month. These Bills aim to bring about major reform and a full overhaul of the electricity system and market.

The Assembly may recall that my ministerial statement from March 2025 warned that our electrical system was in immediate danger and required urgent, decisive action. Our first step to deliver affordable, reliable and secure energy to Territorians was to scrap Labor's ideological and financially crippling target of 50% renewables by 2030. The Labor government knew that was not achievable.

A report was made available through freedom of information which had every page redacted except for the front and back pages. This showed that Labor would not meet its target, which was financially crippling and unachievable. The previous Labor government knew that; it was given expert evidence. Labor chose to ignore it and redacted every page of that report. It was not released voluntarily; it was because Labor had to.

Our government's energy policy is focused on giving Territorians reliable and secure energy at the lowest cost.

Our second step was to fast-track and facilitate the development of the Beetaloo through swift approval processes, legislative reform and providing certainty to industry and investors. The Beetaloo speaks for itself. Currently, pipelines are being put into the ground which will connect Tamboran Resources to the Amadeus pipeline. It is a 37-kilometre pipeline which will inject millions of dollars into our economy. It also provides a pathway for gas in the Beetaloo to be delivered to our generators at Channel Point.

The previous Labor government failed to build on the infrastructure, and there is a gas shortfall to turn on the lights in the Northern Territory. We were in such a state that we had to buy gas from INPEX at top prices, which is extremely expensive. It is another example of how the previous Labor government failed to invest in the energy market and in gas. Unfortunately, Territorians bore the brunt of it; they are the ones paying prices through the roof for power and dealing with the energy shortfalls that the previous Labor government caused.

Our third step was to introduce the Bills I spoke about earlier, which will make it possible to invest quickly, strategically and holistically to protect our electricity system. Put simply, these Bills are essential to keep our electricity network reliable and secure and to keep energy bills as affordable as possible for all Territorians. Without taking urgent action, powering our homes, businesses, hospitals and schools will become more challenging in years to come unless we take swift action.

If we left the system as it was, there would be a risk to vulnerable Territorians. A lot of people across the Territory rely on air conditioning and energy to keep viable medical equipment running in their homes, not to mention hospitals. The previous Labor government's failure to invest put lives at risk.

Unless we act swiftly Territorians can look forward to regularly scheduled brownouts and load shedding, such as in 1970s Britain or modern-day South Africa. We are not there; we are in the Northern Territory, and we need to invest. We in the Darwin or Katherine regions remember the widespread blackouts we experienced last month during NT Resources Week, of all times. We also note that Palmerston experienced blackouts this week.

Unless we act now, such occurrences will become a fact of life in the Northern Territory, which is not the unique lifestyle we want to be known for. We want to be a place where energy is abundant, affordable and cheap. If we have cheap energy, we can attract manufacturing. We have a lot of land, and we are close to our Asian friends. The Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations has been developing those relationships to better put the Northern Territory and Darwin in a position to export to billions of people to the north of us. The minister has done a mountain of work to build those relationships so that they can come to Darwin and we can export what we have to our northern friends.

How can we give confidence to Territorians and restore our lifestyle if we cannot maintain reliable, cheap power supply? How are we meant to the attract private investment and population growth we need to rebuild our economy if we cannot guarantee affordable, abundant and secure energy supply? The simple answer is that we cannot. The gravity of the situation has driven our government and the public service to act quickly. Instead of acting fast for Territorians, the previous Labor government got stuck in endless debate and delay, ignoring critical electricity infrastructure.

I remind the Assembly that during the 18 months the Opposition Leader was the Minister for Essential Services, Tennant Creek—our most stable grid—lost power on five separate occasions, yet she did nothing for Territorians.

The Utilities Commission, our independent electricity regulator, has been warning for years that the Northern Territory must act or risk blackouts. For example, the commission had flagged reliability challenges and investment decisions required since its first Northern Territory Electricity Outlook Report in 2018–19. In the 2024 report the commission stated that the Territory electricity supply had reached a critical juncture. It also stated that significant investment is unavoidable in addressing current and emerging power system issues. NT households experienced more than double the number of blackouts compared with the rest of Australia.

In 2023–24 the average NT household experienced 2.6 outages per year compared with 1.1 outages nationally. Territory network performance continues to decline relative to the national average due to years of under-investment. The previous Labor government was told to urgently push reforms on the electricity system and market to handle these challenges. Labor started this work in 2020, but by the time it lost office in 2024 it had made no progress on these urgent reforms. Labor commissioned two external reviews and reports but did not act on them. It did not make the necessary decisions to safeguard our electricity system.

These reports were the review of the Northern Territory power system control and market operator in 2021 and the Northern Territory electricity market gateway review in 2022, which our government evaluated. I have read both these reports. They clearly state that something needed to be done.

For at least four years the information was before the previous Labor Cabinet, and it chose to do nothing about it. It ignored the reports and said, ‘Let’s sweep it under carpet and forget about it. We will not deal with it; we will just forget about it and hope it goes away.’ Those reports clearly stated that this cannot be forgotten about. Sweeping it under the rug will put lives at risk.

There are currently heatwave conditions across the Northern Territory, and vulnerable people are relying on air conditioning, medical equipment at home, hospitals, education and the police. If the power goes out for a significant period—the definition of a ‘significant period’ might be argued. Even if it is only a couple of hours, fridges turn off, and if it is a day the food in the fridge goes off. Medical equipment and backup battery systems start to fail.

When we came to office the Treasurer requested further expert advice from the NT Utilities Commission on the best way to progress. The advice was crystal clear: make a decision and get on with the reform. The decision is there, and recommendations have been there for a number of years. The Leader of the Opposition knows this because she was the minister. She would have read those reports but for some reason chose to ignore Territorians and let the system fail.

As part of our year of action, certainty and security, we are getting on with the job. Decisive action, not delays, separates our government from those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Essential Services during the previous government’s term. She is responsible for Labor’s inaction. As a

result, Territorians have faced big problems with reliability, high costs and missed opportunity because Labor did nothing for four years.

Labor never considered the whole-of-system costs or the implications of its decisions in relation to the NT electricity network. All it cared about was getting as much solar connected to the grid as possible to meet its target without thinking about the serviceability and reliability problems that caused. It goes back to Labor's failed policy, which its own report said was unachievable and expensive. Labor redacted that, which shows there was a guilty conscience. Labor knew what the report said yet redacted everything except the front and back pages.

Because of Labor's inaction, the utility farms at Manton Dam, Batchelor and Katherine gathered dust since 2021 and were enabled to dispatch electricity only in the last year under our government. Solar rooftops and big solar farms are being limited or curtailed often because our networks are getting weaker and less stable. There is no point in trying to add more solar to the network on an ad hoc basis if the grid instability means that we cannot use the solar we already have.

The Member for Nightcliff may understand this better if she bothered to turn up to the briefing that was offered on this legislation. Clearly, she did not care because she did not bother to show up.

In addition, Labor's hands-off approach in maintaining our vital infrastructure has meant that government-owned organisations and corporations have no choice but to take matters into their own hands. There has been no strategic vision or whole-of-system planning undertaken, which the Utilities Commission has repeatedly called for.

This has resulted in the three NT Government-owned organisations—Territory Generation as the main electricity generator; Power and Water Corporation as the system provider and operator, including system control; and Jacana Energy as the electricity retailer—having to pursue their own procurement in contracting services and activities on an ad hoc basis.

There is the example of when two of those organisations were buying condensers. We needed only one in our system, but because there was not a whole-of-system approach, the previous Labor government was going to waste at least $20m. That is a conservative estimate of what a single condenser would cost. The previous Labor government would have bought two of them, and one would have sat in the shed. The previous Labor government failed to look at the big picture.

Do not just take our government's word for it. Instead, let us hear from the independent electricity regulator. The Utilities Commission stated in its 2020 report:

> *Leaving Territory Generation alone to do the work and propose the solution to government risks a potential suboptimal decision from a whole of system perspective that consumers and taxpayers would pay for over many decades.*

That is the independent Utilities Commission saying that leaving government organisations to do it will lead to poor decisions which taxpayers will pay for over many years. A small example of that is buying two condensers when we needed only one. That would have cost at least $20m—perhaps more depending on what we wanted to buy. A top-shelf condenser could cost $60m to $80m, so I am being conservative with my estimate.

It is clear in black and white that Labor, by doing nothing, passed the cost and the tax burden on to hardworking Territorians—the mums and dads who work hard during the day, send their kids to school, come home, do the chores, put the kids to bed and do their tax invoices; they repeat that cycle. It was not Labor's money; it was Territorians' hard-earned money that the previous government wasted.

I go back to my favourite—the $5,000 Christmas tree. There is a list of blowouts from the previous Labor government. The former government did not care; it spent money as though there was a money tree. I have worked in private enterprise, and I know that there is no such thing as a money tree. You have to work for it, and the previous Labor government failed to do that.

The former Labor government tried to hide the $35m payout to youth offenders. It instructed its solicitors to make sure there was a confidentiality clause so the figure could not be released. Labor knew that what it was doing was wrong, and it tried to hide that.

Our government has expedited the electricity market reforms, and the two Bills will be debated this week. We will not repeat the mistakes of the previous government. The timing cannot be more critical.

The Ron Goodin Power Station is at the end of its productive life, meaning that the Alice Springs grid reliability challenges will worsen in the near term. Everyone will remember last month's Darwin–Katherine blackout. This is a timely reminder of how fragile our system is. If our government had not acted to finalise the commissioning of the Darwin–Katherine Battery Energy Storage System earlier this year, the blackouts may have lasted longer. Without backup devices our blackouts could easily last 12 hours while trying to get generators up and running.

According to the last Utilities Commission Power System Performance Review, Katherine residents endured more than eight hours without power, spread across multiple outages in 2023–24. Alice Springs and Katherine will be especially vulnerable to blackouts as equipment ages and hardware deteriorates. How can we fix this?

We have the office of energy Cabinet sub-committee, chaired by me, which focuses on NT energy issues. We have instructed government organisations that all business cases for investment must be endorsed by the sub-committee prior to Treasury approving it. This is to ensure we do not waste taxpayers' money. This will stop uncoordinated buying of equipment and investments that may negatively impact on the bottom line.

Our government is in the final stages of preparing a regulated electricity system investment plan (RESIP) which is designed to assess current reliability, provide a whole-of-system approach to address the issues identified earlier and identify when and where and what assets we need to buy. For example, do we need to buy new generators or batteries? Do we need more solar? We need a whole-of-system approach to ensure our energy system is reliable.

One of the most important factors is to ensure the lowest cost to consumers. We need to make sure that our energy system is reliable and that the cost to Territorians is as low as possible, because they are the ones who pay the bill.

We introduced the electricity market reform Bills, which will be debated this week. These Bills allow us to put the system control out by itself and have the RESIP to keep costs down.

Our government prides itself on accountability and honouring our commitments to Territorians. We want to put downward pressure on costs so we do not waste taxpayers' money—for example, on a $5,000 Christmas tree, which the previous government did.

The community service obligation is going up. This is the underhanded way that the previous Labor government hid the real cost and challenges in the electricity system. That community service obligation is paid for by taxpayers. There is a $51m year-on-year increase. That is taxpayers' money going out the door. The previous Labor government did not care and genuinely thought that it could just spend because it was not its money. It is Territorians' money, and it needs to be spent wisely.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, bringing on this ministerial report shows how thin the CLP government's legislative agenda is. We will debate legislation that goes to the heart of what the Member for Nelson has brought before the House. This is a move of desperation to fill a two-hour gap because the government does not have legislation for us to debate …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections, please.

Ms UIBO: The government does not have the gumption to do such hard work.

The minister's doom-and-gloom warnings about the electricity system will alarm everyday Territorians because the government does not want to do the hard work. Guess what? The last time the CLP was in government it slapped Territorians with a 30% increase in power prices. The government is priming for that type of increase. There is no doubt in our minds that the CLP is getting ready to again slap Territorians with a huge one-third power price increase. Get ready for that, Territorians, because I have seen this before. People who are already struggling with the cost of living will be slapped with a 30% increase.

There is so much heat and noise from the Member for Nelson that we are starting to wonder whether he is generating his own source of energy. Maybe he could capture some of that hot air and turn it into energy for Territorians without wasting the Legislative Assembly's time.

Let us get the facts straight. This reform of the electricity system has been well underway for many years. The Member for Nelson rattled off and bumbled through ridiculous mistruths. It did not sound like even he believed them. He is not even convinced that those words are true, yet he is wasting our time in the Chamber and trying to convince Territorians that no work was done on the electricity system before the CLP government came to government in August.

The CLP government has definitely dropped the ball because a lot of that work was done, primed and ready for 2024. I would love the backbenchers to do homework instead of being fed mistruths from their Cabinet. Obviously, a change of government can slow things down but not by a whole year. There have been 12 months lost. The Member for Nelson is rattling on about how much time has been wasted …

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; we have not even been here for 30 minutes, and the interjections are overshadowing the Leader of the Opposition's deputation to the Assembly.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, they are. I note that the Deputy Chief Minister was heard in silence. In all respect to the Opposition Leader, she deserves the same.

Ms UIBO: The work to diversify the Northern Territory's energy supply has been well underway, with a mix of gas and—oh my gosh; get ready for this word, CLP—renewables. For some reason, the Deputy Chief Minister, who is responsible for this portfolio, is ashamed to say that; it is a dirty word. Renewables were part of the work over the last couple of years—the things Territorians expect their government to work on when it comes to reliable energy sources. The legislation tomorrow is all about enabling renewables, but you will not hear that word from the Member for Nelson. It is like he is scared he will catch a cold or something.

A thought-out plan over many years has had a one-year delay thanks to the CLP sitting on its laurels. Let us keep moving on, because them dragging the train puts us back.

I have a copy of the Territory Electricity Market Overview Paper that was published. I saved the homework for the backbenchers and other ministers who think that no work has been done or believe the Member for Nelson's rubbish. Guess what the date is? February 2024. Interestingly, on page 9 it says that the legislation passage was due for quarter 4 of 2024. That is the end of last year when the CLP came to government; the work should have been done then. We are a year overdue.

I will table this for the parliament, particularly the CLP members who think that work magically started when they came to government. I seek leave to table this document so that the CLP does not have to do the hard work; it has been done for them and is at their fingertips.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: They are enthusiastic as they know they have been called out. Let us make sure people know that the work has definitely been done. Do not believe the rubbish of the Deputy Chief Minister; you would think he would actually do this work, but to make something like this political is ridiculous.

Members interjecting.

Ms UIBO: In fact, according to the timeline, the reform works—you can look at it, backbenchers calling out from the side—the legislation has definitely been dropped by your CLP government. It was due to be debated a year ago; that is how slow you mob are in thinking about energy in the Northern Territory. It will happen tomorrow apparently, so God save us all; thank you, CLP, for being a year behind everybody else. These laws should have been in place a year ago. We will debate that tomorrow.

The work on the Northern Territory electricity system and market operator legislation should have been done at least by the beginning of this year. Maybe by the end of last year you were still figuring out what to do in government, like you are now. That would have given the government several months—some reading time over Christmas and the new year—to get it done, but no; those opposite rested on their laurels and wasted time. We waited until October to see this one year and two months on from coming to government.

The regulated electricity system investment plan should have been underway at the start of this year. This is why the decisions you make as government are important; they push things back, delay and cause stress on the system because you are not doing your job. Shame on you, CLP.

This timeline was well underway under our former government. I have no clue what the CLP has been doing for the last year and will never try to answer for it; Territorians can ask that. There was nothing from the Member for Nelson to explain why he, as the responsible minister, wasted 14 months. They do not take responsibility. They like being in government, having titles and doing excursions and exercises across the Territory, but they do not like holding themselves to account or saying that they have responsibility. It is either the blame of eight years of Labor or—the new narrative we noticed; they have a new media person, so maybe this is where it came from—'Let's start calling on the federal government to talk about the work we should be doing as the Northern Territory Government'. That is what we heard for the last few weeks. There is no accountability or responsibility when it comes to being in government as the CLP. CLP members like deflecting and blaming, not doing the work.

It is clear that the CLP is trying to inoculate itself from criticism. Should there be blackouts over the Wet Season—it is an unfortunate occurrence in the Territory, whether in the Top End or the desert in Central Australia—it is desperate to finger-point to someone else.

I am sure that if there is a blackout in Alice Springs this Christmas, it will be Labor's fault. I am sure if a cyclone rips through Darwin, it will be Labor's fault that the weather changed. We will be ready for the blame, but we will be pointing the finger. What will the CLP do to act and support Territorians when it comes to network stability that was not already in train? It is deeply cynical politics. The CLP is trying to play Territorians for fools.

I will look at that energy track record by the CLP so far. It dished out a few solar battery grants at the start of its term but quickly put a stop to them—a cynical election stunt. Only a handful of Territorians benefited. It offered little in the way of meaningful expansion of solar energy for private residents.

Its big election pitch to double solar tariffs was a debacle and joke. It said it would be for peak times, and it was not. We saw that in black and white—but wait, that was after the election. After the CLP promised Territorians it would do that, it changed the goal post. It lied to Territorians about the solar feed-in tariff times, saying that the hours would be peak times and changed them to a reduced late time. It is ridiculous for Territorians who lost faith because they voted for the CLP on this one issue. How do you explain that to those Territorians? The CLP still has not explained that because it does not show any accountability; its members are cowards.

The CLP scrapped the renewables target and told furphies to Territorians about the reason, saying that it would cost billions of dollars, which has been proved to be utterly false. The CLP never apologised because it does not agree that if a person does something wrong, they should apologise.

If CLP members tell Territorians one thing and do another, they should explain themselves and apologise, but no, there is no accountability or response from the CLP. It has managed to make political this area of policy and the reform work which people expect should be the government's job. It is ridiculous. It does not want to say 'renewables'. I wonder what alternative word it has been told to use.

The CLP has scrapped power tariffs and subsidies for schools—one of the biggest kicks in the guts. Yesterday there was another filler of time with the Education minister's report. She did not mention that the community service obligations for schools had changed under her team's watch. The government is making schools pay a ridiculous amount of money for their power. The minister for Education did it quietly in the background and did not put out a media release, do a video or take a selfie about that. The CLP knows that the significant hike prices for schools has been detrimental.

I have another document to table. On 16 August this year the NT Council of Government Schools Organisation (NT COGSO) issued a media release with the headline, '636% Power Bill Increase in One Month: Student Funds Diverted to Pay Electricity Costs'. This was issued by the President of NT COGSO. The clear example was that one school reported a 636% increase in power costs because of the decision by the CLP to make schools pay. This impacted schools' bottom line and budgets.

The billion-dollar schools deal was for the school resources to support our kids, and the CLP is now making schools pay the bills because it is too lazy to do the work. It is shameful. Its members say one thing and do another. They quietly do something and then fade into the background; that is the CLP way of doing business.

Territorians better strap in because that is what we can expect for the next three years—two years and 10 months, if you are counting down.

I seek leave to table the NT COGSO media release.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: Local government councils have to grapple with much higher power prices next year because their subsidies have been taken away. Will this mean services are cut or the rates go up for Territorians? Again, there is silence from the CLP on any explanation about why and how these changes will impact individuals, families and other tiers of government and organisations.

Big families who use a lot of power—like running heat during the Central Australia winter or those who are living on rural blocks with bore pumps—are being hit with bigger power bills. There is no 'sorry' or, 'By the way, this is what is happening and why we have to do it' from CLP members. They make decisions, do not explain them and then they hide away when they are asked questions.

The CLP is either incredibly lazy or incompetent—I think both—that much-needed electricity reforms that are now a year behind are suddenly sprung up and have been discovered as important by the CLP. I hope the rest of the CLP government members are asking their minister why he wasted 14 months. I hope that in the background in Caucus or during conversations that those opposite ask why their Deputy Chief Minister is lazy, incompetent and cannot even pass electricity reform when all the work had been done. I hope they stand up for Territorians in their electorates; we know they do not care about ours, but I hope they care about their own.

All of this heat and noise from the minister begs another question: if they have upped power prices for schools, local government councils, large families and those on rural blocks, who is next? It is my gut feeling it will be the rest of us. The setting is now to push up power prices to prime, get ready and say, 'We were talking about this a year ago, and look what has happened; now we must put up the prices.' This is a genuine concern, and I urge constituents from all electorates to write to the government to ask what its intentions are and to rule out power price hikes above CPI for Territorians. We did not hear a single word from the minister on that today. He has another chance tomorrow to speak on that. Let us hear that line from him and the spin-makers upstairs. We will find out the truth once and for all.

To compare and contrast, when Labor was in government there was a strong plan for renewables and gas to ensure diversification of our energy supply. There was a set renewables target of 50% by 2030 and a thought-out, detailed roadmap to get there. Some of the smartest people in the Northern Territory Government were working on this plan. That thorough work is one thing the CLP cannot rubbish because those people worked extremely hard to look at what was happening around the country and the world to ensure that the Northern Territory's plan was fit for purpose for our context and climate, having large geographic coverage with a small population. They did a huge amount of work that was thrown in the bin by the CLP. It was a huge disappointment not just for the clever and talented energy experts in the field across the departments and the three GOCs but also for Territorians who wanted to see diversification and steady and reliable energy sources that need to be maintained in the Northern Territory.

The former Labor government signed three energy security agreements for alternative energy suppliers, after issues with Blacktip, to ensure certainty of supply. The Tamboran deal will supply competitively priced gas to Territory power generators for nine years from 2026. Central Petroleum from the Mereenie and Palm Valley Gas Fields will secure local gas supplies over a six-year period. Empire Energy's first gas will go to Territorians, providing us with competitively priced gas until 2030.

That work has been in train, so do not let the CLP tell anyone that, suddenly, because it is in government this has popped up out of nowhere. Our government did continued work on subsidising electricity for households and Territory businesses to ensure that the electricity uniform tariff and community service obligation (CSO) would remain in place and power prices would not hit Territorians' hip pockets.

This is all being slowly stripped away by the CLP. This is a huge danger. The CLP government has a lazy and incompetent minister who makes up hot air, tries to blow up the work and then does nothing to show that the CLP is serious about energy stability. We can hear quotes and lines which sound good for a one-second grab on the radio or a headline in the newspaper, but we want to see the real work being done. We want the CLP government to be true to its word and tell Territorians when and if there will be a power price hike.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I do not know what side of the bed the Leader of the Opposition woke up on this morning. Some days she says that the CLP government is rushing through too much legislation, then on days like today says that we are not doing enough legislation quickly enough. The Leader of the Opposition perhaps does not think our power grid is important, but I do.

The Leader of the Opposition said that it has been 14 months since the CLP came to government and that we have not done enough in that time. Those opposite had eight years. I am a mathematician, and eight years is a lot more than 14 months.

When those opposite cannot play the game, they try to play the person. Instead of talking about what Territorians care about, they attack the Deputy Chief Minister. They keep saying that it is not about politics, but they go on political attack after attack. That is inconsistent. Shame on them. I look forward to the Member for Gwoja's contribution to this debate as I am sure he will display real leadership.

Let us talk about electricity. I love electricity and seeing powerlines; they remind me, and Darryl Kerrigan in *The Castle*, of man's ability to generate power. I love seeing Christmas lights on gates and fences in the rural area and, above all, I love air con—not quite as much as my fiancee who insists on keeping the air con cold enough to give me the shakes, but we love our air con. Without power, gas or electricity and a stable grid, we do not get air con.

Northern Territory households experience more than double the number of blackouts compared with the rest of Australia. I thank the hardworking Power and Water staff for doing emergency repairs when there is a blackout. They often brave intense weather conditions, like storms, and go out late at night to turn on the power as quickly as possible. I give a big shout-out to all the hardworking people at Power and Water across the Territory who make sure our power gets turned on promptly.

Whenever there is a power outage, there will be a post in the Humpty Doo community Facebook group—a great community resource—and within minutes of the blackout, day or night, no matter whether it is 2 am or midday, a hundred Facebook comments will give a street-by-street review of where the power is out. We will know exactly which areas are affected.

I concede that many rural residents are self-sufficient and have invested in solar batteries and generators, so when a blackout occurs they flick a switch and are sorted for a while. However, for many residents the impact of losing power is tremendous. For those on bores in the rural area, no power means no water, air con, ceiling fans or cold drinks. It also means that fishtank pumps fail and tragedies occur. I lost an angelfish to a blackout that occurred under the failed Labor government. It was a horrible thing to come home to.

Extended blackouts mean that food rots, families shower in the pool or kids go to school without clean clothes. Blackouts and brownouts trip and break appliances, costing families thousands in replacements without notice for key appliances such as fridges, freezers, air cons and pool pumps.

We inherited a system that was not up to scratch. In our year of action, certainty and security, this CLP government is getting on with the job and acting. We will not follow in the footsteps of the failed opposition. We will not ignore requests for reform and investment for years like it did. We will not commission reports telling us what to do and then promptly ignore them or fail to act in time like Labor did. It promised the world and delivered nothing.

We are promising reform, and we will deliver. This reform is not sexy or eye-catching, but it is necessary. This Country Liberal Party government will deliver for Territorians.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I will speak on our electricity system and about a future that is not yet written but will be by the decisions we make.

The Northern Territory's electricity sector stands at a crossroads. If we fail to act, we face not only rising costs but the real risk of a system failure, prolonged blackouts, stranded infrastructure and deepening financial burdens for future generations. This is a moment for reform. Labor seems not to understand this.

Let us begin with the reality of where we are headed without intervention. Across the Territory the electricity system is absorbing wave after wave of structural pressure. There are escalating generation costs driven by rising gas prices and an ageing asset base and a ballooning community service obligation projected to reach $192m in 2025–26, up by $51m in one year. Why is this so? Labor failed to plan for the future.

We have unstable grid conditions with increasing solar penetration, stressing legacy infrastructure. We have opportunities that exist for improvement of governance where our three government-owned corporations could operate more efficiently to reduce duplication in decisions which then improves efficiency and reduces costs.

These pressures are compounding. They are not isolated. Every year that we delay a coordinated reform, the risk profile of our electricity system deepens and so does our fiscal exposure. This is not just a technical challenge; it is a treasury challenge. The cost of upholding the status quo is mounting in subsidies, lost productivity and growing vulnerability.

How did we get here? The Labor government failed to take action. It was pursuing unrealistic targets knowing that it could not meet them and throwing money at renewables. We are not anti-renewables. We will consider renewables within the grid because it is the right thing to do, but we will not do it at any cost.

If we continue with a fragmented and reactive approach, the Northern Territory faces multiple long-term risks. We have reliability risks as our ageing gas generation fleet is not getting any younger. Channel Island—a backbone of supply—requires direct investment to maintain operational life. Without new investment, power outages will become more frequent and severe, particularly in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

The financial risk of the rising CSO is crowding out other government investment. At this rate, we are locking in unsustainable expenditure just to maintain the fragile status quo. This is before factoring in emergency generation, network failures or escalating fuel costs.

Our investor confidence is at risk. Without clear, centralised planning, developers and financiers face delays and uncertainty. Projects like the Batchelor solar farm have suffered due to opaque connection processes from the previous Labor government. If we cannot offer certainty, the NT will lose investment to other jurisdictions.

We have system integrity risk. With the decentralised rooftop utility-scale solar, it is increasing grid instability. Without a system-wide operator, we risk asset duplication, stranded investments and system blackouts at public expense. We are doing this work to ensure stability in our grid going forward.

Why must we do this reform? It is obvious that the time has come for a coordinated, risk-mitigated and forward-looking approach. This is exactly what we are delivering through the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill that was introduced in September 2025. The establishment of the NTESMO (Northern Territory Electrical System and Market Operator) as an independent statutory authority marks a critical turning point and juncture in our electricity market. NTESMO will provide whole-of-system planning; a 10-year regulated electricity system investment plan (RESIP); central oversight of generation, procurement and asset optimisation; and a risk-informed recommendation base to minimise future exposure rather than just managing today's problems.

This is about getting ahead of the curve, identifying future pinch points and designing a system that avoids them entirely, which the previous Labor government failed to do. The public procurement model is not just about modernising how we buy electricity; it is about embedding financial discipline and system resilience at the heart of our energy sector, and it ensures that all new generation investments are coordinated, minimising redundancy. Procurement is undertaken at least cost, maximising the Territory's buying power. Contracts are structured to mitigate financial risk during higher demand or failure scenarios. The role of TGen is maintained where appropriate to preserve reliability, particularly in our smaller grids.

Most importantly, the Treasurer, as the shareholding minister, will approve all major investments, ensuring that they are aligned with Treasury's risk appetite and broader fiscal strategy. To apply these safeguards the change must be managed carefully, and it will be. We are implementing reform in phases through to mid-2027, ensuring operational continuity and minimising disruption to workers, communities and businesses. Existing long-term contracts will be transitioned under a no-worse-off principle, and ongoing engagement through the electricity reform taskforce ensures that risks are identified early and mitigated collaboratively with proponents. By legally separating NTESMO from Power and Water we are establishing the governance independence necessary to ensure long-term system integrity without duplicating functions or increasing costs to Territorians.

The Opposition Leader spoke about increasing costs; yes, there are costs increasing to large users, but we are on the front foot making sure that the costs do not increase to everyday residential users.

I will talk about the cost of inaction. Let me be clear that inaction is the most expensive option on the table. It will cost us more in subsidies, lost investment and reputational damage. It will cost us in the trust of Territorians if we allow the lights to go out while sitting on legacy systems that no longer serve their purpose. Treasury analysis shows that every year of delay compounds our exposure and undermines future resilience of our electricity generating systems.

This is more than electricity; this is about governing for the future and doing what is right. The previous government did not think about the future and our grid. This is about managing risks before they manifest. It is about building stable, accountable and investment-ready systems. It is about doing the hard work now so that Territorians can rely on a secure, affordable and modern energy future.

I am proud of the work we are doing. I thank all the partners and stakeholders who continue to engage with this process. This is the work the previous Labor government failed to do, putting our electricity system at risk. Together we are building a system that is not just fit for purpose but also fit for the Territory's future. We will de-risk our electricity system and provide the needed certainty for Territorians and proponents looking to work with and develop in the Northern Territory.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, energy affects every Territorian, whether they live in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, remote communities or homelands.

I acknowledge that the electricity makeup in the Territory is different. Many of our homelands still operate on hybrid systems with solar power and diesel generation to help them continue to generate power. Solar farms across the Territory provide energy into the grid. We still have a large amount of gas-fired generation as well. We are talking about a number of energy sources which continue to keep the lights on.

Any reform that looks to provide certainty to Territorians on power reliability is a good conversation to have. People have different views on how to get to the objective of reliable, cheap, affordable power for Territorians, so it is important to have those conversations.

People in the community have spoken about January 2026. Households after January 2026 will continue to pay the domestic energy tariff for the customer's first 55 kilowatts of consumption of energy each day and a higher tariff equivalent to the standard of the commercial tariff after this threshold. Consumption will be calculated each billing period based on the daily energy consumed.

That means there will be an increase in power bills for people who have large families, who might run a number of air conditioning units in their homes during extreme heat periods or who live in the south, like I do in Alice Springs, and have heating in winter. If people are in a remote community or a regional setting they might not have up-to-date cooling and warming technology, so they might rely on box-rattlers, which are the old air conditioners in the window. They draw a lot more power than a split system reverse cycle inverter air conditioner.

These power changes will have an increase, more likely for vulnerable families who live below the poverty line or people in the rural areas of the Northern Territory who rely on bore water. If they have to run their pump every day to guarantee that their house has running fresh water for their kitchen, shower and toilet facilities, that will come at a higher cost when this tariff changes.

Energy is important. We need to have a serious conversation about it. In the Top End during extreme heat periods there is a lot more demand for energy. Central Australia is always the powerhouse of the Territory. We produce more energy than the demand at the moment. Looking at how we can manage energy consumption in Central Australia—feeding into the grid versus the demand to take out—has been a huge volume of work that our hardworking public service has always had to do. I acknowledge that it is a complex issue.

While we are talking about energy, I will be clear that today's conversation is important. We will debate energy legislation tomorrow. This morning is an attempt by the CLP to get ahead and continue to hide the failures of its government when it comes to being open, transparent and accountable with Territorians about the INPEX disaster. The minister for the Environment is ducking and weaving at every chance and refusing to do interviews with media outlets because he does not want to talk about what is going on. He does not want to be honest with Territorians …

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: Relevance to Subject. I am not getting the dot points in between.

Madam SPEAKER: I think it is relevant. I will let the member continue.

Mr PAECH: Full points to the Member for Goyder for trying to stand up and defend his government to continue hiding the INPEX scandal.

We are talking about energy, and INPEX is an energy provider. This government is refusing to be open and transparent with Territorians. The minister for the Environment needs to face Territorians and be truthful. He needs to tell Territorians how long he knew about what is going on at INPEX before it was made public. How long has he sat on his hands …

Mr BURGOYNE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; the imputations are that we knew about this previously. It was stated in this parliament that on Wednesday last week, the 15th …

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. You cannot use this point of order to give a speech or add new information. You can stand up shortly and contribute what you like.

Mr PAECH: I am not implying anything. I am saying that if the minister wants to be truthful, accountable and open to Territorians he should tell this Assembly how long he has personally known about what has gone on at INPEX. When did the department brief him?

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: The interjections are astonishing, trying as hard as they can to hide. 'Nothing to see here' is what we get from this government.

Territorians want to know how long the department knew. How long did the minister know? How long did the Cabinet know about what was going on with the INPEX issues in the Northern Territory? These are important questions.

In Question Time this week the Environment minister, who is supposed to stand up for environmental protection, refused to give a worthwhile, lengthy, appropriate and truthful answer when asked questions by members of the opposition and crossbench. He just gave a quick one line and sat down, dodging and weaving accountability.

The government must be open and transparent about this issue. It is about energy and the environment. This is about integrity, and Territorians want to know. I went to Woolies last night and was bailed up by many people asking, 'What is this government hiding? Why don't they want to tell us what is going on with the issues surrounding INPEX?' I said, 'Good question. We would like to know as well.'

This government is not being open, transparent or accountable. It is not answering the questions and is refusing to do media interviews. I am sure the government members will be jumping next week when they feel like the story has gone away. The story will not go away because people know that the government is hiding something about this INPEX issue. The government is not being truthful with people.

We can talk about energy; that is important. I acknowledge the work being done by the public service in energy reform; it is good, and I look forward to having that debate tomorrow. I think it is cheap, dirty and nasty politics for the CLP to try to create a smokescreen and say, 'We will talk about energy today because we want people to think that we are doing all the great work and do not want to talk about the INPEX issue. We do not want to talk about what is going on, how long we knew about it and why we did not talk about it.' The people are looking for the government say the truth. What happened?

I acknowledge the work the government is doing to stabilise the energy grid and address the demand pressures. It is good work. I am not having a jab at you there, but if we are to have a constructive conversation about energy, step out of this building, face the media and answer the questions that Territorians want to know about INPEX: how long have you known, and what are you doing about it? These are the questions people want to know. They do not want to hear the Deputy Chief Minister talk, as he always does; they want to know what the CLP government and Environment minister will do to stand up for the environment.

The people of Alice Springs might not be in Darwin, but the good people of Braitling are watching and continually see the Member for Braitling stripping environmental protections, defunding things. When he does not want to face people, he declines an interview or invitation to attend a community event. That is not leadership. We see continued cowardly attempts to cover up the truth under this government.

Mr EDGINGTON (Essential Services): Madam Speaker, I support the Deputy Chief Minister's report on the dire state of the Northern Territory electricity system.

I put on the record the grave consequence of a Labor government that for eight years failed to deliver critical reforms to our electricity system which were desperately needed; that disregarded expert advice from the Utilities Commission on how to prepare the Territory's regulated electricity system for the future; and that, instead of taking an energy-agnostic, lowest-cost-to-the-consumer approach, was guided by their ideological drive to reach an unrealistic 50% renewable generation target.

The culmination of these failures has left Territorians footing the bill for a power grid prone to blackouts and ill-prepared for future challenges. Labor's insistence on pursuing its political agenda led the former government to defer essential operational and investment decisions which did not align with its ideology. Among the most dangerous of these deferred decisions was Labor's failure to finalise a plan to replace Channel Island's ageing generators as they approached end of life.

By way of background, the original life expectancy for Channel Island's C1 to C6 was 30 years, with an original planned retirement in 2012. These already ageing generators, with the exception of the C3 unit, had their lifespans extended by 15 years up until 2027, leaving plenty of time for any government to properly plan for their replacement. However, after eight years under a Labor government, which preferred to invest in art galleries and shadeless structures over critical infrastructure, these same ageing gas-fired generators still provide Darwin and Katherine with much of their electricity generation and grid-firming capacity.

The age of these generators elevate the risks of mechanical failure and system trips, increasing the likelihood of blackouts. As the Minister for Essential Services, every time there is a blackout I do my best to ensure power is restored with haste. I urge Territorians to remember that while Labor promised to deliver an energy future backed by renewables, it instead left the Territory with ageing critical generation infrastructure which exposes Territorians to more frequent interruptions and outages.

On the topic of blackouts, it is not as if Labor was left in the dark on the critical nature of replacing the generators at Channel Island. Since as early as 2019, independent reports, including those from the Northern Territory Utilities Commission through the NT Electricity Outlook Report process, have consistently highlighted the risks and challenges facing our electricity system. In particular, the Utilities Commission stressed the urgent need to plan for the retirement of generation assets at the Channel Island Power Station and to commission alternative generation sources. These warnings were repeatedly ignored by the former Labor government which failed to take meaningful action to replace this essential capacity.

While some may believe it unfair to claim that Labor chose to ignore these warnings, it is clear that this was not the case. I refer to an ABC article from July 2023, which states:

> *Darwin–Katherine grid at risk of power blackouts within three years, Utilities Commission finds*

The then Minister for Essential Services—now the Opposition Leader—was asked to comment on concerns raised in response to the 2022 Northern Territory Electricity Outlook Report findings. The report's findings were clear:

> *… 'action and investment decisions are needed now' … to avoid 'risks to maintaining a secure Darwin–Katherine power system as early as 2026/27'.*

The report explicitly warned that within four years, electricity demand may exceed supply if a solution was not found to replace the 185 megawatts of generation capacity scheduled for retirement at Channel Island Power Station. When asked for comment, the now Opposition Leader stated:

> *The outlook report necessarily assumes only committed electricity projects.*

She went on to assure Territorians:

> *… the NT government is planning for future generation capacity to replace planned retirement of existing gas-fired generators, as well as near-term investments in the essential services required to enable the safe commissioning of future renewable energy projects*.

Opposition Leader, what happened? Where are these promised near-term projects that were expected to take the place of the generators at Channel Island, which are critical in supplying and stabilising the Darwin–

Katherine grid? Was the plan to get all our power from solar farms commissioned without adequate battery storage, leaving Territorians vulnerable to blackouts every time a few clouds pass overhead?

When the Country Liberal Party came to office in 2024, we were not left with much of value in the electricity space—no strategy, limited committed replacement capacity and scarce investment in the infrastructure needed to secure our energy future.

I ask the Opposition Leader: was this another broken Labor promise? While the Labor Party may not have understood the damage it was doing, the CLP has always understood that energy policy must be grounded in practicality, stability and the delivery of affordable power for Territorians in the short term and the long term.

I guarantee that this government is not repeating Labor's mistakes. While it may take a while to clean them up, we are committed to restoring confidence in our energy system by delivering the power security Territorians deserve at an affordable price. As Minister for Essential Services I have already taken action to correct Labor's numerous energy mistakes and do my part in steering the Territory back to a stable and affordable energy future.

In March I announced the decision to extend the life of three gas generators at Channel Island Power Station, a critical decision which was long overdue and neglected by Labor. TGen advised me that extending the life of these generators—one to 2030 and two to 2035—would likely secure reliable capacity for the 150,000 Territorians who depend on the Darwin–Katherine grid. These generators are ageing and require investment. With no committed replacement projects planned by the former Labor government, this decision became the government's most viable option or perhaps our only option if we were to ensure energy security.

With the support of this Chamber, tomorrow this government intends to pass the Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025 and the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025. Among other benefits, these laws will streamline electricity infrastructure procurement and establish a framework for whole-of-system planning, which is a significant step to avoid the investment failures that occurred under the previous Labor government.

Our electricity system is in dire straits and requires immediate reform and investment. With tomorrow's expected passage of the energy market reform Bills and across the next three years, this government will deliver the reforms and investments needed to rebuild the Territory's electricity grids. Our actions will ensure that Territorians enjoy reliable, affordable power to restore our economy and rebuild our unique Territory lifestyle. That is this government's commitment, and that is what we will deliver.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I commend the Deputy Chief Minister for bringing on this ministerial report.

I want to impress upon this Assembly the importance of energy. At the core of most of the great issues we face is a question of power and generation of electricity.

Unfortunately, in my electorate we have ageing infrastructure, fragile supply and rising costs across the grid. This means that in Drysdale there are blackouts regularly. There is potential load shedding and maintenance failures that people in the electorate have to endure. That means when there is a blackout in Driver, Melissa's—an award-winning home-based business—cannot operate or meet timeframes, which impacts her business. A lot of people are at home throughout the day. These blackouts cause big issues across the community.

Everything relies on reliable power. It is an easy throwaway, but when looking at how much our community relies on electricity it shows that this topic needs to be front and centre for the public service in their delivery and in the political arena. It is an issue I do not believe we have performed well on over the last 20 years in this country and the Northern Territory. We need to rectify this because the implications are vast.

We have seen manufacturing collapse throughout the country, but particularly in the Northern Territory. Power is the major reason behind that. This is not a new train of thought.

I will be brief, but since my peer, the Opposition Leader, is also a lover of Greek mythology, I will share a story about the importance of power. Prometheus went to the mountain, stole fire and gave it to humanity. Zeus was angry and punished him for eternity. Why did he punish him? Zeus was angry because when Prometheus gave humanity power, he gave them the power to be their own gods. I find that message

amazing. Thousands of years ago it was realised that fire and the giving of power would enable humanity to self-realise, actualise and be freed from the power of the gods.

It holds true today because without power we would not have flowing water, hospitals could not heal, schools could not teach and businesses could not compete. Fresh water comes down to the question of power because we have developed the technology to desalinate and to pump from aquifers, so drought is no longer a problem of fate and the weather; drought is truly a problem of power. With enough power, we can mitigate drought. We need to think of power and generation at its core regarding these larger issues.

Manufacturing is close to my heart. We need cheap, abundant electricity. To make it simple, the input costs of manufacturing include labour, wages, materials and electricity. If we do not want to lower wages for Territorians, we must lower those other components so we are competitive. The easiest one we can lower is electricity by making cheap, reliable power. That, in turn, will lower the cost of getting materials out of the ground and into the work shed. If we tackle that one thing we can be competitive in manufacturing whilst maintaining relatively good wages for our labour force. The death of manufacturing is a question of power and electricity policy.

Computing and AI are the most power-hungry industries to a degree we do not even realise yet. The new computing power coming on board is electricity hungry, but it is the future. We need to be able to feed it. We need to decide now how we will have that edge because if we do not, other jurisdictions in the country and the world will move on it, and we will be left behind. We need to maximise this century's greatest leap, computing and AI, and be at the forefront with cheap and reliable energy.

This also speaks to Defence and national security. We need strong energy systems for our bases, radar systems, communications and, importantly, Defence industries. Our grids need to be reliable, and they need backups. This will ensure we can hold national security. The Northern Territory is at the forefront of national security. If we want the Defence industry to provide what our forces need, especially in a time of war, we need to ensure we have cheap, reliable energy with multiple backup systems.

There is also a rise in electric vehicles and the modernisation of transport. This is another step forward we are taking, and the technologies will only get better. With that, the everyday person's energy demand will only skyrocket.

All these things compound on top of each other. The fact is that every Territorian will need far more electricity year on year, so our policy needs to target this. We need to feed that demand and ensure we are best positioned to maximise our gains this century.

We have humongous opportunity. We are blessed in the Northern Territory. Between gas and solar we can produce huge amounts of electricity, so we can deliver the cheap, reliable energy that Territorians need in every aspect of their lives. If you do not think energy is important, look around your home or workplace. You will see that every part of our lives needs energy. If we get cheaper, reliable energy our individual wealth will grow. It will happen; if we can get the cost down, our economic wealth will rise.

A huge opportunity lies ahead of us, and our government is aware of this. We understand the community and economic need that energy will deliver for. That is why I commend the Deputy Chief Minister for raising this. He has drawn a line in the sand. He put on the record the situation we have inherited. He is taking the bull by the horns to ensure that the Northern Territory and its people are best placed to maximise this opportunity for all our workers, manufacturers, hospitals, schools, computer industry and industries we do not have yet. Through energy we can create new industries that we do not have workers for yet, but they will provide economic benefit into the future.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I speak on behalf of every Territorian who has been left behind by the chaos, mismanagement and delusion that defined the former Labor government's energy policy. We all know the truth. Labor promised lower power prices, cleaner energy and reliable supply. Instead, it delivered blackouts, budget blowouts and prices that soar beyond the reach of working families and small businesses.

As a Territorian, the dire state of our electricity system deeply concerns me. As the Member for Fannie Bay, it alarms me. In Fannie Bay there has been over 200 outages between 2016 and 2024. When we came to government, the Territory was left with an electricity system that, frankly, could keel over at any second and is significantly costing us in the process. Labor did not put the necessary plans in place to fix the Territory's old and inefficient energy infrastructure and failed to secure our energy future.

On the other hand, this CLP government has been proactive in keeping the lights on for Territorians and dealing with Labor's energy failures. The electricity reform package we will debate in parliament this week is another Labor mess we are acting on and mopping up.

The cost to Territorians has been absurd. In the current financial year the Territory's budget has had to swallow a $51m increase in our community service obligations (CSOs). CSOs are government subsidies that reduce Territorians' energy bills by about 50%. Without our government's CSOs, households would be paying approximately $1,700 more on their energy bill. For businesses, it would be approximately $3,900 more.

To maintain this level of support, the CLP Finocchiaro government's first budget allocated $192m so Territorians do not have to dig so deeply into their pockets. The savings our government makes for Territorians on their energy bills are proportional to the cost of energy. In other words, the lower the cost to generate energy, the lower the cost passed on to Territorians and the less our government must subsidise costs.

There is no doubt that the cost of energy generation and the level our government has had to subsidise this cost is impacted by our ageing infrastructure. Most people know that I grew up in Alice Springs. The Ron Goodin Power Station is at the end of its life and cannot be extended any more. It is an old, unreliable system that has led to chronic blackouts; it means our government has had to pick up the slack after Labor's poor plan for our failing electricity system.

Labor was in power from 2000 to 2024, with the exception of a small stint between 2012 and 2016. That is 20 of the last 25 years, and Labor dares to blame this new government for the damage Labor caused. Shame on Labor.

Another significant reason our CSO skyrocketed is due to emergency gas costs. This escalation in cost for emergency gas comes from poor planning. With the Beetaloo on our doorstep and gas companies knocking on our door to take advantage of this gas, the price of gas and the impact on energy bills should be the least of Territorians' concerns. However, bad planning on Labor's part has meant our government had to buy emergency gas outside of the cheap gas we should be receiving under our gas supply agreements.

In addition to this, instead of focusing on unlocking the cheap, abundant gas we have in the Territory, Labor was focused on—well, we are not sure what it was focused on; I am not sure it was focused on anything.

Labor's poor attempt to invest in our electricity system and try to right its wrongs led to its bungled investment in solar. The utility solar farms built under Labor in Manton Dam, Batchelor and Katherine sat there for years until our government came to power and finally allowed them to dispatch electricity to the grid. Labor may have been aiming for 50% renewables, but it managed to dispatch only 15% solar-generated electricity.

Our government is not anti-solar or anti-renewables, but we are anti energy that drives up costs for Territorians and does not contribute to improving our failing electricity system. This CLP government is taking an energy-agnostic approach so that we can use the necessary means, whether it is gas or solar, to keep the lights on for Territorians. With the risk of our CSO and Territorians' energy bills skyrocketing, our government cannot get Beetaloo online fast enough. When we invest in renewables like solar, it will be part of a well-orchestrated, system-wide plan.

In addition to getting our energy mix right for the Territory at the right price, this CLP government is delivering an electricity market reform package that will continue to drive down costs for Territorians. Until the CLP came to power, the Territory's energy system was left to its own devices, and Territorians had to pay for this disorganisation ever since.

The reforms we are progressing consist of centralising our system control in NTESMO, spinning this unit out of Power and Water Corporation and into its own independent body. We are modernising and changing the way our electricity market operates by giving NTESMO the mandate to implement a coordinated, regulated electricity system investment plan.

I attended the briefing provided by the minister, and I can tell you how much of a difference this will make in ensuring that the government-owned corporations (GOCs) stay in their respective lanes. These reforms will allow for true competitiveness, providing a level procurement playing field for all the GOCs and private investors to compete for projects that our energy system needs.

A centralised procurement process brings more players to the NT's electricity market, with the ability to provide cheaper capital, lowering our costs and reducing the amount Territorians have to foot the bill.

With the dire state of the Territory's electricity system, these reforms have been a long time coming; however, they have been an even longer time coming under Labor which set them in motion in 2020. Clearly, Labor knew these reforms were important; if they were not, it would not have started them. However, under Labor, Territorians got inaction on their energy future.

This government is making these reforms a reality and getting the job done as part of our year of action. Our government knows that over the forward estimates CSOs will continue to be part of our budget. It is a price we are willing to pay to keep electricity prices low for Territorians.

Under Labor, the Northern Territory's electricity market became a case study in failure. It shut down efficient gas generation while throwing millions at experimental projects that could never deliver base load power. It buried industry in regulation, scared off private investment and pushed a reckless agenda that chased headlines rather than delivering results.

Households are paying the price. Electricity bills have exploded; businesses are struggling to stay open; and regional communities which once relied on affordable energy to sustain jobs and opportunity are being literally and figuratively left in the dark. The legacy of Labor's grand energy experiment is ideology over practicality, slogans over solutions and politics above the people it was elected to serve.

The Territory cannot afford another decade of neglect. That is why this government has a clear and disciplined plan to restore affordability, reliability and confidence in the power system. Every dollar wasted on red tape is a dollar stolen from Territory households, so we are putting it back at the heart of our energy's future.

The Northern Territory has abundant natural resources. Labor chose to leave them in the ground, but we will not. We will responsibly harness them to secure a stable power supply and bring down costs through common sense and competition. We are restoring trust in the market.

We will open the field to innovation, encourage investment and ensure that every provider competes to deliver the best deal for the consumer, not the bureaucrat.

Finally, we are giving power back to the people. This government believes that local organisations like councils and regional communities should have the tools to develop their own energy solutions—microgrids, hybrid systems and small-scale gas developments—that deliver real resilience and independence.

The difference between us and Labor is simple. We believe in practicality, enterprise and the ability of Territorians to chart their own future. Labor believed in control, bureaucracy and forcing ideology where innovation should have led.

We would have loved to come to government without finding messes, empty promises, unfunded projects and messages that had no substance every time we turned around. Our mission is clear: clean up Labor's mess. We will rebuild confidence in the system and make the Northern Territory the powerhouse it should always have been. The time for excuses is over; the time for results has arrived. This government will deliver for Territorians.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, we are here to talk about the NT's power system in preparation for the Bills tomorrow. In terms of the overall structure of the Territory, these Bills are some of the more substantive things we will do—after Declan's law, crime reform and the Territory Coordinator—because of its long-term effect on the Territory. This is serious. People need power when they turn on their lights; they rely on it.

Instead of playing the ball and dealing with the issue, the Member for Gwoja plays the man and rants about something completely separate that was dealt with yesterday in parliament. As a former minister he should know that sometimes there are things he cannot talk about. He needs to make a public statement and allow the processes to carry on. He chooses to play politics, which is a shame.

He does that because he knows he has no record to stand on. He was the worst Attorney-General in NT history, who oversaw the burgeoning crime crisis explode out of control. In his own electorate more people chose to go out bush to homelands instead of being forced to vote for that little boy. Of the 6,132 people enrolled, only 1,654 voted for him. That is 27%.

The theme of the previous Labor government was announcements with no substance; those opposite loved announcements. I am sure they watched the *ABC* comedy *The Hollowmen* and, instead of taking it as a comedy, they took it as a recipe book for how to run a government. They were chasing announceables: 'What

will we announce today? Do not worry about delivering it or how much is in the budget; we will just announce it. Let's announce a clinic for Maningrida, a road to Wadeye or this or that. Do not worry about how we will pay; put it on the program of works. She'll be right, mate.'

When people asked, 'What happened with the clinic at Maningrida or the road to Wadeye?' they would answer, 'We are working on it'. Meanwhile, they knew no cash was allocated. It was in fairyland—a castle in the sky.

The former Labor government loved to make announcements without considering how to get it done. It signed the Batchelor Solar Farm with Eni and had no plan of how to manage the power. Renewable energy is great; we all love it. I cannot wait to put solar panels on my roof, and we use solar at the farm to pump water. We love renewable energy, but the power system has to match, millisecond to millisecond, supply and demand. People study at university for years to understand the mathematics of how to manage a power system.

If a solar farm is pumping out power and a cloud goes over, something must balance that out. A big chunk of the grid cannot just fall over. Instead of the former government planning to deal with it, commissioning a battery to smooth out the supply and putting in a control system to manage it, what did it do? Labor did not connect it. I cannot speak about the solar farm at Katherine, but I drive past the Batchelor one when I visit people there. It is all there; the solar panels diligently turn to face the sun, and for what? Nothing. For years all that power was being wasted because the Labor government could not be organised to connect it properly.

Ms Uibo: You do not even know how to do it. Shame job for you.

Mr KERLE: I pick up on the interjection from the Opposition Leader. She knows that she failed. She was the Minister for Essential Services.

Ms Uibo: Get a briefing on how to connect a solar farm; then you will understand.

Madam SPEAKER: That is enough. No interjections.

Mr KERLE: The previous Labor government got drunk and blamed us for the hangover. We are not the ones who got drunk. They had a party for eight years, spending taxpayers' dollars. Now we are here to clean up the mess. We and Territorians are the ones dealing with the hangover, and Labor is blaming us for having a sore head. The previous Labor government signed us up for things without considering how to deal with it.

I will support the Bill tomorrow. I will speak about my electorate and why NTESMO is important. In the suburbs of Moulden and Woodroffe in my electorate, and Driver in the Member for Drysdale's electorate, power outages have been a huge topic of conversation recently. The most recent outage was on 20 October from 7.45 pm to 9.30 pm. Moulden, Woodroffe and Driver were affected. The issue was caused by a problem in the underground power cables.

I thank the hardworking lines people from Power and Water who are on call to come out—day or night, rain or shine—to do their best and work hard to restore power to Territorians. They were fantastic. Instead of being home with their families enjoying dinner, they rolled out at 7.45 pm and fixed that power cable.

In the meantime, there were three suburbs of people—mums putting their bubs and toddlers down to sleep. Jacob was about 18 months old when Cyclone Marcus hit, and the power went out for days. Trying to put down an 18-month-old when there is no power, fans or air con is hard. Three suburbs of people had to suffer in the heat with no fan, air con or warning.

On 15 October from 7.10 pm to 9 pm—I do not have the exact time when it was resolved—there was another outage. Before that, there was an outage on McGuire Circuit which lasted a bit longer.

Our power system is in dire need of attention after eight years of neglect. It is essential to take action and create an entity which will be wholly and solely focused on running the grid and undertaking the investment required.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Safer Schools, Stronger Classrooms

Continued from 21 October 2025.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, Labor will always value education. Whilst there are changes in government, Territorians know that Labor will always advocate for education. It is one of our core values.

Many members, especially the new ones, will learn that everyone is an expert when talking about education. We heard a bit of that during contributions yesterday. Some contributions were narrow-minded and shortsighted.

CLP members claim to support education, but they fail to talk about the much-needed investment in education that they cut in their first budget in May this year. They cut $3m from funding to improve infrastructure at homelands schools in East Arnhem without a shred of decency in telling the local member—the Member for Mulka—or any of those schools.

It is not just Independent and opposition electorates being punished by the CLP's Education budget cuts; the Member for Barkly's electorate is one of the losers in education investment. There was $8m for Alekarenge School cut by the Treasurer in May this year. Not a shred of decency was shown by the Education minister in travelling to Alekarenge School to explain that dire decision. This was for much-needed infrastructure. It was probably because the former Labor government budgeted to invest in Alekarenge School. We did not hold that seat, but it was not about politics; it was about the much-needed infrastructure for Alekarenge School. This funding was cut by the CLP in its own teammate's—the Member for Barkly's—electorate. The CLP loaded him up with a bunch of portfolios and then cut investment that would make a huge difference to the community and the future of places like Ali Curung.

They must have something—maybe there is a hex on the Member for Barkly because he wants to be the future leader. He would probably be a much better one, but they have done him in—their own teammate. Worse, they have done in the kids, staff and community of Ali Curung by cutting $8m of desperately needed infrastructure. It is a shame that CLP members say in this House that it is all about education but out the back is cutting anything to do with infrastructure and making schools better for kids, staff and communities. It does not care to do the hard work.

Let us not forget the silence by the CLP government and the Minister for Education and Training on the billion-dollar Better and Fairer Schools Agreement that was signed by two Labor governments. This highlights that the Territory will always do better under a Territory and federal Labor government. That 10-year billion-dollar deal was signed early. It took us seven years, but by golly we did the work to get that money for NT public schools.

That money is dwindling away for expenses that the CLP thinks schools should pay, as opposed to sticking up for investment in what students need, like human and material resources. Territory schools are left in a state of shock because of the CLP government's disregard. Those opposite pretend that they care about schools. Territorians will not have the wool pulled over their eyes.

I spoke this morning about the community service obligation regarding energy costs for schools. Again, a school in the Member for Barkly's electorate was shattered by the extra they will have to cover for high energy costs without the community service obligation. The CLP did not say it would do this when it came to government. It did not even bother to put out a fancy press release. That is a 636% increase in costs that this school now has to pay because of the removal of the community service obligation by the CLP government. This hit our schools hard. We will hear more stories on that; do not worry.

We heard from the Member for Port Darwin the other week. She quoted Einstein about the insanity of doing the same thing and expecting a different result; that is a well-known quote. She then spoke about going back 30 years and doing things from the past that failed. She stood behind this statement, yet we are now seeing it happen in schools; the government is using the attendance strategy and punitive measures against kids, families and carers, thinking there will be a better result.

Former CLP Northern Territory Senator and Minister for Indigenous Australians, Nigel Scullion, also admitted that the policy failed. The CLP dusted off the books, tried to bag up something as new and thinks that will somehow make things better. Every education expert I know is appalled, so I hope they are telling the

minister—they are probably not allowed to because they might lose their jobs. I hope they are advocating with experts regarding that bad CLP policy.

As we heard from the Member for Gwoja, the Minister for Education and Training likes to talk about the good news stories in schools and claim all the hard work. Member for Katherine, Mataranka School has nothing to do with you. You have done nothing to support them. They have done the hard work in that school.

The minister should be ashamed of trying to claim the work of any school in the Northern Territory when there are improvements. The school staff work hard, day-in and day-out, and community members work hard to get their kids and families to school to encourage learning and engagement, so she should not try to take credit for Mataranka School's work.

The Member for Mulka spoke about the 50th anniversary of the homelands movement at Garrthalala in his electorate a couple of weeks ago. Garrthalala is a small, beautiful homeland. The bush university is making great inroads.

I commend the Minister for Education and Training, who attended. Unfortunately, she was late, not by of any fault of her own but because of travel delays in getting to Garrthalala via Nhulunbuy. The minister said that everyone should be conscious of the way they act regarding education. Hopefully the minister has reflected on her behaviour. Once she gave her speech, while other speakers spoke at the important anniversary, she was on her phone in front of every student, teacher and visitor. People came from New South Wales for this special event to celebrate the years of advocacy for the homelands movement and education, to be strong on country, and there she was sitting at the front, fiddling on her phone during other speeches. I did not see anyone else playing on their phone when she was speaking.

Mutual respect was not shown publicly, and it is not shown in here. The Member for Katherine needs to work on that. She should think about the way she is perceived in public because people were upset. People spoke to me about her, and I said, 'She is not part of my team, but I will pass it on'. People will say that as a reflection of the parliament in public. The Education minister spent a lot of money and time attending the celebration, which is great, but sitting on her phone and acting disinterested throughout the rest of the celebrations and ceremony is unacceptable. I hope the Member for Katherine realises how disrespectful and two-faced she is being regarding education.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Bill 2025, Serial 46.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Housing, Transport and Surveillance Devices Legislation Amendment (Police Public Safety Officers) Bill 2025, Serial 44.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Attorney-General and Police Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 43.

PETITION
Petition No 18 – Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act

J DAVIS (Johnston)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I present a petition not conforming with standing orders from 1,524 petitioners praying that the Northern Territory Government abandons its plan to amend the Northern Territory *Anti-Discrimination Act*.

I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

> *The petitioners humbly request that the Northern Territory Government abandons its imminent plan to amend the Northern Territory* Anti-Discrimination Act.

J DAVIS: Madam Speaker, I move that the petition be referred to the Public Accounts Committee to consider whether the petition should be debated.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Domestic Violence Prevention – Roadmap

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for PREVENTION of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Yesterday you claimed that domestic violence rates were down across the Territory, but the reality is different from the story you told the Assembly. The latest crime statistics show that in the eight months to August, compared with the same time last year, 67.5% of all assaults were associated with domestic violence—up by 2.6%. In Darwin domestic violence was up by 7.4%; Palmerston by 9.5%; Katherine by 4.6%; Tennant Creek by 4%; and Nhulunbuy by 31%.

It is beyond belief that you claimed in the House yesterday to have brought down domestic violence rates; however, that is not the point. The point is that you still have not released the domestic, family and sexual violence roadmap for the Northern Territory. We have been asked about it time and again. The sector cannot understand why you will not act on this incredibly pressing issue.

Rather than make misleading statements to the Assembly about domestic violence, when will you act, and when will the roadmap be ready?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the incredible results from the work being done by the Circuit Breaker team in Alice Springs.

The information presented to the Assembly yesterday was that from January to August 2025, compared with January to August 2024, there has been a 1% decrease in domestic violence assaults across the Territory. That is incredible. Most incredible is that the majority of the decrease has occurred in Alice Springs, where there has been a 17% decrease in domestic violence assaults for that period.

The most significant change in that environment is the delivery of Circuit Breaker, which is working with families to make sure that the cycle of violence is broken at its root; that kids are given the best opportunity to live the life they deserve; and that families are supported and given every opportunity to reduce the risk of harm in those households.

I am incredibly proud of the work the Circuit Breaker team has done. They have been working tirelessly since December, and their work is paying off. As I spoke about yesterday, when looking at the month-on-month results from April to August across the Territory, we expect similar decreases.

There was a period at the beginning before the programs kicked in when we were still seeing an unacceptable incidence of domestic violence, but a shift is starting. The work is paying off, and I would have thought those opposite would celebrate that, not call it out.

Arafura Nolans Rare Earths Project

Mr KERLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Arafura’s Nolans rare earths project in Central Australia continues to demonstrate how important the Northern Territory is to our nation’s economic and strategic future. With growing international interest and USD400m in new investment earmarked, including from the United States, Nolans is shaping up to be the most significant critical minerals project in the country.

Can you update the Assembly on how this project will create local jobs, reinforce our position as a key player in global supply chains and why the rest of the country should never underestimate the value of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we should not be underestimated; we should be celebrated for what the Territory can do for the security of this nation and for our allies.

The deals struck by Prime Minister Albanese and President Trump are a significant step forward for the Northern Territory. The Member for Blain is excited about this project as a born-and-bred Territorian, and the CLP has been backing this for the better part of a decade.

To get it to this point puts the Northern Territory on the global stage for all the right reasons. It is a vote of confidence in our capacity, capability and geostrategic importance in the regions. We continue to go to Canberra regarding this. I have been to Japan, and we will head to the United States next year to reinforce what the Territory has to offer this country in terms of rare earths, mineral, food, energy and strategic national security.

This investment is around $400m. There is $100m being reported by Export Finance Australia and $300m from the Export-Import Bank of the United States. We are hoping that this final push of funding will help deliver the final investment decision that Arafura needs to make so that the Territory can benefit. The significance of this project should not be underestimated. The Territory will benefit from 600 construction jobs and 350 operational jobs. This project is 135 kilometres from Alice Springs. Aileron and a number of other fantastic communities in the Barkly seek to benefit from the real jobs on country and the royalties that flow from it.

There is a focus on the Territory to deliver for our country and allies, as we know we can. We have been ignored for too long. As I said at the Bush Summit, ignore us at your own peril. We can deliver for this country and our allies, and this is a strong example of that.

I thank the Member for Blain for his keen interest in this. Rebuilding our economy has been a core focus for us, and we are doing everything we can to make the Territory a better place to do business. We celebrate the scale of this investment and the way it will create the supply chains that we need, the growth in the business community that we need and hopefully the expansion of the Alice Springs population. This is a good thing for the Territory, and we hope it continues to create opportunities for people now and into the future.

Electricity System

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY

You told Territorians that the energy system is in a dire state, sparking alarming headlines about life-threatening blackouts. Energy reform work has been underway for several years now, so which regulator or agency gave you that advice and when? If the warning is genuine, Territorians deserve to know who raised this alarm; if not, why are you telling stories and spreading panic?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is another failure by the previous Labor government. As I said this morning, we have known for years that the energy system is in crisis, and the previous Labor government failed to act.

The gateway report recommended that something needed to be done. It was presented to the Leader of the Opposition when she was the Essential Services minister. She read that report, yet what did Labor do?

Mrs Finocchiaro: Nothing!

Mr MALEY: It did nothing. Labor did not even ask, ‘Can we do something?’ It did nothing because, for whatever reason, it did not care about Territorians. It is a shame.

Labor had the ridiculous policy to get 50% renewables by 2030. Labor did not care about the costs and what Territorians would pay. Unlike this government, led by Lia Finocchiaro, we are offering Territorians the lowest-cost electricity possible. We are about cost of living. The mums and dads are doing it tough. The previous Labor government failed them and left us with a $15bn debt, which we are repaying.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing order 110; the question was specifically about which agency or regulator gave you the advice that there are life-threatening blackouts.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have plenty of time.

Mr MALEY: We do not need an agency; it is called common sense, which the previous Labor government did not have. When the power goes out, electrical items turn off. If you are a vulnerable person with health equipment plugged into the wall and the power goes out, it turns off. This puts vulnerable Territorians at risk.

This is serious. Territorians could suffer, and lives could be potentially lost because the previous Labor government failed to act and left us with an unstable system, lacking infrastructure. Those opposite had the information and did not act.

We are talking about vulnerable Territorians who suffer from medical episodes. They go to the doctor and receive their treatment. Air conditioning for older Territorians sitting at home—there is currently a heatwave; if the power goes off, the air conditioning and ceiling fans go off, which could put lives at risk.

Regarding the question about who told us, it is common sense that if the power goes out, people's lives are at risk. Labor did not have any foresight to move forward. That shows the previous Labor government failed Territorians.

Ms UIBO: Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that this concern was brought to the House because of the regulator. Can he confirm which regulator brought this to his attention, what they said and why?

Mr MALEY: It is quite simple …

Madam SPEAKER: That was pretty much the same as the first question. I do not think you have asked a different question.

Ms UIBO: I said 'agency and regulator'. He is saying that it is the regulator, so …

Madam SPEAKER: You asked which regulator gave that advice in the first question, and you are asking the same in the second question. I do not think that is a supplementary question. I am sorry. You can have another go at a supplementary question later in Question Time, but you have asked the same question twice.

Agriculture – Economic Growth

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

In 2024 our agriculture sector contributed approximately $1.4bn to the Territory economy. The opportunities for further growth are enormous, particularly in regional and remote areas. The latest figures released by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries also show that cattle exports from Darwin Port have hit record highs. We know how much you value our agriculture sector and our hardworking producers and farmers, including local Malak resident, David Dinh, who is a major mango producer.

Can you tell the Assembly how you continue to push and develop economic growth and how it will help our critically important ag sector?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama is committed to the agriculture sector because he knows it will grow the economy.

We were left with a $15bn debt by the previous failed Labor government. How will we address that? We will grow our economy and make our way out of that debt, unlike the previous Labor government which decided to tax people more. It wanted to shrink the economy and raise taxes.

The Member for Karama is talking about growing the economy, which we will do. We want to ensure that agriculture remains one of the Territory's great success stories. We can unlock regional growth. The regions are the backbone of the agriculture sector. We have a vast area of land, and we want to connect it because agriculture is important. Agriculture is responsible for the food we eat and the economy. It makes our economy stable. It ensures people in the regions have jobs and can put money in the bank, food on the table and pay the power bill.

The gross value of agriculture production has increased by 34% over the past 20 years. In real terms that has gone from $61m to $82m last financial year. The Northern Territory relies on agriculture. The CLP government will support that as we move forward because it means jobs for our regions. There is a lot of agriculture in the land of opportunity, the Barkly. We are supporting the industry because it employs 274,000 people in the Northern Territory, which is up by 6.7% from the previous year.

The export industry has had a great start, with more than 440,000 head of cattle exported from Darwin Port last year. That eclipses the previous 10-year high of 400,000 in 2015–16. It is going up.

We are supporting the agriculture industry so it can create jobs and make the economy stable.

We are working hard to develop sites such as the Larrimah agricultural development, the expansion of the Ord River and the Wildman agricultural development near the cashew farm along the Arnhem Highway. We are also supporting Singleton Farm, which is a $500m development to be staged over nine years. That will give us 1,000 jobs over the years.

We support the agriculture industry.

Corrections – Rehabilitation Programs

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Your government allocated just 3% of the Corrections budget to domestic violence prevention and reduction programs in prisons. This week your Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence tried to deny that domestic, family and sexual violence rates have gone up under your watch.

Can you explain why your government is deluding Territorians about addressing domestic, family and sexual violence when just 25 prisoners on a sentence of under two years have had access to these programs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the crime stats have gone down across the Northern Territory. For example, in the greater Darwin area, house break-ins are down by 38%; commercial break-ins are down by 25%; and DV assaults are down by 2%. Our strategy to reduce crime is working.

Unlike the previous Labor government, we are putting people in prison into programs. Rehabilitation is the key to breaking the cycle of reoffending. Unlike the previous Labor government, which just put offenders away and did not do anything with them, we are providing programs to support that.

For example, 12 people have gone through the anger management program—RAGE—in the Berrimah Correctional Centre; eight people are going through individual treatment programs; and seven people are going through the sex offender program. Rehabilitation is the key to breaking the cycle of offending and lowering domestic violence rates.

The Minister for Prevention of Domestic violence is working hard; she spoke earlier about the successes in the Circuit Breaker Program.

Our programs are working, and the rates are going down. We started with record-high crime and domestic violence rates. We have to ask: how did we get there? The previous Labor government had eight years in power—or 19 out of 23 years—and failed Territorians. In fact, some young offenders were not born when the previous Labor government came to power. Those opposite talk about generational change; these kids were born under the failed government that put them through misery with nothing to break the cycle of reoffending. We are running these programs to break that cycle of offending. We know how important it is.

Every time domestic violence occurs, there is a victim, not just a perpetrator. Victims suffered at the hands of the previous Labor government. We are giving victims the rights and protections they need to get on with their lives. We are not just focusing on breaking the cycle of reoffending; we are also supporting victims, which the previous government failed to do.

Darwin Port – Pilotage Services

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

The Darwin Port services a diverse range of industries which all contribute to the Northern Territory economy and the day-to-day life of our communities. Port users have raised concerns regarding Darwin Harbour's pilotage system, an issue which has been causing serious delays for commercial shipping operators, fuel and food deliveries and even live export movements. The previous Labor government ignored repeated calls from business and industry to fix this issue.

Can you update the Assembly on the steps the CLP government is taking to fix this problem, cut red tape and ensure our port can keep pace with the growing demand and industry expectations?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the member understands the important role the port plays in growing our economy moving forward. Pilotage services are an important part of managing Darwin Harbour to assist vessels to move in and out of the harbour, including berthing, mooring and general vessel movements.

For clarity, a certified pilot usually boards the vessel to guide it or oversee its movements and, in cases, may take control of the vessel directly. We have heard from many industry stakeholders and port users who are seriously concerned about the limited availability of pilots in Darwin Harbour. This is to the point where I have had to intervene on occasions, particularly about the movement of perishable goods from Darwin to remote communities when pilots are unavailable and goods are spoiling on berths or ships before they make it to communities.

When a pilot is not available, vessels can be left waiting to move, causing those delays. The delays disrupt the delivery of essential food and fuel supplies, and industry operators have repeatedly raised concerns about pilot shortages leaving barges stranded. Food has spoiled on board instead of reaching communities that desperately need it. Delays also affect animal welfare if live animals are left waiting in difficult conditions.

Delays for large commercial operators, such as LNG ships and container vessels, may lead to penalties from customers and disrupt business operations. The Chief Minister recently visited Japan, where representatives of one of our key trading nations also made their concerns known about the pilotage issues at Darwin Port.

We have two options: increase our pool of pilots immediately, which is not possible as they take time to train; or reduce the demand for these services required for smaller vessels, allowing pilots to target larger vessels. Under our existing regime the regional harbourmaster can issue exemptions to vessels of certain sizes and classes.

Consequently, I have asked DLI to complete the necessary risk and mitigation assessments to enable the increase of the current exemption limit from 35 to 55 metres, freeing up pilots to target larger vessels which need more oversight. This change will free up pilots to focus on larger, more complex movements. These changes will bring us in line with other jurisdictions, such as Queensland, which also manages high levels of industry activity and complex demand requirements.

The CLP will continue to push forward to rebuild our economy. As port activity increases, it is vital that our operations meet what is required for the Territory.

Gill Netting – Phase-out

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

The last time the Barramundi Fishery Management Advisory Committee met was in July last year. During estimates you said that a new group would be formed this year. You also said that you would be progressing your election commitment to phase-out gillnet fishing and talk to the fishing industry about alternative gear.

The fishing sector has been left in the dark about whether you intend to meet any of your commitments. Can you advise the Assembly whether you have made any progress? If not, why not?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, barramundi fishing in the Northern Territory is a big industry, whether commercial or recreational.

To refresh the Assembly, the CLP's commitment is to phase out gillnets in this term of government. We are only one year into this term, and we are on track to meet our commitment. We are working hard to get the balance right. We do not want to make a rash decision not based on information to close or open something. We are making sure that industry is brought along for the ride and know what is going on. We know how important barramundi fishing is for recreational and commercial fishing; we need to get the balance right.

To answer the question, I have a request on my desk about alternative gear type. We are working with that proponent to make sure he comes up with an idea to line fish or do something other than gill netting, so that there is still a commercial industry here.

We are progressing and dealing with proponents in the Northern Territory to convert from gill netting to a different type of fishing on their own application. We have not changed any rules in relation to commercial netting or fishing, but we are working with the industry to get it right.

We will set up an advisory body. I understand that the makeup of that body has been done, and they will meet in the next month or so. We want to get this right. We are working on two things: how to phase out gillnets and meet our commitment; and working with proponents to transfer to different types of gear, if they see fit. How they will do it is a matter for them, but we are here to support them through that transition.

This is about getting the balance right and ensuring we give everyone an exit, if they choose, with dignity. They can use alternative gear. Our department is working with those proponents. We are working with a proponent to use line fishing rather than gill netting. We want to get it right. I assure Territorians that we will meet our commitment to phase out gill netting within this term.

Vocational Education and Training

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

Our government is focused on rebuilding the Territory's economy and creating real opportunities to improve the quality of life for all Territorians. Not every young person will choose to pursue university after completing Year 12, and many are looking for practical and hands-on pathways into the workforce.

Can you please update the Assembly on how our government is supporting young Territorians by expanding access to vocational education and training and the steps being taken to boost participation in skills training across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina has a young family. He wants a bright future for when they go to a school and embark on a great career pathway in the Territory, no matter what they choose. The Chief Minister recently launched our new economic strategy, which aims to rebuild our economy. It lays out specific priority areas, actions and annual targets. Priority 2 of the economic strategy is building a bigger, better workforce. Our government is committed to supporting and upskilling Territorians, and we value vocational education and training (VET) as a tertiary pathway.

Today I attended the high achievers' lunch at Darwin High School with the Member for Fannie Bay. Although the 59 students were extremely high achievers with their ATARs, many of them had done a cert III as well, which was interesting. They chose both pathways. It does not have to be one or the other; they have done them together.

We recently opened the Trades Training Centre at the CDU Casuarina campus. The new facility will significantly increase the training capacity at CDU TAFE, enabling us to meet growing demand for a skilled and agile workforce. It will play a crucial role in addressing construction industry shortages.

As a previous tradie, I know that we need more tradies. It is a great pathway to a lifelong job. You can travel the world, do many things and earn as much money as people who go to uni. Ask the Member for Barkly; he is always going on about that.

The timing of the facility aligns perfectly with our government's HomeGrown Territory Grant, which we spoke about yesterday. There is $50,000 for first homebuyers to build or purchase a new home.

I give a shout-out to all the builders. We spoke about AKJ Services working on the development in the new suburb of Asche. We have great builders across the Territory. My son is an apprentice working for a great builder in Katherine. They all contribute to our economy, and the first homeowner scheme benefits local businesses. We want to encourage that in the Territory.

In addition to the Casuarina campus facility, we announced that a new trades training centre will be established in Katherine; we are working through where that will be. The centres provide vital support for a range of traditional trades, including automotive …

Madam SPEAKER: Your time has expired, minister.

Electricity Tariff Subsidy – Local Government

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY referred to TREASURER

From 1 July 2026 you are removing the electricity tariff subsidy from every local government council across the Territory, which will see massive hikes in their power bills. Have you bothered to engage with the local government sector about these power price hikes or sought advice on the impact it will have on Territory households, given that councils will be forced to either cut services or pass the cost on to their ratepayers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I can see why the previous Labor government failed Territorians so badly. We are talking about the electricity rates, but the Mining minister does not deal with that. I might pass the question …

Mr Young: A point of order, Madam Speaker! He is the minister for Energy …

Madam SPEAKER: You do not have the call, Member for Daly. Would you like to say something? What point of order?

Mr YOUNG: Standing Order 110; relevance. I was saying that it is relevant to his portfolio. He is the minister for Energy, so he should be able to answer the question instead of handballing it.

Madam SPEAKER: It is the minister's call whether the question is appropriate or he wants to hand it to another minister.

Mr MALEY: I can see why the previous Labor government failed Territorians. Those opposite cannot get something as simple as who controls electricity and Power and Water. I feel sorry for Territorians who suffered the last nine years. This is a classic example of how stupid they are.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; I find those words disorderly. He has referred to us as …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. The minister did not call you stupid; he referred to the Labor Party as stupid. I think we have all decided that general, mildly offensive slurs at political parties are more acceptable than slurring someone individually. In the scheme of things, it is offensive but not offensive.

Mr MALEY: I will pass to the Treasurer to answer that question.

Mr YAN: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Chief Minister is right; pricing tariffs do not sit with the minister for Energy. Funnily enough, they sit with the Treasurer as the shareholding minister. Go figure; it shows how much those on the other side know.

On 1 July 2025 the regulated tariffs under the Electricity and Water Supply and Sewerage Services Pricing Orders increased by 3% for residential users. That was under our government. The previous government increased them by 3.9% in 2024–25.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr YAN: The Territory's electricity tariffs are among the lowest in the country at 3% indexation. That is lower than the increase in the underlying cost of electricity and is why the CSO is increasing.

We had to reform the Electricity Pricing Order; otherwise, the CSO would have kept increasing. As a government we provide subsidies for electricity to households and businesses by the CSO. Without the CSO, on average, Darwin households would pay nearly 50% more for electricity. The government increased funding for the electricity CSO by about $51.5m due to the increasing costs of generation. That way, we keep our residential prices at some of the lowest in the country.

High-use business and government users, which includes councils, will pay the cost of generation. That is reflective of the amount of power that they use with any other large commercial customer across the Territory. We spoke to councils and advised them that the prices will be increasing. We did not impose this straightaway because most councils had already worked out their rates budgets. Rather than slap them with this, we spoke to the councils and advised them that their tariffs will be increasing in line with the cost of generation. We have done the responsible thing and engaged with stakeholders to advise them that their power will be going up, reflective of cost of generation. Those large users will pay cost of generation.

Bayview – Rezoning

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

On 28 August 2025 you notified me that you have made a decision to rezone lots 7433 and 5988 in Bayview to a new specific use zone. Can you advise the Assembly of the reasons for this decision? Can you explain how this rezoning will help to bring certainty for Bayview residents on the future of that suburb?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim is a fierce advocate for his electorate.

In October 2023 developers lodged a concurrent application to rezone two parcels of land and subdivide that land to facilitate a residential subdivision for a future house and two-storey townhouse development. For those not aware of the planning jargon, a concurrent application comprises a planning scheme amendment proposal, rezoning and a development proposal in a single application.

The concurrent application was subject to public exhibition in 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act 1999*. This gives the public and stakeholders a chance to lodge their submissions. The development facilitated by the application is consistent with the surrounding area and enables the final stage of Bayview to occur.

The Development Consent Authority (DCA) conducted two hearings regarding this proposal, including one in which it deferred a decision to seek further information on the subdivision requirements under the Northern Territory Planning Scheme 2020. In response to the Development Consent Authority's request, the developers amended the application in April 2025—listening to the community's concerns—from traditional Northern Territory Planning Scheme zones, such as low density residential and low-medium density residential, to a specific use zone. In essence, this specific use zone aims to facilitate development consistent with the low density residential and low-medium density residential zones, which typically include single dwellings and two-storey townhouse developments.

The DCA held a second hearing on 23 May 2025 to consider the matter. At this hearing it was determined that, should the minister approve the Planning Scheme amendment proposal, the DCA would likely proceed to approve the associated development proposal, an 18-lot residential subdivision—once again, delivering for Territorians and getting development happening.

As per standard processes, I advised that the Planning Scheme amendment proposal was approved on 26 August 2025 because I was satisfied that the amendment supported the purpose and objectives of the Act in the following ways:

- It provided a mechanism to enable the completion of the Bayview residential development in a style and format consistent with earlier stages of the suburb.

- It ensured that the strategic planning reflects the needs and aspirations of the community, guiding the development of future growth areas, as identified in the Darwin Inner Suburbs Area Plan.

- It had merit in establishing a site-specific planning framework to support the development of housing within an identified future development area.

The DCA made its decision on 10 September 2025, which facilitates the conclusion of the concurrent application, and the residential subdivision proposed in the concurrent application would complete the residential subdivision of Bayview.

Domestic Violence Prevention – Roadmap

J DAVIS to MINISTER for PREVENTION of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Earlier you were asked when the DV roadmap will be made public. The Chief Minister said on radio yesterday that you could answer that question. Can you tell Territorians what date the DV roadmap will be made public?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, a massive amount of work is being done by the Department of Children and Families and the section specifically addressing the scourge that is domestic violence; consultation across the sector; and ensuring we get the strategy right—which flows on from the last three years of the domestic violence prevention framework—so that it is, without question, focused on results, not how many heads they count and programs run. That is a lot of work to do, and we have almost completed it. The team is finalising everything they need to ensure resources actually show where people can go for assistance and what our expectations are with non-government organisations receiving large amounts of money to deliver services. Up until now, it has been hard to see how we are measuring outcomes on the ground.

We have been talking to organisations working alongside the team from the Department of Children and Families to see what they need, where the gaps are, where they can do things differently, how we can adjust their agreements to be more flexible for the needs of the community and how they can respond when things are not going well in various spaces in the community.

I commend the work being done by the department team because this resource will be valuable to the community, be meaningful and will give clear information on where to go for help. Most importantly, it tells the story that prevention of domestic violence is an issue for each of us; it is not for government to fix or for those organisations …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. What date will the roadmap be made public?

Ms CAHILL: That work will be completed and rolled out in a timely fashion, then people will have resources that are meaningful and enable them to take on the responsibility in our community for selling the message about what we need to do to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in our community. Every person will have the opportunity to be part of the fight against this terrible scourge.

Systemic Racism Audits

Mr GUYULA to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yesterday I asked a question that you did not understand; it was not a question about the racism review within Police. On page 33 of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Implementation Plan, one action is to review 10 NT Government agencies to identify systemic racism.

I understand that the DLI review was completed. Will the report be made public? Which other agencies will be reviewed for systemic racism?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Mulka for clarifying that question from yesterday. I went into quite a bit of detail about it because I thought he was referring to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. I took him through that yesterday in detail.

In relation to the reviews the member is talking about, Labor made a heap of promises to do a bunch of racism reviews across agencies. It said how urgent that was …

Ms Uibo: As part of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Ms BOOTHBY: Labor sat on that for three years. It did not do those reviews.

I appreciate the question. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement includes a section to see if there was any systemic racism. We stood up all that work by Leanne Liddle under Police for the anti-racism strategy. All that work is happening. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement goes for another three years, so we continue to do that. It also includes things like more Commissioners for Oaths across Aboriginal communities, alternatives to custody and Community Courts, which include sentences for that type of arena. All that work continues.

We have been in government for just under 14 months and have delivered our election commitments in spades, including reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. A lot of work had to be done in the first 12 months. We will continue that work, including in the courts, Corrections …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the Member for Mulka clearly asked the Attorney-General, will the report be made public about the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, and when will the next department be chosen for the review?

Ms BOOTHBY: I know that the Leader of the Opposition does not like to listen to answers, but the Member for Mulka asked me the question …

Ms Uibo: Why don't you answer him? Show him some respect.

Ms BOOTHBY: I am answering that; I have a minute and five seconds to go.

Ms Uibo: She is not answering it.

Madam SPEAKER: You are on a warning, Opposition Leader. Stop the interjections, and have some respect.

Ms BOOTHBY: Before I was interrupted, I was talking about the work of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and the work we have done in the last 14 months.

As Attorney-General, that sits in my purview. I have been visiting communities that have those mechanisms in place to see how they work. There is an evaluation piece, which is part of the whole Aboriginal Justice Agreement, underway to make sure that what is being done is working. I look forward to that coming to my office so I can look at it. It will have all the aspects of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

Local Business – Economic Growth

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

The Northern Territory's economy was going backwards under the previous Labor government, with budget blowouts and reckless spending. Since coming to government, the CLP members have had a clear goal of rebuilding the economy, creating new and exciting opportunities for all Territorians, including the hundreds of small, medium and large businesses in the Fannie Bay electorate that know our CLP government has their backs.

Can you inform the Assembly of the work being done to help local businesses grow and encourage local and international investment? How are these approaches creating economic results across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know how important small business is to the Member for Fannie Bay's electorate. Of Territory businesses, 96% are small businesses. Fannie Bay is a good example of the vibrancy of the small business community. Her advocacy for them is fierce, and I thank her for that. She is to be commended for the support she is giving them on an day-to-day basis.

Under eight years of the previous Labor government, the Territory economy was going backwards at an alarming rate. There were budget blowouts and reckless spending by those opposite that left our economy struggling and our budget in total tatters. It is not how you run a family budget, and it is not how you spend taxpayer monies. Spending money you do not have is an economic strategy that can only end one way, and that is in tears. In the case of the Territory, after eight long years of Labor, that is what happened: a $12bn deficit and an economy in serious decline.

Thankfully, Labor has been relegated to the other side of the House, and under the Finocchiaro CLP government, the Territory economy is the fastest-growing economy in the country. We were ranked number one for economic growth at 10.2% by the CommSec State of the States report. Under our government commercial construction is up by 5.5%, and housing finance is up by 30.1%. How amazing is that? Our government is backing small businesses; it is a critical platform for our government. The increase in the payroll tax-free threshold gave them room to breathe and opportunity to grow, think big and create jobs and pathways for more Territorians.

Then there is our proximity to Southeast Asia. We have opened the door that was slammed shut by the previous Labor government almost a decade ago. In just one year I have made delegations to Singapore, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Malaysia and Japan, where we have been welcomed back with open arms. Investment and trade opportunities for Territory businesses, large and small, are flowing as we work to reclaim the Territory's position as Australia's gateway to Asia.

We made a commitment to rebuild the Territory's economy, and that is what our government is doing. There is more to do, and we remain laser-focused on our goal of making the Territory the best place to do business. There is no question that under the Finocchiaro CLP government the Territory's economic future is bright.

Crocodile Industry

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

The Finocchiaro CLP government has made clear its commitment to action, certainty and security across the Territory, including for our world-class agriculture and primary industries. The Northern Territory's crocodile industry is not only iconic but also a major economic contributor for regional jobs and investment.

Can you update the Assembly on the findings of the recent review into the economic value of the Northern Territory's crocodile industry and outline how the government is supporting this important industry to grow sustainably and strengthen its role in the Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Drysdale knows how important economic development in the Northern Territory is. Whether it is in the north or the south of the Territory or in the Member for Drysdale's electorate, we need to grow our economy, jobs and the population in the Northern Territory.

The Finocchiaro CLP government remains laser-focused on action, certainty and security for Territorians. As part of that commitment, we are backing the Northern Territory's well-renowned crocodile industry to create regional jobs and remain a global leader in saltwater crocodile products. Crocodiles are not just an iconic part of the Northern Territory; they power our economy as well.

The new report estimates that the crocodile industry will contribute approximately $151m in 2025, supporting more than 300 jobs across the Northern Territory. The review into the economic value of the Northern Territory crocodile industry was developed with the Crocodile Farmers Association of the Northern Territory and undertaken by Ernst & Young—two great organisations that bring out quality work. It outlines the potential growth scenarios that will see the industry's contribution rise to between $176m and $243m by 2035. That shows us that this industry will move forward and grow.

The crocodile industry is world-renowned for its quality, research partnerships and responsible farming practices. It creates regional opportunities through Aboriginal partnerships in egg harvesting, habitat conservation and wildlife monitoring. Crocodile Farmers Association Chairman Mick Burns said that the review confirms the strength of the sector, its potential growth and its benefit to the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory crocodile industry has evolved into a globally recognised, responsible industry demonstrating world's best practice in sustainable farming. The report identified new opportunities through

market diversification, investment and innovation branding. It includes expanding to emerging markets in Asia and growing the domestic demand for crocodile products.

Following the release of the report, our government affirms its commitment to growing the long-term sustainability of the industry because it brings us jobs—300 jobs. Unlike the previous Labor government, which did not seem to care about jobs, this government supports industries that grow the Northern Territory economy and offer jobs.

Censure of the Deputy Chief Minister – Not Accepted

K McNAMARA to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 67, I move that the Assembly censures the Deputy Chief Minister for his ongoing aggressive and threatening behaviour in this Chamber, primarily to the women on the crossbench.

Parliament is a workplace, and every member has the right to feel safe and to be safe in carrying out their duties. No member should come to work expecting to be bullied. As elected representatives we are expected to hold ourselves to the highest standard of conduct. The Deputy Chief Minister's behaviour is unparliamentary and fundamentally unacceptable.

This motion further notes that the Deputy Chief Minister's pattern of bullying behaviour creates a hostile work environment and has broader implications beyond this Chamber. It sets a dangerous precedent for acceptable workplace behaviour across the Territory. Violence against women begins with disrespect, intimidation and the normalisation of aggressive attitudes towards women. This Assembly cannot credibly advocate against violence and disrespect towards women while simultaneously tolerating such behaviour within our own ranks. No member of the CLP government can speak with integrity on matters of workplace safety, gender equality or respectful conduct while remaining silent on this matter.

I urge the Assembly to call on the Deputy Chief Minister to immediately cease this pattern of behaviour, offer a formal apology and commit to upholding the standard of conduct expected of all members, particularly those in leadership positions.

I stand with the full support of the crossbench and opposition for this censure motion, and I thank them for that. The threatening behaviour from the Deputy Chief Minister has been ongoing and growing, culminating in him last week inappropriately screaming accusations across the Chamber to the Member for Johnston. The standard you walk by is the standard you accept.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nightcliff, please pause. You have given notice of the motion. I now have to ask if the government accepts.

K McNAMARA: I was under the impression that I had time to speak to …

Madam SPEAKER: No. You present the motion and then the government indicates whether it accepts. Leader of Government Business, does the government accept the censure motion?

Mr EDGINGTON: Madam Speaker, no.

The motion contains a range of allegations, and that is all they are—unsubstantiated allegations. The behaviour of every member in this Chamber is governed under the Speaker's authority in accordance with the standing orders. None of the issues outlined in this motion have been brought to the attention of the Speaker at any time during Assembly sittings. These are clearly unsubstantiated, being put forward without being raised through a normal process of standing orders to substantiate this behaviour. This is nothing more than baseless allegations with no evidence to support it.

We do not accept the censure motion.

Madam SPEAKER: The censure motion is not accepted. We will proceed with Question Time.

National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob Funding

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for MAJOR EVENTS

The National Indigenous Music Awards in Darwin and Desert Mob in beautiful Alice Springs are nationally significant events that draw visitors to the Territory each year and showcase our cultural excellence on the national stage. Can you confirm whether the National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob have had a reduction in funding?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Gwoja because I love to speak about a good major event.

Our government backs major events. It is exactly why we have brought forward—which we will debate next month—legislation which allows us to grow our tourism and major events industries by merging the two together. We can have those two powerhouses come together and get more bang for buck.

Under Labor, tourism was unfortunately hobbling along, often going backwards, with fewer visitors coming to the Territory. Even though we had the amazing Major Events Company bringing big-ticket items to the Territory and attracting people, there were many avenues where it was just working in a silo on its own. We needed a visitor and destination economy, including all sorts of things like events. That is why I am bringing together those two powerhouse teams.

Member for Gwoja, that will allow us to give certainty to all the organisations that do amazing events and festivals. We did the event funding release last week. We had events like the Thai festival, which is a longstanding, amazing festival in Darwin. The Barunga Festival was on there. There was a number of festivals. I cannot remember all of them, and I do not have the list in front of me.

The Aboriginal music awards is a fantastic event. I have been to those awards; it is a great event. The awards can apply for event funding as well. My understanding is that it does. It is something we have had for a long time. I look forward to seeing it continue that process.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I respect the minister's reply, but it was a direct question. Can the minister confirm whether there has been a funding reduction for the National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob?

Madam SPEAKER: Please continue, minister. You have plenty of time.

Ms BOOTHBY: I thought I was finished, but I will quickly wrap up by saying that those two festivals and awards ceremonies are great events. They can apply for event funding. It is a program that continues. I look forward to seeing that continue.

National Indigenous Music Awards and Desert Mob Funding – Supplementary Question

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for MAJOR EVENTS

Can you confirm that your government is committed to doing everything it can to keep the National Indigenous Music Awards in Darwin so that we do not lose an amazing event that celebrates First Nations excellence, culture and music to the east coast?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, our record speaks for itself. In the last 14 months, we have brought amazing events to the Territory. You only have to look at the international cricket, which the CLP brought back after 18 or 19 long years. We are committed to ensuring that we have events in the Northern Territory that drive visitors here, not just for one event but to stay longer. Look at the AFL Masters; those people stayed here for nine whole days. They played a couple of games of footy and had a great time, but they also ate at our restaurants, drank in our pubs and went on tours.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was specifically about the National Indigenous Music Awards.

Madam SPEAKER: It was.

Ms BOOTHBY: The Leader of the Opposition keeps interrupting, trying to help everyone on her side. They can do their job themselves, Leader of the Opposition.

I have just said that our track record speaks for itself. We will try to bring all the amazing events to the Northern Territory.

NT Health – Commonwealth Funding

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for HEALTH

Residents in my electorate rightly expect access to quality well-funded health services like the Royal Darwin Hospital emergency department and the other hospital services that support them when they face illness or need healthcare. Recently I have heard commentary about the health funding that the Northern Territory receives. I am concerned that, despite the excellent work of our healthcare professionals, our NT Health services are under pressure and facing increasing demand. What is the funding Commonwealth funding situation for Health? Are we receiving our fair share? What is being done to address these issues?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the member is regularly engaging with me about these issues and has been a tireless advocate for her community. I can inform her and the members of this Assembly that it is true that the Territory health system is underfunded by the Australian Government. I reflected on this the other day, and it may have been the case that we have been underfunded since self-government.

In a place where there is a greater need, a population with higher rates of illness and where we have rates of kidney disease and third-world illness at a rate which is, frankly, a national crisis, we receive the lowest level of Commonwealth health funding in Australia. It seems to have never been ventilated or properly highlighted by the Members for Arnhem and Gwoja under the former Labor government. I have heard nothing from the Members for Daly, Arafura or Nightcliff about this issue.

The Northern Territory receives only 31.9% Commonwealth contribution rate for our public hospital services. This is woefully inadequate and is well below the national average of funding of about 37.5% that other states and territories receive. The result of our low funding is a recurrent annual shortfall of approximately $200m which, if properly provided by Canberra, would go a long way to addressing the structural funding deficit faced by NT Health every year.

NT Health also steps in to pay for and deliver services every year to the tune of approximately $186m for health services that are the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. These services include areas such as aged care, primary healthcare in remote communities and aeromedical retrieval services. All up, that is a shortfall of $386m per annum, which we cannot allow. This CLP government will be relentless in holding Canberra to account so that the Commonwealth steps up, delivers on the needs of NT residents and properly funds our health services.

The Northern Territory deserves nothing less. It is high time that we heard those opposite pointing out where the shortfall in health funding is; we have heard crickets from them. This has been going on for years, and it is high time they got on board and the Member for Solomon and started advocating for more funding for the Northern Territory.

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

MOTION
Economic Value of Regions

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move that the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly recognises the importance of the Northern Territory's regions and their role in developing the Territory economy and recognises and supports their plans for economic growth.

The Territory may be small in population, but it is spread across a vast expanse. Each of our regions has its own unique features and characteristics as well as challenges and opportunities. While the majority of our population resides in the major cities of Darwin and Palmerston, the Territory's economic opportunities do not stop there. It is critical that we invest in our regions to ensure the economic growth they deserve in regard to jobs, business opportunities and the Territorians who live there.

I brought this motion to the House to highlight just how important each region is to the collective economic, social and cultural success of the entire Territory. We are the sum of our parts, and we need to do all we can to hold up, support, advocate for and invest in each of those parts. Unfortunately, the CLP does not seem to get it. It effectively withdrew services and investment from many of our communities.

Funding for regional and remote roads has been drastically cut by the CLP government. We have spoken about that many times in this House not just because it affects the many electorates that we represent in opposition but because it impacts the economy for the whole of the Territory when there is no work to connect road networks.

All we get from the CLP government is, 'We cannot afford it', which is pretty much is code for, 'It is not a priority'. More and more we are seeing that CLP members do not want to do anything because they are afraid of the hard work. Our Labor opposition team will continue to argue that you cannot afford not to invest in economic enabling infrastructure, but that is not the strategy of the CLP government, as we all know well into the 14 months of its leadership.

Regional economic growth plans—a huge volume of work that provided clear economic directions for each region—completely disappeared from the Northern Territory. Presumably that means that the government has slashed these growth plans. So much work by dedicated public servants, local government representatives, industry representatives and community representatives went into developing those plans, and it was all cast aside by the CLP government that replaced them with nothing. It is a clear demonstration of the CLP's disregard and lack of planning and vision for our regions.

Yesterday we heard that the Territory Coordinator—the Chief Minister's big ticket, the saviour for all things economic in the Northern Territory and the centrepiece for the economic initiatives of the CLP government—is yet to consider a single new project or designate a major project.

Every time you see CLP members at one of their many photoshoots wearing a hard hat, it is to spruik a project that started under Labor. Whenever the CLP puts out a press release claiming credit for progress on a private project, it was greenlit by the former Labor government. They have nothing, to date, to attract private investment. There is not a single private investment project that the CLP can claim that it greenlit. It has been confirmed by the Chief Minister and the Treasurer, and I am sure it hurts them to admit it, but it is the truth. This is the sign of a small, mean and immature government.

We talk about Verdant Minerals' Ammaroo Phosphate Project—which is in the Member for Barkly's electorate—the Beetaloo, the return of goldmining to Tennant Creek and the Wildman agricultural hub; well done, CLP, for celebrating the continuation of these projects that started under Labor. You have done nothing yourselves.

This is the icing on the cake for how immature and desperate they are to stay relevant when they have nothing to show for it; they are now trying to take credit for the Albanese Labor government's partnership with the US President for an additional $100m to the Arafura Nolans rare earths project. This project is pivotal to the historic agreement signed by the Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and President Donald Trump of the USA earlier this week that will bolster the resilience and security of Australia and the US.

The Territory is a key player in this agreement. We are massive winners from it, but the CLP government trying to own this project is rich even for that lot. I guess that is what happens when you do not have your own economic vision for the Territory, with nothing to show for it 14 months in.

As we have seen with the State Square art gallery just behind Parliament House and the art gallery in Alice Springs, the government is more interested in stripping our regions of economy-boosting projects than doing the hard work. The CLP government does not seem to get that strategic public investment stimulates private investment and unlocks economic potential across the Territory. It might not be keen to stand up for our regions, but we sure will be.

The Big Rivers region, where I live, has great diversity and enormous potential. It is home to agriculture, tourism, Defence, energy, mining and construction. Strategically located as a freight and logistics hub in the Territory, it has economic value of around $4.8bn. One in five of the country's mangoes comes from the Big Rivers region, as does most of the 40% of the Territory's beef exports. It is home to more than 1,000 local businesses and much-loved tourism hotspots.

RAAF Base Tindal in the great Arnhem electorate is undergoing a $1.1bn Defence upgrade. The redevelopment has had a positive impact for local Territory businesses within and outside of the Big Rivers region. Unfortunately, under the CLP government, we are not seeing any vision for Katherine or the Big Rivers region. What has happened to the Katherine logistics and agribusiness hub? The CLP has not uttered a word about it.

Mrs Hersey: Under eight years of you, zero things happened.

Ms UIBO: Zero things have happened under the Member for Katherine, who is a minister of the CLP government and does not have a single economic vision for her own electorate.

If you asked key businesspeople around Katherine and the Territory, they would say that the Katherine logistics and agribusiness hub is a critical economic development project for the region to help establish new industries and businesses and to improve existing transport links. Let us see if the CLP government contributes any type of update on this project today. I think it is in the CLP's too-hard basket. I would love to be proven wrong on that.

The CLP scrapped road projects like the next stage of the Katherine East roadworks. It scrapped the Phelp River crossing and much-needed barge landing upgrades in the most remote parts of the Northern Territory, which puts food security for many Territorians at risk. The only real investment going into the Big Rivers region under the CLP is the upgrade to the Buntine Highway, which is an existing joint investment with the federal government, so it is not something they could get out of, thankfully.

Part of my electorate covers the East Arnhem region. It is an enormously important economic region for the Northern Territory going through a significant transition, with the closure of Rio Tinto on the horizon. Nhulunbuy and the surrounding communities have a strong vision for a post-mining future. They have been planning for this for a long time. The community is focused on the opportunities in industries such as education, research, health, aged care, fisheries, transport, logistics, Defence, forestry and land management.

The people of the region say that they want to keep everything that is good about Nhulunbuy the way it is and continue to improve it through collaborative government and non-government work. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any interest from the CLP government.

Our Labor government provided initial funding for the Gove Peninsula transition work to help with land tenure, master planning, economic development planning, town governance planning and more. That was a funding bucket of $2.1m over three years. The CLP has provided no further funding to support this transition, which is a huge gap. The CLP will be the government that drops the ball on the Gove Peninsula transition. The successful transition of the Gove Peninsula needs to be a significant priority of any government. We urge the CLP to do the work.

Residents in Nhulunbuy and the East Arnhem region are anxious to hear from the government about its level of commitment, but they are not getting anything at this point other than being talked about. The failure to commit or invest will have long-term implications for economic growth, jobs, security for the future and community amenity in the East Arnhem region. The CLP government needs to step up to ensure certainty for investors, businesses and, most of all, for those residents who live in the East Arnhem region.

Earlier this week on the radio the Chief Minister said that she was doing her bit, but it is not clear what that bit is. Here is what we would like to see the government focused on:

- ensuring housing stock for investors, businesses and residents to access now and into the future is secured

- upgrading road and transport infrastructure, such as sealing and upgrading the Central Arnhem Road to support freight, tourism and industry reliability

- ensuring reliable air service to enhance tourism and business access while also providing residents with lifestyle connectivity and service access to other areas within or outside the Northern Territory

- enhancing the Gove Port infrastructure to support future fisheries and aquaculture and potential Defence investment.

That is the blueprint that has come from the region itself, so we would like to hear what the government is doing in those areas.

The growth sectors, as identified in the now-scrapped regional economic development plan, include tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, resources, mining, conservation, eco management, construction and civil works. It is important to put all of this on the record because Labor is concerned that the CLP is poised to turn its back on Nhulunbuy and the East Arnhem community. It has said little about a plan for the East Arnhem region. It is critical that the CLP steps up to ensure the future of this critical part of the Territory is secure and certain.

There are concerns about the CLP's lack of commitment to Jabiru and Kakadu and the entire West Arnhem region. I spoke about this last week, but I will put it on the record again. The CLP has ripped away money without warning, consultation or even an afterthought or visit to communities.

The CLP is dropping the ball on the Jabiru transition program, which aims to support its transformation from a mining town to an ecologically sustainable tourism town. Without warning or consultation, the CLP government cut $20m from the Bininj resource centre. That is intended to be a central part of the new tourism offering in the Jabiru township as the heart of Kakadu.

The transition project is about building a sustainable economy and future for the entire Jabiru and Kakadu region. This has been on the books for many years and was supported by the former federal Coalition government. It will support existing local businesses to flourish, allow new businesses to grow and expand and support long-term jobs for locals and visitors to the region.

The CLP's lacklustre support for this project is deeply concerning. It perhaps comes from a time before this government when previous Treasurer, Dave Tollner, wrote to the federal government and basically offered to cut Jabiru out and back to the Commonwealth—a shameful act.

I am not sure if the CLP has even bothered to go to Jabiru and places like Gunbalanya in the West Arnhem region to talk about what the transition project means for the economic future of that region, the community and the residents. It is further evidence of the lack of care the CLP government has for Territorians and businesses beyond Darwin and Palmerston, which seems to be its only focus.

There has not been a lot happening from the CLP, but luckily for the great Barkly region, the CLP continues support for projects starting to come to fruition that started under Labor. There are big projects that have not come to fruition which the Labor opposition will continue to support. SunCable, the world's largest solar farm, will originate in Elliott and deliver significant jobs across the Barkly region. The Beetaloo will deliver jobs and economic benefit to the Barkly region. Large-scale goldmining is back in full swing for the first time in 20 years at Nobles Nob. At that important project, one in three workers is from the Barkly and one in six jobs are filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

It is a good start, but there is more opportunity for the locals and businesses of Barkly. Because of its proximity to these major projects, Tennant Creek is poised to become a major mining town once again and a minerals services centre. It is exciting times for the Barkly. There is vast economic opportunity for that region as a result of these projects, which were enabled by the former Labor government.

That will come with challenges. The CLP government will need to ensure that local people take on the responsibility and challenges of being trained for the job opportunities these projects will provide now and into the future. There needs to be adequate housing and services to support the growth of economic activity in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region. We have not heard any plans for this. Training and upskilling locals and boosting housing supply with social and affordable housing are big areas that the CLP missed.

Based on the legislation that went through yesterday, social and affordable housing does not seem to be on the CLP government's radar for any of the regions. We hope this will be added to its to-do list.

I turn to Aboriginal businesses and the opportunity for economic growth in the Northern Territory. We did not get a chance to speak about this last week, but the contribution of our Aboriginal businesses to the economy is huge. There are approximately 1,400 Aboriginal businesses in the Northern Territory, contributing $3bn to the economy. The Member for Barkly knows this as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs because he was at the launch of the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network's Aboriginal Economic Development Forum and heard that statistic from the businesses. I am pleased to repeat that statistic because it is a great story for the Territory. Unfortunately, the Member for Barkly is the only one of the 17-member CLP government who is supporting Aboriginal businesses and talking about the regions.

Aboriginal businesses are doing incredible things across the Northern Territory and deserve to be recognised for their contribution, despite the odds any business faces in taking the risk to start, grow and continue when it expands. This year the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN) hosted the Blak Business Awards, which is a testament to Aboriginal businesses' dedication, resilience and keen business acumen. Significant achievements were celebrated across the Northern Territory, with 130 businesses nominated for an award.

I congratulate the following businesses that were recognised on the evening:

- Blak Business of the Year—North East Arnhem Land Aboriginal Corporation
- Blak Female Business Owner of the Year—Kattie Risk, Billirrawarra Truck & Training
- Blak Male Business Owner of the Year—Shaun Tatipata, Deadly Vision Centre
- Young Blak Entrepreneur of the Year—Brandon Rusca, Bulmeka Contracting
- Blak Impact Creator of the Year—Stedmans Constructions & Engineering
- Blak Construction and/or Resources Business of the Year—AKJ Services
- Blak Sole Trader/Microbusiness of the Year—Pink Apple Hair
- Blak Creative Business of the Year—Babbarra Women's Centre
- Blak Tourism Business of the Year—Bawaka Yolngu Experience
- Blak Consultancy Services Business of the Year—Dumbarra Consultancy Services
- Blak Community Controlled Organisation of the Year—Galiwinku Women's Space
- Blak Start-up Business of the Year—Mick's Cranes Australia
- Blak Growth Business of the Year—Wurrba
- Best Ally Business of the Year—Power and Water Corporation.

Yesterday the Chief Minister said that her government was in no rush to invest in our economy or develop economic plans for our Territory regions. That is obvious because the government has not done anything in the last 14 months to show that it supports the regions.

We call on the CLP government to get on with the work, not recreate more work and reinvent the wheel but look at the economic regional development plans and support, assist and guide our regions, as is expected of a government. Work with the federal Labor government, instead of using a combative approach, so that every community across the Northern Territory that sits outside Darwin and Palmerston can benefit from the collaboration that we expect from any government, regardless of what political sphere it comes from. We expect any government to support the Northern Territory.

We call on the CLP government to respond to our regions—not just to pay lip service—and truly talk about the plans for economic growth. They need a blueprint or a roadmap. So far, one of the biggest areas of concern under this government has been to remove economic growth plans for each of our regions.

In our six Northern Territory regions—I have spoken about three or four of them as examples—it has been exciting to see new projects grow which had been greenlit under the Labor government and thankfully not scrapped. Either the CLP government tries to claim credit for them, or it has no way to back out of them because they are already tied to an agreement with the federal government.

We want growth in and continued support for our regions. That is where investment in road networks and the enabling infrastructure is so important. Madam Speaker, I do not need to tell you. You are from Central Australia; you know how much it means to have a project taken away or put into a community, town or region.

The CLP has continually scrapped projects and investment in developments which could open tourism, agriculture and aquaculture business opportunities and more businesses on country, like the amazing businesses that received Blak Business Awards. There were many other nominations for those categories. We want to see more support for opportunities to grow the Territory's economy.

The government has spoken about reducing red tape. There are not many examples of how it has done that other than the Motor Vehicle Registry, which always comes up. If there was more sincere work guiding that—the government does not have to start from scratch. If a CLP member contributes today, particularly a minister, I would be appreciative if they could explain why the regional plans have been removed from government websites. They are guiding plans across regions. They are not political Labor plans; they were the work of the public service, which is apolitical. There was work from community members who invested as much of their own personal time as businesspeople who committed their professional time to developing those plans for the regions.

We do not see the support for the regions that was provided under the former Labor government. We had a decentralised model to place more decision-making in our regions so that people did not have to rely just on the main centres of Darwin and Alice Springs to guide the whole of the Northern Territory. It provided an opportunity for the wheels to come off for each of the regions in regard to decision-making, problem-solving and deciding how to spend money locally through that decentralised model. I understand that slowly but surely each of our regions has been centralised again. I urge the government to take this time, 14 months in, to reflect on why that has happened.

I have not heard anything positive about that happening. Many community members in my electorate have asked, 'Why don't we do it this way anymore? Why don't the public servants meet with us anymore?' That is because decision-making has been taken away; it has been eroded since the CLP came to government.

The CLP government is focused on Darwin and Palmerston, which is a huge mistake. Each of our regions will slowly become the victim of an ignorant, naive and arrogant government that does not see that other places have not been developed and supported as much as Darwin and Palmerston. It can take years to restore funding and rebuild government trust when it is broken. We experienced this in 2016, and unfortunately Territorians have been experiencing it more in the last 14 months. Whether it is a shared position of CLP members or everyone is too frightened and have been told that they cannot speak up for the regions, time will tell. Now there is no advocacy or economic vision for the regions.

Last week the people of Alice Springs and Central Australia were gutted when the CLP pulled the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art gallery project because of a weird stoush when the Treasurer, an Alice Springs resident, decided to jump the gun and pull some trick with the federal government. Now everyone in Alice Springs and Central Australia loses out.

The government did not even have the guts to face the people of Alice Springs and Central Australia about the decision. As far as I am aware, nearly all the 17 CLP members were in Alice Springs that weekend, getting great photos and talking to people, but there was not a single word about what the government would do. It is cowardly and gutless.

Mrs Hersey: We spoke to a lot of people.

Ms UIBO: Maybe the Member for Katherine told people that the government would cut the gallery. I would love to hear her say that she fronted up, eyeballed the people of Alice Springs and said, 'We are taking this great economic opportunity from Alice Springs. We do not support the people of Central Australia.' I would love to hear her recite any conversations she had because she said that the government members talked to lots of people. Did they talk to people about pulling the art gallery? I doubt it, because this government is cowardly and cannot speak up.

The government does not support the regions. If government members want to, it would be quietly done because their leader will not allow it. Let us see whether there is a change in leadership. Maybe we will see a change of vision from the CLP.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I heard the Leader of the Opposition trying to rewrite history. The Territory Labor Party is living in denial. I spoke for Alice Springs for eight long years. What did we get from Territory Labor? There was an upgrade to the women's shelter, which I must say was much needed, but that was about all we got. I digress.

The CLP government supports the motion's principle that we recognise the importance of the Northern Territory's regions, which we already do, but we do not support Labor's idea of what a plan for regional economic growth should look like.

The truth is that when Labor was in government it could not deliver a letter, let alone a project, proving it was incompetent regarding matters of regional economic development. Instead, Labor left regional Territorians with a $1.4bn budget black hole, net debt accelerated towards its arbitrary $15bn debt ceiling and a litany of projects for our regions uncosted, uncashed and under-developed. Here we are talking about the importance of the Northern Territory's regions and their role in developing the Territory economy, when Labor turned its back on the regions and the economy during its eight long years of government.

I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition was trying to do when she was talking about the Katherine logistics hub. We are fully committed to delivering that. I speak to the federal minister about this on a regular basis. There is a reason we cannot deliver the Katherine logistics hub. The Leader of the Opposition lives in Katherine, so I thought she might know this, but maybe it slipped her mind when she failed to mention it.

There are ongoing negotiations with custodians in the Katherine region where the hub is to be located. There has not been a resolution on the roles of the people and who will get royalties from that logistics hub. That is why the Katherine logistics hub has not gone ahead, which may have slipped the Leader of the Opposition's mind.

We are doing a lot of work at Gove to make sure that community has a life once Rio Tinto leaves in a few years. This is something that the previous Labor government failed to do.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition's contribution about Jabiru. Labor's idea of supporting those regions and helping them develop was to throw money at them and build stuff. That does not build a thriving community.

There are fundamentals for communities that need to be met. There needs to be business, industry and growth to support all those other things to create a thriving and growing community. You cannot just walk in, throw some cash in, build things and hope for the best. That was Labor's mantra. No wonder we are seeing issues.

Only the CLP will deliver regional growth. I am glad to have this chance to talk about supporting the economic development of our regions. This is an issue raised in this House that, for once, actually matters to Territorians.

This CLP government has a strong record on recognising the importance of our regions and supporting them to play a central role in the Territory's economy. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, the CLP has a plan to support our regions.

We will support economic growth; it is called our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy. Maybe the Leader of the Opposition failed to check that one out as well. This is the strategy we unveiled at the start of this year to make the Territory the best place to do business. We have not stopped talking about it since.

The opposition members clearly have their fingers in their ears, because the regions are embedded in our strategy as the bedrock of our Territory economy, particularly in key industries of energy, Defence, agriculture, mining and tourism. In fact, the CLP is so supportive of economic growth in our regions that our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy could be renamed the 'rebuilding the regions strategy'. Labor still could not tell the difference.

Those opposite are not serious about building our regions and are clearly not serious about regional economic development if they have not bothered to read the government's strategy. This strategy works to create jobs, bring people to the Territory and increase our capacity to service the regions through an economy that can support improved goods and service delivery.

Through our strategic priorities of unlocking regional growth and connecting the Territory, the CLP Finocchiaro government is building infrastructure that will build our regions and their industries.

The Territory is vast, but the CLP's Rebuilding the Economy Strategy and the work our government is doing is lifting up all the regions, whether in the Top End, the Big Rivers region, East Arnhem, Barkly or my home of Central Australia. The CLP will continue to lift these communities through our five priority sectors.

Where are our mines located? I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that we are focused only on Darwin and Palmerston; I do not know of many mines in Darwin and Palmerston. They are definitely not in Parap, Nightcliff or Gray, sadly; they are in our regions. Yesterday the Minister for Mining and Energy announced that PC Gold floated on the ASX, and its capital raising was oversubscribed. That is great news for the Territory.

This investment is money flowing into the Territory and into communities like Pine Creek, which has a population of just over 300 people. This investment also benefits the broader Big Rivers region and Katherine through direct job creation at the mine and indirect work for local suppliers and contractors. Under our government we also saw the opening of Nobles Nob goldmine, the first new mine in Tennant Creek for decades.

In the Barkly, more mining projects are set to follow, with Verdant Minerals' Ammaroo Phosphate Project recently receiving mining authorisation approval, with FID expected in early 2027. I am working closely with Verdant Minerals to make sure it can get that project off the ground and start delivering for the Territory and the country.

Mr Edgington: The land of opportunity.

Mr YAN: Exactly, Member for Barkly. The land of opportunity is Central Australia and the Barkly—I will include us in that as well.

This government is working to make Tennant Creek the mining centre of the Territory, and investors are clambering to be part of the CLP's new mining age. The first people to benefit as more mines open around regional centres are regional Territorians. The most recent data shows that mining employs over 6,000 Territorians and is expected to contribute $346m in royalties to our own-source revenue, putting money back into the community for workers to be supported through stronger services.

I look forward to seeing our mining industry continue to grow under the leadership of the Minister for Mining and Energy and the royalties that regional communities will benefit from. Under the CLP, there has clearly been real movement in the mining sector. The Beetaloo will be an economic game-changer like we have never seen before. Under our government, investors' interest is growing fast, with international recognition that the Beetaloo is one of the world's largest under-developed gas resources—the next big thing—in the heart of our Territory's regions.

Under the CLP, the Beetaloo is moving forward fast, but under Labor they could not even bring themselves to say the word 'gas'. It makes me question whether they even care about regional economic development or if they just want a score on the board. The CLP government is helping drive that success by progressing the Territory Energy Link, which is critical enabling infrastructure that will unlock this massive economic opportunity. As the Beetaloo grows, unless the energy link is there, this will become a stranded asset, and we will not let that happen.

The Territory Energy Link will be a multi-user, multi-asset corridor connecting the Beetaloo Sub-basin to the Middle Arm Precinct. It is designed to carry gas, fibreoptic cable, water, hydrogen and other essential services, laying the foundation for long-term growth. This is not short-sighted, as the opposition says. This is long-term future growth and planning. Connecting the Beetaloo to local and international markets will spark major investment, create jobs and secure reliable energy for Territorians.

The development link to the Beetaloo is expected to generate tens of billions of dollars in economic activity and thousands of jobs over the coming decades, creating economic value for our regions at a scale that we have not seen before. The project is now in its feasibility stage through to late 2026, with an ambitious goal of delivering a development-ready corridor by 2028.

Yesterday, the project team delivered a keynote at the Australian Pipelines and Gas Association conference, and it is fair to say that the Beetaloo and Territory Energy Link are firmly in the national spotlight, drawing strong attention from private investors eager to be a part of the Territory's energy future. That is because these proponents have confidence in our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy and the CLP government's ability to roll this strategy out. We are actually doing it, not just talking. The government is doing the groundwork by securing early approvals, de-risking the project and making sure the corridor is investment ready so that private capital can flow into our regions and opportunity can follow.

Our other pillar is tourism. The Territory's regions are clearly seen by international visitors as an economic destination of choice. In addition to our mining industry, our tourism industry is also renowned all over the

world thanks to Kakadu, which Deloitte estimates has a social value of over $10bn. Kakadu National Park is a major economic contributor, supporting over 1,280 regional jobs—many of those for Indigenous people—and contributing $136m to the Australian economy through tourism activity each year. Another internationally recognised landmark is Uluru, the heart of Australia, which is located at Yulara. This is why tourism is one of the key industries under the CLP's Rebuilding the Economy Strategy.

The Territory's abundant natural capital is an asset to local communities that they can use to become self-sufficient and forge their own economic futures. There are massive opportunities for Aboriginal economic development through our tourism industry and, with tourism numbers increasing, this government continues to support tourism through infrastructure and industry development.

We cannot talk about economic development in our regions without speaking about agriculture. The NT's cattle industry makes up 45% of the Territory's land mass. If that is not an industry which is supporting economic development in the regions, I do not know what is. Recent figures show that 274,000 head of cattle were exported from the Northern Territory in 2024, compared with 184,000 in 2023. That is an increase of 89,000 cattle departing from Darwin Port. The cattle industry is valued at $1.2bn. They are staggering numbers, and they form part of the backbone of our regions.

In the north we are proudly Asia's food bowl as Australia's largest producer of mangoes. The Northern Territory generates $128m and accounts for more than 50% of national production, with over four million trays annually. They are huge numbers, and we continue to support the mango industry.

Our government is helping the industry ramp up to its full potential through growing the Territory's agricultural footprint. Projects include the Gunn Point emerging agribusiness precinct, Ord River expansion, Wildman agricultural development and the Larrimah agricultural development. The CLP is also championing the industries that are unique to the Territory—such as crocodile farming, which we spoke about earlier—which tie into other industries under our strategy such as tourism.

No matter where you live, our government is working in partnership with regional communities to boost economic development, resilience and permanent jobs that people in the bush can count on. We used to hear the mantra from the previous Labor government about jobs, jobs, jobs. Not many jobs were created in the region, but there was plenty of debt.

The obvious strength of these industries in our regions is that they are true job creators for their regional towns. The construction industry, which is crucial to delivering the infrastructure that industries rely on to operate, employs almost 11,000 Territorians. Many of these support the foundation needed for economic development.

Projects such as the $4bn remote housing package are a great example of this. Though those opposite like to harp on about it being their special initiative, when it began rolling out only in the seven dying weeks of their government. In the last 15 months, for most of which the CLP has been in government, we have delivered 984 bedrooms—a massive contribution to job creation in remote Aboriginal communities—and engaged Aboriginal business enterprises with a pipeline of projects so that they can continue to operate for years to come.

The truth hurts, and it surely hurts a bit more for Labor members as they watch the CLP government do everything they failed to do for regional and remote communities. The opposition does not like to hear it, but only this government has the seriousness to deliver such life-changing programs for our regions. It seems Labor was not serious about doing it.

Our other strategic priority is connecting the Territory. The CLP knows that we cannot unlock regional growth without connecting our regions, which will then enable us to connect the Territory to the wider world. Under our Rebuilding the Economy strategy, we are laser-focused on developing the trade, export and logistics capabilities we need to become Australia's gateway to Asia and outpace the nation on economic growth. Minister Cahill is doing exceptional work in that space, engaging with our close neighbours in Asia. We reintroduced a minister for Asian Relations, which Labor took away.

The CLP government is developing regional logistics hubs across the Territory. The proposed network of regional hubs is backed by the $440m equity commitment from the Australian Government. I will continue to work closely with the federal government to unlock this opportunity for regional investment.

These strategic hubs will help the Territory meet growing demand for freight and logistics capacity driven by existing and emerging projects. The network will include the major hubs, rail sidings, spurs and supporting

road infrastructure required to underpin the estimated $38bn in proposed resource developments across our regions. Initial business cases have been developed and identified in the regions, with three key hub locations in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

In addition, work is being done to consider subregional hubs, providing further economic value for our regions. As mineral resources begin to develop in other areas in our regions, smaller hubs will be required to get those resources on the rail to Darwin, the port and off to the world. This kind of development will drive long-term regional jobs, strengthen our supply chains and play a major role in rebuilding the Territory's economy and supporting our regions.

Through our first budget the CLP is making significant investment in roads and enabling infrastructure, all of which are—you guessed it—in the regions. I spoke last week extensively about the importance of investing in Territory roads in the regions. The CLP Finocchiaro government's first budget has more than 1,100 kilometres of new bitumen on the program so that, as our economy ramps up, industry and local businesses in the regions can hit the road running. The 2025–26 budget includes $2bn in key upgrades for transport, infrastructure and priority sections of the road network access, being the Tanami Road, Central Arnhem Road, Carpentaria Highway, Outback Way, Sandover Highway, Buntine and Buchanan Highways, Mereenie Loop, Santa Teresa Road, Arnhem Highway, Kakadu roads, Tiwi Island roads and national network highway upgrades.

Every kilometre sealed is another kilometre of opportunity under the CLP. We are delivering these opportunities to more Territorians than ever before. These extensive infrastructure investments across all our regions will play an important part in rebuilding our economy and creating economic value for our regions for many years to come.

One thing our regions have in common is that they count construction as a major industry. Our investment in roads and enabling infrastructure creates economic value for these communities through the local businesses involved in construction and the local businesses that utilise that infrastructure post completion.

Water infrastructure is crucial to supporting regional economic development. We all know that water is critical for Territorians in all regions to support liveability and to underpin our economic development. In partnership with the Australian Government, this CLP government is delivering on the Darwin regional water supply program, which includes the Manton Dam return to service and the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project.

The AROWS project is one of the Territory's main strategic infrastructure projects. It is rebuilding our economy by securing reliable, long-term water supply for the Darwin region and supporting future growth across the Top End. The project will harvest and store water in a natural basin near the Adelaide River, with modelling showing that it could deliver up to 60 gigalitres each year, almost doubling Darwin's reliable water supply. That means more certainty for households and industry and future developments for the greater Darwin and Palmerston region.

AROWS is a game-changer for the Territory's economy. With secure water comes opportunity, opening the door for new housing, expanded agriculture, industrial growth and emergency industries that depend on reliable water access. The scale of work involved will also create local jobs, boost Territory businesses and attract private investment, delivering long-term benefits that will flow through the economy for many decades.

Construction for the Manton Dam return to service is due for completion in 2026. These two projects combined will support 1,000 direct and indirect jobs during the peak of construction and will lay the foundations for a stronger, more resilient and diversified Northern Territory economy, ensuring water security for our growing communities and powering the Territory's next generation of industry.

Central Australia, my home, contributes an estimated $2.9bn to the Northern Territory's gross state product through mining, tourism, agriculture and Defence. Under the CLP's strategy, we are keeping the heart of Australia pumping with key investments and incentives. We are bringing the world to Central Australia through our vibrant tourism, and we are exporting the minerals, rare earths and energy that Australia and the rest of the world need. I am excited about the economic future of Central Australia, with progress being made at the Arafura Resources rare earths project.

There was the filming and release of the film *Kangaroo*; I am yet to see it, but my close colleague, the Member for Braitling, saw it with his family and cannot speak highly enough about it. With large, visible economic projects, this government is showing Central Australia at its best to international audiences and future travellers and investors.

I will touch further on Nolans rare earths. This week we saw the signing of the rare earths and minerals deal between Australia and the US. I have been working with Arafura Resources since about 2014 when they first started looking at developing the mine near Aileron. It is great to see that project coming close to final investment decision so that work can commence, because that will benefit our regions and the people of the bush.

I am working closely with Arafura. Recently on a trip to Canberra I put forward to the federal Treasurer the benefits of Nolans rare earths and what it can do for Australia overall. I am glad to see that an agreement has been struck between Australia and the US. It cements this project and what it means for Central Australia, the Northern Territory, Australia and our allies.

We are also moving to make Alice Springs more liveable and provide a strong economic foundation in our year of action, certainty and security. A number of projects are coming up in Alice Springs. The Stuart Highway and Schwarz Crescent intersection upgrade was on the papers under Labor for years, and it did not push to get this done. The Member for Braitling, the Speaker and I live in Alice Springs, and we know the importance of that intersection. We have pushed to get that done, which Labor failed to do.

We are delivering the Gillen Oval multi-sport precinct. Work will commence on that next year; the planning is done. The new lighting for Jim McConville Oval is well underway. Planning has been done for the new multicultural centre, and work will commence on its construction next year. Our government is also investing $11m in headworks, infrastructure and subdivision to support the development of residential land at Kilgariff so that more people can come to Alice Springs and contribute to our region.

As a local member I am excited to see these projects getting off the ground in Central Australia. We have been waiting for far too long. Labor underinvested in our region for eight long years.

Tourism continues to be front and centre for Central Australia because of the amazing visitor experience we offer on the ground. We have allocated $4.8m towards a new Tourism Central Australia headquarters and visitor information centre. We continue to support major events drawing in crowds from around the world, such as the Parrtjima Festival in Light, which was developed and instigated by the CLP back in the day; the Field of Light installation at Uluru, which I am proud to say we played a large part in developing and installing when I was working with Corrections; and the Desert Mob festival.

The CLP has invested $5.5m for a new multi-day walking track in the stunning Watarrka National Park—home to Kings Canyon—and will continue to invest in local amenities to attract visitors to Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, Uluru and the Western MacDonnell Ranges.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr YAN: Tourism is a fundamental pillar of our Northern Territory economy and a significant industry throughout our regions. In 2024–25 the sector accounted for 3.7% of our gross domestic product and 5.1% of total employment, with about 8,000 jobs.

When we talk about our regions we cannot forget Defence. Although Larrakeyah is in town and Robbo barracks is on the edge of Palmerston, the rest of the Defence sector is in our regions. We saw the announcement today of a huge investment in a firing range and the investments at Tindal.

Defence effectively accounts for about 10.2% of the Northern Territory's economy. This supports job creation, population growth and a more diversified local industry due to several redevelopments and construction activities. It is great to see this work happening in the regions. I have never heard anyone from Labor speak about it, but we are working closely with Defence and specifically with the federal government because we understand the need for Defence in the Northern Territory. We understand our strategic location for the defence of this country.

To Territorians outside Darwin who want to know that the government is supporting economic development of the regions they call home, I make abundantly clear that the CLP government inherited chaos. Years of Labor neglect, waste and poor planning left Territorians burdened with debt and stalled growth. With an economy in shambles, it was clear that Labor had no plan to deliver for the Territory. That can be seen by the $1.4bn black hole, all the unfunded liabilities and ongoing projects that were not costed into the future, which we found when we came to government. Labor would continue racking up debt on the credit card.

In our first year in government the CLP has turned around the Territory's economy, leading the nation in annual economic growth at 10.2%. We achieved this by taking a hard look at the budget and the infrastructure program to make sure Territorians finally get value for money and support for industries that would then support Territorians.

We brought discipline back. We are investing in projects that can be delivered and add real value for Territorians. Importantly, they create the environment for investors in our key industries to want to do business in the Northern Territory.

The CLP is focused on playing to the Territory's natural strengths—resources, Defence industries, agriculture and tourism. These sectors are key to driving jobs, attracting new capital and growing a stronger and more self-reliant economy. Our government has acted on our mandate to reduce red tape and is ensuring that the Territory is viewed as the place that business wants to invest in and people want to call home.

Our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy does all of that and more. As the CLP continues to rebuild our economy, help create thousands of jobs and make the Territory the best place to do business, we continue to rebuild the regions and create economic value for people across the Territory.

The CLP does not just recognise the role our regions play in the developing the Territory economy; under our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy the regions take centrestage because our government recognises their value and potential. They have been left out of the discussion for far too long under the previous Labor government. The CLP government will continue backing people in the regions because we understand that they are the heart of growing the economy into the future.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge the Treasurer's contribution.

Member for Katherine, you might not want to leave because there will be no quorum. I will call a quorum, Mr Deputy Speaker. The government does to want to hear the opposition.

Mr Mackay: Where is the opposition?

Mr PAECH: Right here; you are looking at it.

Mr Mackay: Who?

Mr PAECH: Have a look; open your eyes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, the Clerk informs me there are 10 members anyway. We can continue.

Mr PAECH: That is good. I note that the Member for Katherine ran back in to maintain the quorum. I respect you …

Mrs Hersey: I did not run back in. You managed to get your friends in. It is your GBD.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 20; there are continued interjections from the Members for Goyder and Katherine. The Member for Gwoja has not even got on his …

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Daly, sit down. Member for Gwoja, you have been talking directly to the Member for Katherine. Please direct your comments through the Chair. There is a quorum.

Mr PAECH: I acknowledge the Member for Katherine for coming back to maintain the quorum while her government numbers are low because they have all walked out.

Regional economic development is important. I represent the largest electorate in the Northern Territory, with over 457,000 square kilometres from the South Australia/Northern Territory border, the entire length of the NT/WA border, up to just shy of the Victoria River. I represent many amazing communities, particularly Amanbidji, Daguragu, Kalkarindji, Bulla Camp, Timber Creek and Kaltukatjara and Mutitjulu communities on the South Australia and NT border.

I acknowledge that the Northern Territory's regions are the powerhouses of the Northern Territory. Much of the Territory's economic activity produced in larger regional towns and cities comes from the remote regions. Our regions are rich in culture, innovation and opportunity. The Territory's future success depends on full economic inclusion and participation of Aboriginal Territorians. We cannot leave the bush behind. We must invest in the bush to build the Territory's future, creating jobs, supporting enterprise and building stronger, safer and more sustainable communities. Every community deserves the opportunity to grow, lead and share in the prosperity of our economy to make real progress. That means walking together to ensure no-one is left behind.

We all interpret things differently and come from a different perspective, but I see regional economic development as a means of helping communities outside of major cities and regional towns. It is about remote and regional communities growing their local economies in a way that creates jobs, strengthens industries and improves the quality of life for residents. In simple terms, it is about making sure that every part of the Territory, not just the Top End, gets a chance to thrive. We need to talk about it more because it is more than just policy; we need to talk about how it works in practice. Regional economic development is the process of building the economy and resilience of regional and remote areas through investment in infrastructure, local business support, training and community-led growth.

I will steal the Member for Fong Lim's line that regional economic development is great, but we need population growth to stimulate and grow the economy. The more people we have, the more opportunity there is to grow the workforce and return investment to local communities. Regional economic development is not just about building physical infrastructure projects; it is about building local communities socially and economically so that people relocate to regional places.

We want Central Australia to grow. The Treasurer says that he is a proud Central Australian and talks about the Rebuilding the Economy Strategy he has released. Not once does the strategy talk about Central Australia and growing its economy. That is disappointing. As a fellow Central Australian, I want to hear the government's plans for Central Australia, because it is important.

The government talks about long-term projects from before this government and even some from before that. Projects take time to go through the due diligence, checks and balances, consultations and approvals. This government has not given us a single new project for Central Australia. The government lacks economic vision for our region.

The Chief Minister and the Treasurer woke up one morning and said, 'We will play a game with the Commonwealth Government and throw threats around, reducing the funding for the national Aboriginal art gallery of Australia'. You do not just wake up one morning and say, 'I will do this'. Cabinet needs to be fiscally responsible and talk about what that means and where the money is going. This was an opportunity for the Treasurer to say, 'We will not do that project'—that is fine; that is the government's prerogative—'But this is where we will invest that into the local economy'.

We have not heard about a single project from the Treasurer, who is from Alice Springs, about where that money will go. I will be the first to put up my hand and say that should go to things like the Araluen Arts Centre refurbishment and renovation, moving the Museum of Central Australia to the Desert Park or a new exhibition at Strehlow. People will say that they are not economic, but they are; they create jobs in the local economy for our hardworking tradies, who do a brilliant job. They create the opportunity for our creative community to come together, see what those installations will look like and how they will work. That is economic opportunity and prosperity for Central Australia.

We still have not heard from the Treasurer about what that money will go towards. We do not even have a commitment from this government that money will stay in Central Australia. This is an opportunity for the government to send a message that Central Australia will not be left behind and for the Treasurer to include Central Australia in the Rebuilding the Economy Strategy.

When the CLP was in opposition, the Member for Barkly—the Barkly bull—was always getting selfies at the Berrimah Line. It appears that the Member for Barkly has forgotten those photos and the hard line about defending the regions. Since he crossed the Berrimah Line and is sitting in that flash office in a comfy chair, he has forgotten the good people of Barkly and their need for investment. Tennant Creek is not mentioned in the Rebuilding the Economy Strategy either. We need to make sure that investment happens below the Berrimah Line because a good chunk of the Territory's population lives below it.

Every region—from Alice Springs to Yuendumu, Yirrkala, Kalkarindji, Kintore and Ali Curung—deserves incredible investment that will grow projects and communities to make sure they are thriving. The regions of

the Northern Territory, despite what you will hear, are not just places for extraction of minerals. I acknowledge that is an important industry, but these regions are also home to the Territory's most amazing artists and vibrant and successful tourism operators you will ever meet.

Health, education, housing, aged care, disability and essential services drive economic opportunities in the regions. It is an opportunity for us to continue to do more work in that space. Central Australia contributes over $2.9bn into the Territory's economy.

I acknowledge that my region—the great Gwoja electorate—is home to many economic generators. We are home to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, one of the most prestigious places in the Northern Territory, telling important stories of First Nations Aboriginal Territorians and their *tjukurpa*, inviting tourists to come in, see it and celebrate it. It is a jointly managed national park, with Aboriginal people working side by side with Parks Australia to deliver amazing opportunities. The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation have run it for some time, making sure we can grow jobs for local people in that community.

I am proud to be going this weekend to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Uluru being handed back to the rightful owners, the Anangu people, of the region. Let us remember that 40 years ago the CLP government was protesting the handback of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, saying that it belonged to everyone. I look forward to seeing the CLP members at Uluru-Kata Tjuta to support Aboriginal tourism and economic development on their land.

My electorate is also home to the Granites—the Newmont Tanami goldmine—one of Australia's largest goldmines. I have been many times and met with the local community and the hardworking organisations that work there. I acknowledge that this is an important project growing the Territory's economy. They have a commitment with the Yapa Crew, which has gone from two people years ago to a large workforce of *yapa* (Aboriginal people) from Yuendumu community. It is growing, and it is important to see that work moving forward.

There are projects across the Territory that we need to invest in. The Tourism minister speaks about the need to change the way we do things in the Northern Territory. I am not disagreeing with her; I agree with things she says sometimes, which might come as a surprise to people. I do not think we should have an Aboriginal Tourism Committee; the main tourism committee should be heavily dominated by Aboriginal Territorians because many tourists come here for an Aboriginal experience. Great organisations have stepped up and are starting tourism businesses; they may have been in for a couple of years and made changes during COVID days, but they are continuing important work.

We need to look at how we better engage with remote communities. A lot of the Northern Territory is Aboriginal land, as it should be. It should be celebrated and respected. Aboriginal land does not mean there is no opportunity for economic development; it means we need to sit down in the dirt, build relationships and listen to people firsthand about economic opportunities and projects people want to see on their country.

When I travel the Northern Territory, I spend a lot of time—like the Members for Mulka, Daly, Arnhem, Arafura and Barkly—covering lots of kilometres and hearing from Territorians left, right and centre. We often hear people from remote communities talking about economic development opportunities; there are many.

Central Australia is not a barren, hot wasteland; it is a place of opportunity and an oasis in the desert. There are many good things happening there. Agriculture is an incredible industry that contributes significantly to the Northern Territory. Central Australia produces about one-third of Australia's melons. Watermelons, honeydews and rockmelons are produced in the Member for Barkly's electorate. We all love a good melon. It is an amazing opportunity in that community. Look at the work being done by Centrefarm, which is trialling growing onions and garlic in the Northern Territory. I think that claim will be for the Member for Barkly as well.

In the southern region over the years people have been growing lucerne and sorghum, which is food for cattle, horses and livestock. If you travel up the road you will get to my family's property in Ti Tree where they grow mangoes. They have produced mangoes and grapes for many years. Back in the day they had a mango wine—I think it was called 'mango madness'—and it was not too bad.

An exciting economic opportunity that we all need to get on board with is growing the bush foods industry. The Northern Territory is home to this country's strongest superfoods. Solanum centrale, which is also known as the bush tomato or desert raisin, is a superfood. People pay significant money per kilogram for the bush tomato because it is high in antioxidants. There is a real opportunity to work with the Territory and federal governments on growing the Territory's bush foods industry so that it can be a project on a national and international scale to keep up with the demand to bring that food to market.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the amazing work of great Central Australians like Rayleen Brown, who has been a champion for bush foods for decades, and Dr Josie Douglas and Dr Fiona Davis, who worked on a bush foods project about growing the Territory's economy in that space.

These are all amazing industries that we can grow. We need to look at opportunities in our remote communities that are not being realised.

We travel. All the bush members—regardless of their political persuasion—get out and talk to people. Often, we see the opportunities that are ripe for the picking.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr PAECH: I will not be too long—famous last words.

Remote communities have a resource that is not seen as an important or valuable commodity—that is, wastewater. In our remote communities there are big sewerage ponds. We could be turning this greywater into recycled water, not necessarily for human consumption but as an agricultural resource to grow citrus and bush foods or to green remote communities to make life more liveable for our brothers and sisters in the bush.

If we can recycle water to green ovals and plant trees, that is an investment for the local community. Suddenly, it creates a workforce because we need groundsmen, nurseries and people running events in those local communities.

The water could be turned into a valuable commodity to grow things. Remote communities could be using that resource themselves or trading it to the local pastoralists nearby to use for watering paddocks, growing pastures and keeping the food green for people.

There are amazing opportunities, but the narrative is that the future of the Northern Territory's economic prosperity lies in the hands of Indigenous economic participation and co-development. We need to work together because the regions hold the success of all of us. When our regions thrive, so does our Territory. Our capital cities and towns flourish. The economy goes hand in hand. When people are lifted out of poverty and given the opportunity to have a rewarding, empowering and life-changing job, they suddenly start contributing more to their local community. They start spending more at the shop, buying whitegoods and furniture—all of these things. It is important.

During COVID there was this false narrative being peddled that an increase in social welfare meant an increase in alcohol consumption. That does not stack up because the data shows and staff from Outback Stores will tell you, 'No, we had a significant increase in fruit and vegetable sales and in whitegoods, with people buying fridges and washing machines'. When we provide economic development opportunities and jobs for people in the bush, we start to see our economy growing, shaping and delivering for everyone.

We continue to see investment in real jobs from the Commonwealth Government and Malarndirri McCarthy and Marion Scrymgour—both proud Central Australians. That is an initiative about real jobs, wages and conditions so that people living in the bush do not have to spend a life on welfare or CDP. That means real conditions like leave entitlements, sick leave and superannuation. People in the bush deserve all these things.

The government cut ranger program funding. When ranger programs first started, they were seen as a program to supplement and support community development. We can measure the economic value of that today and see that has provided meaningful employment for people, a reason for people to get up every morning and work for their communities. They can care for country and get a wage to support their families and their goals and aspirations.

We need to roll out more projects that create jobs in remote communities. It is not always just about infrastructure in communities; it is about job-creating projects for people to give them opportunities. It is also not about setting up projects from other regions, extracting something and taking it somewhere else.

Alice Springs has the opportunity to become the country's renewable energy recycler. What do we do with solar panels when they reach their end of life? Often we send them overseas. There are few companies in

Australia that do the disassembling and recycling. Imagine if we could create that industry in Central Australia and get people together to do that important work. This is what we need to see.

What are the top three economic drivers for Central Australia for the next three, five or 10 years by this government? We cannot be told that they will be existing projects. I am not claiming that those existing projects are solely ours, because some were there before the previous government was in. They had to go through that process.

We need a pipeline of projects, conceptions and economic matters to talk about so that we can make sure that Alice Springs does not dry up. Central Australia is amazing. The more economic opportunity we create in the bush, the more opportunity we give to our countrymen to stay in their communities.

I hear about my young nephews and nieces coming back from Cairns and Unity College in Murray Bridge when they have finished their Year 12, and most of them want to go back and work in their communities. It is about making sure that we create these economic opportunities for our young ones to work in their communities. An economic driver in a remote community is childcare. We should open more childcare centres in our communities. When I talk to my sisters, mums, aunties, grandmothers and wives—in a cultural sense—they all say, '*Japanangka*, I cannot work because I do not have anywhere to put my young one when I want to work at the shop'. Childcare centres also create jobs for people to be the caregiver of kids in remote communities while others work.

It is important to note that economic development is more than capital infrastructure and resources. Resources are a major part of the Territory's economy and will be for some time—everyone in this Chamber acknowledges that—but we need to see other investments as well. I want the government to commit to rolling out infrastructure and arts investments. The previous government invested in the Art Trails, involving significant capital infrastructure to upgrade community arts centres to encourage more local artists come to the centres. We have not seen a single initiative under this government that supports arts, other than maintaining the funding that is already there.

An economic driver is major events and festivals, which the government should get behind. Do not shift the National Indigenous Music Awards to the Community Benefit Fund and say that it is their responsibility. Do not tell them that they have to keep applying when they used to have a five-year funding agreement. Give them that so they can continue to advocate and bring people to the Territory. Support remote community events and festivals. Get behind events like the Gurindji Freedom Day Festival, Barunga and the events that unfold in the Mulka, Daly and Barkly electorates. These events are lifelines for regional and remote centres. Every time we have a major event or festival in a local, regional or remote community, the return on investment is huge. Families decide to visit one another, and people say, 'I have never been there; I will check out this amazing community', so communities get to showcase their place. We should be doing this.

The CLP should look at other major events that can be done in Alice Springs and whether we should bring back a big rodeo, a bushman's carnival or something else. That will bring thousands of people to Central Australia.

These ideas bring investment. No region should be left behind. We should have major events and festivals in every region and give people the lead-in time. The organisation and celebration means jobs.

When we showcase the Northern Territory and when every member of this parliament stops talking the Territory down, we grow the economy, because we sell the Territory. We tell people to come to the Territory and that the Territory is open for business, but we also tell people to have an amazing, lifechanging cultural experience with Aboriginal people.

Let's stop demonising Aboriginal people and start celebrating them and the opportunities they bring to the Territory's economy.

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Mr Deputy Speaker, as the Minister for People, Sport and Culture, this is an important discussion about the regions that my portfolios play a critical role in.

The regions are the backbone of the Northern Territory economy and the heart of our Territory lifestyle. I spoke yesterday regarding the three key pillars, and I will repeat them again: reduce crime; rebuild the economy; and restore the Territory lifestyle.

The 2025–26 infrastructure program demonstrates this government's clear commitment to regional development, with $247.3m allocated to construct and upgrade arts, recreation and park facilities. This investment grows to $270.6m when capital grants are included.

In Alice Springs we are backing infrastructure priorities with $168.7m for projects, including a multi-sports precinct in Gillen, repairs and re-establishment of ANZAC Oval, an upgraded visitor information centre, support for the Alice Springs Public Library and a new multicultural centre.

This includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art gallery of Australia. Work has to be done to reset following the news of ATSIAGA, and I am sure there will be more to say on this in the future.

My Department of People, Sport and Culture delivers and manages infrastructure in partnership with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, local governments, regional councils and other key stakeholders. The department's total capital budget for 2025–26 is $34.9m, which includes $13.4m in capital major works and $9.8m in capital grants.

I am proud to hold portfolios that expand across the whole of the Territory and impact the lives of all Territorians, whether that is our seniors, migrants, artists, athletes, veterans, members of the LGBTQIA+ community or Territorians living with a disability. I welcome the opportunity to outline how we are delivering for every region, ensuring every community can play its part in growing the Territory economy.

I turn to sport and active communities. I note that my department manages 50 facilities, from TIO Stadium to Araluen homestead. They know a lot about regional facilities. Earlier this year, along with the Member for Katherine, I was pleased to announce a $1m infrastructure investment to the Katherine Country Club to deliver a new all-weather, multipurpose facility which will support community connection and healthy, active lifestyles year-round. I am not sure that I have heard the Leader of the Opposition welcome this announcement, but I am sure she will join the Member from Katherine at some stage in enjoying this facility when it opens.

While the opposition might prefer the big, shiny Santa Claus projects, as the Chief Minister so aptly put it yesterday, this government is focused on projects that make a real difference to everyday Territorians in our regions. Many residents of regional and remote communities, including traditional owners and Aboriginal Territorians, want to see their communities prosper, create jobs and build economic resilience. That is exactly what our Restoring the Territory Lifestyle Strategy is about: delivering better infrastructure for an active, healthy Territory. It is delivering results.

We will establish, upgrade and improve sports and recreation facilities to increase participation by all ages and abilities. It would be remiss not to mention the $1m lighting investment at Norbuilt Oval. The Members for Nelson and Goyder are beyond excited for this Saturday night to watch the Crocs under lights for the first time. It is the same feeling that Central Australians had when they ran back onto Anzac Oval for the first time. The town rejoiced. That is impacting multiple sporting communities, including rugby league, rugby union and football—or soccer, for some.

Our government has committed to the Gillen Oval multi-sport precinct. It will feature multipurpose fields, new change rooms, spectator areas and car parking next to Centralian Middle School. That is in addition to the $1.4m upgrade for field lighting at the nearby Jim McConville Oval, enabling year-round participation.

While it is all good and well to create sporting facilities, they are no use if they are not used. That is why the CLP government introduced the Sport Voucher Scheme so many years ago, ensuring young Territorians can participate regardless of cost barriers. I am pleased to provide an update that 6,632 sport vouchers have been redeemed to date. In Darwin, vouchers totalled $381,269; in Palmerston, $161,500; in Alice Springs, $57,200; in Litchfield, $48,700; in Katherine, $10,300; and in Nhulunbuy, $4,000.

To pre-empt the inevitable question from the Member for Barkly, yes, Tennant Creek is included, with $430,564.82 allocated to the Barkly Regional Council to support local programs under the Active Regional and Remote Communities Program, which receives a $4.1m Territory-wide investment. This program funds councils across the Northern Territory to deliver inclusive, safe and community-driven recreation opportunities because participation builds health and the economy.

In the Multicultural Affairs portfolio, inclusive infrastructure also means spaces that bring people together. Creating inclusive and accessible public spaces for use by multicultural and community groups is a key strategic priority for our government.

A great example is our commitment to new multicultural centres in Katherine and Alice Springs. We are in the process of working with my department on current Northern Territory Government-owned assets in Katherine to assess our options for upgrades to include a multicultural centre, with $1.5m allocated in our budget. I hope I can say more soon.

A scope of requirement is being prepared for the design tender for a new multicultural facility in Alice Springs, which is a $5m investment from the CLP government. The Members for Namatjira and Braitling look forward to this project getting underway shortly.

There is also a commitment to fast-track the release of land for multicultural groups that want to build new cultural centres and places of worship. We made a commitment to invest $1m towards a new Multicultural Community Facilities Grant program. The program will provide support to multicultural community organisations to improve their existing facilities with a dollar-for-dollar co-contribution, capped at $50,000 per applicant. That is local investment creating local jobs and pride.

I turn my attention to Arts and Culture. I have spent time visiting art galleries, and I am making my way around the Territory. I look forward to visiting more communities to see this fantastic work. I spoke about the opening of Gapuwiyak and Katherine centres during the last sittings. In recent weeks I had the pleasure of visiting Injalak Arts and Crafts in Gunbalanya.

In support of the arts, this government has invested $7.93m in the 2025–26 Arts Grants Program and $30.45m to support upgrades and expansions to galleries and cultural centres across our regions. This includes arts venues and facilities investment to ensure that key arts venues remain affordable, accessible and professionally managed, enabling artistic development, cultural participation and creative enterprise.

These include $10m for the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre in Tennant Creek, where the upgrades are complete and we are waiting for the official opening ceremony; $2.843m for Mimi Aboriginal Arts and Craft in Katherine; $7.6m for the Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre, which officially opened in April 2025, and I attended the opening ceremony with the Member for Katherine; $1m for Injalak Arts and Crafts in Gunbalanya; $2.5m for the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala, where works are continuing; $2m from the Northern Territory Government and $8.5m from NIAA for Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts, which officially opened in August 2025, and I attended that ceremony; and tenders are under assessment for Maningrida Arts & Culture, which has been allocated $4.5m. Each of these projects represents jobs, training, tourism and cultural pride.

Through the Accessible Australia initiative, we are expanding the Changing Places program, delivering fully accessible facilities in national parks and at beaches and portable locations. This program, which is running to 2028, is 100% funded for eligible infrastructure. It is already attracting strong interest from councils and agencies. That is what inclusion looks like: removing barriers so that every Territorian can participate fully in community life. Removing barriers to participation to allow for community activity is also highlighted in our many programs for seniors and youth.

For development and economic growth, we need people to choose the Territory as their home. That is why it is important to look after our next generation of Territorians—our youths. Our Regional Youth Services Program includes funding for six regionally based coordinator positions in Alice Springs, Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and East Arnhem. We also invested $6.8m in 2024–25 for core after-hours services, regional youth activities and youth engagement grants.

Let us not forget our seniors. They play an enormous role in supporting families, caring for grandchildren, volunteering in community groups and keeping cultural traditions alive. This unpaid contribution underpins much of our economy and makes the NT such a strong, connected place. Investment, as defined by this motion, is clearly not just in built infrastructure; it is inherently investment in people.

To this end, the Northern Territory Concession Scheme provides concessions on a range of essential goods and services to help with living expenses. Essential goods and services you can receive a concession on include council rates and garbage services, electricity, water and sewerage charges, NT driver licence and vehicle registration renewals and spectacles. In 2024–25 the total scheme expenditure was $19.5m.

Our regional economies are strengthened by those who have served our country—our veterans. From Katherine to Alice, Tennant Creek and Palmerston, we are working with ex-service organisations and local councils to ensure that facilities meet the needs of veterans and their families, recognising their contribution to our community fabric.

I am still waiting for an update from the federal government on the Scott Palmer centre. It has been working with the DVA and one of the non-government organisations in Darwin. I am hoping to hear good news soon. This has been going on for many years.

The success of the Northern Territory economy depends on the strength of our regions. Whether it is arts, sport, multiculturalism, disability inclusion or veterans' support, these are not isolated programs. Together they form the social and economic infrastructure that keeps our Territory strong. While others may chase grand plans and photo ops, this government is getting on with the job, investing where it matters most—in people, communities and our regions. That is how we grow the Territory together.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, as the regional hub town of Nhulunbuy moves towards its mining end date, support is needed from the NT and federal governments for communities in the Gove region. I am aware that the township of Jabiru has also been through this transition and received support from all layers of government. Nhulunbuy is quite a bit bigger than Jabiru and a lot further from Darwin.

Nhulunbuy has become a regional hub of north-east Arnhem Land, with a large hospital, many services, an industrial centre and many businesses that service the region. The loss of the mining industry is significant, and it will be important for governments to provide ongoing support to ensure that the businesses that provide critical services for the region are maintained.

It is easy for the government to say that it is a mining town and ignore the issues experienced in the region, but it makes economic sense to support this regional hub to continue. Without Nhulunbuy, the pressure that would be added to Darwin hospital, businesses and services and the number of people having to travel to Darwin would significantly increase. Public housing in Darwin is already overcrowded, bringing significant problems. Many people come to Darwin and get stuck here for periods without transport home.

Nhulunbuy has historically been a balanda town, but today there are more Yolngu also living in town. Many balanda have come to Gove and lived for generations—grandparents, kids and grandkids all living in East Arnhem Land. A lot of people are adopted by Yolngu to become a family and have respect for language, culture and diversity. Many are the businesspeople, doctors, nurses, teachers, pilots, mechanics and tradespeople of the region. Many work with the services that support the CDP program, homeland programs and other support services. These people often call north-east Arnhem land home for many years, and they experience the hardship of living in a remote region, with the high cost of living, fuel prices and cost of flights.

Previously, I asked the Labor government to look at whether flight subsidies should be applied to remote and regional areas. The Queensland Government has this system in place for its remote residents. Through correspondence with the federal minister for Transport, Minister King, I understand that the Productivity Commission will soon begin an investigation into remote air travel and make recommendations to improve it. It is important that all levels of government are working on these regional issues.

I believe there are three to five years left before the closure of the mine, and many people who own houses and businesses and are invested in the region feel concerned. People have contacted my office, asking me what is happening; the answer is that I do not know. Just like everyone else, I have no certainty of the plans for Nhulunbuy. The Gove Peninsula Futures Reference Group has a good website.

This year there have been no meetings for the community to ask questions or obtain information. I have asked Rio Tinto and the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet to try to hold a meeting with the Gove community before the end of the year. I have raised concerns with these parties that the decisions and consultations about the transition of Nhulunbuy need to include all clans of the Gove Peninsula.

The majority of consultation happens with the two corporations that are connected to the Rirratjingu and Gumatj clans. Traditionally, the NLC said that these two clans are the TOs of the Gove Peninsula, but that has been long contested by other clans in the region. Currently, native title applications for the region are being submitted and heard. There are multiple parties to this application process. I hope these clans can work together to reach agreement about land ownership for the region. For this reason, it is important that all clans and traditional decision-making processes are included in decisions about the future of the region.

We assume that a new lease in the region will be with us for a long time. It is important that we do not lay an unstable foundation because it will create problems long into the future. I have raised these concerns over many years in briefings with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet and in meetings with Rio Tinto. Both sit on the Gove Peninsula Futures Reference Group. This group also consists of the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation and the Gumatj Corporation but should include other clan leaders from across the region who may want to participate.

Many clans do not have funded corporations and, for this reason, may not easily engage in the early negotiation process. Instead, it is important to seek out the clan leaders and ensure that they are part of the decision-making processes.

It is also important that we ensure there are no environmental legacy mine issues when Rio Tinto leaves. Community members have raised many concerns with me about this, and it is important that the government makes sure the mine is held to account. We must ensure a robust plan is in place. This was being discussed on ABC radio this morning. Dave Mitchell, who has lived in Gove for many decades, is pushing for the mine to train young people to take on environmental responsibility and rehabilitation. It is important that we look at the opportunities for young people in Gove and find employment and training pathways needed into the future.

Many people call Nhulunbuy home. It is a special place with a strong sense of community. It is a meeting place for many cultures. In July I attended a citizenship ceremony at the town hall. There were people from many cultures joining us to live on Yolngu country. We welcome people who come to our country with open hearts. Nhulunbuy is a place where kids can grow up in a bush environment. There are many sporting groups, including the golf club and football teams, and a strong arts community. It is not just a mining town; it is a Northern Territory community. We need strong support from the NT Government to ensure it has a sustainable future.

Aboriginal communities and homelands in my electorate also want to be part of developing the Territory through small businesses, enterprises and sharing our culture and knowledge. Yolngu are not against business development; we want to be part of it. Elders from our homelands have come to me to say that they want to start fishing, buffalo meat and tourism businesses, and there are many small businesses already.

Our community art centres are world-renowned. Our arts and music performers already contribute greatly to the NT community.

Our communities want to be part of providing services on country, such as healing and youth services. These services can operate cheaper on country instead of sending people to hub centres. We want to see our kids grow up on country with opportunities to benefit from our ownership of country. We need the government to recognise and support our plans for future development that will give our young people control of their country and financial independence in the future.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, our Finocchiaro government knows we cannot rebuild our economy without our regions and that a strong Territory economy is not worth building if it does not benefit our regions.

Our Rebuilding the Economy Strategy plays to our strengths. The latest CommSec report shows that the NT has the fastest-growing economy in the nation, ranked number one for economic growth at 10.2%, with construction increased by 5.5% and housing finance up by 30.1%.

On this side of the House, we back small business. As a previous small business owner, I know how important they are and how they support our economy. We increased the payroll tax-free threshold, which gives businesses room to breathe and opportunities to grow, think big and create more jobs.

We spoke of this when we extended the HomeGrown Territory Grants, with $50,000 offered for first homebuyers to build or purchase a new home. The Opposition Leader said that we do not care about social or affordable housing; in fact, there is a $50m Social Housing Accelerator Payment, which is funded by the Australian Government and is being delivered by the Northern Territory Government.

Construction of the next 24 homes across Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs is expected to start in October. I am pleased to say that eight of those houses are being built in the Big Rivers region. Five are being built on Bradshaw Crescent, one on Casuarina Street and two on Maluka Road. It is not only about private investment; it is also about social and affordable housing for low-income earners and people in need. It is important that we get the balance right.

It is a bit rich for the Opposition Leader—and her whole team—to suddenly decide that regions are important. The hypocrisy is not lost on me, as a regional member, or the good people of the Northern Territory who voted them out resoundingly at the last election. Just because the words flow out of the Opposition Leader's mouth does not mean that they are true.

When in opposition we spoke on the importance of the regions, as the seven of us then were mostly from the regions. That was four years ago. I was going back through my speeches, and in 2021 we had the same conversation about the importance of the regions. Not much happened under the previous government, but all of a sudden here we are.

Labor not only ran the Territory into the ground economically; it left us with a crime crisis we have worked hard at rebuilding with our reducing-crime package. Without reducing crime, we cannot have thriving communities. On this side of the House can walk and chew gum at the same time, as we have been doing.

I pick up on the crime stats: NT-wide house break-ins have decreased by 25%; commercial break-ins have decreased by 26%; total property offences are down by 77%; total assaults, including DV, are down by 5%; alcohol-related assaults are down by 17%; DV-related assaults are down by 1%; and robbery is down by 24%.

In Katherine house break-ins decreased by 9%, commercial break-ins are down by 35% and total property offences are down by 5%. I note that there has been an increase in assaults and DV-related assaults in the Katherine area, but the police and the broader team—including the Circuit Breaker team, Kalano and the public housing safety officers—do great work to keep our community safe through their regular evening patrols.

The Opposition Leader is a regional member. From listening to her, it is clear that she is about only doom and gloom. She did not care about the regions when in government, nor did any of those opposite, but all of a sudden, they had an epiphany and came to the realisation that regional Territorians contribute greatly to our economy.

The only positive in her contribution was about the work being done at RAAF Base Tindal, 15 minutes from Katherine. This is a $1.1bn federal investment providing smaller works for Territory-based companies, with many of these people living, shopping and renting in Katherine.

There is investment in remote work camps, including one in Katherine. There is investment in upgrades to the Stuart Highway. These Darwin-based companies are employing locals and supporting communities. It is part of a bigger investment in developing the north.

The CLP Finocchiaro government has serious credentials in backing the bush. This goes back to self-government in 1978, with parks and roads being delivered and strong support for our regions from members such as Mike Reed, the Member for Katherine; Tim Baldwin, the Member for Daly; Les MacFarlane in Mataranka as the Member for Elsey; Jim Robertson in Gillen; Ian Tuxworth in the Barkly; and Roger Vale in Stuart, which is now Gwoja. Since self-government we have had supportive members making sure that our regions always feel supported and are kept in focus.

I remind the Opposition Leader of her lack of support for the regions, including in her own electorate. The small town of Mataranka has been trying to get land released and developed for as long as I have been the Member for Katherine. Members of Roper Gulf Regional Council have come to me with concerns about the reliability of housing developments for staff, security and the growing town of Mataranka. The Mataranka Roadhouse has been in contact with the Member for Arnhem about the sewerage problems it has during the tourist season. The roadhouse owners must get a truck to empty the septic tanks almost daily because of these issues. They have heard crickets from the Member for Arnhem. Whilst the Opposition Leader has her epiphany and realises the importance of the regions, I remind her to speak to the people in her own electorate.

Mataranka has a thriving community, fantastic markets on Sunday mornings and great businesses. There are supportive businesses like Territory Manor, owned by Sharleen and Michael, who have managers moving in soon as they head down south. Businesses like Territory Manor have supported Mataranka School with its swimming program, which is one of the many education election commitments we have delivered.

It has been great to see the school increase its attendance rate under the guidance of Telka Zotz-Wilson. Telka has been at the school for many years and works in partnership with families and community. Through positive relationships with families, extra bus pickups and working with Aboriginal community police, the school's attendance rate increased by 13.5% from 54.2% to 67.7%.

Labor drove education off a cliff, with poor attendance rates, literacy and numeracy. It has been great to see the hard work of attendance officers, engagement officers, school counsellors, school-based police and ALOs to support attendance, which has stabilised at 71.7%.

Attendance went up in four of the six regions, and 68 schools recorded higher attendance than at this time last year. Mbunghara achieved an incredible 30% increase, which is to be applauded. If we do not get kids from homelands and all the smaller communities to school, it brings down the attendance rate. It is great to see that people in the remote and very remote regions are working extremely hard.

The economic value of the regions was stifled under the previous Labor government. Developments—such as the one that Jake Groves from Northern Renewables has been trying to get through in Katherine—were held up under Labor, as they did not see the significance of allowing young business owners like Jake to develop land, build and add considerably to our local Katherine and greater economic region.

Thanks to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, I have worked through many planned development opportunities to enable growth in my town. Bob Holt, another developer, has a development on Florina Road that has been stifled but, through working with the minister and the department, this development will come to fruition. There are many like that. There are people who wanted to develop for many years, whether it be changing their land from rural residential to being a business; those kinds of things were put to the previous government and were not successful. It has been great to see that many small and large businesses have been freed up. That all adds to the economic growth of Katherine.

Recently I was at Katherine High School where we opened the STEAM centre. I lobbied that to be built five years ago when I was elected as the Member for Katherine. There was no development in that school for over 40 years. Meanwhile, in Darwin—in the then Chief Minister's electorate—$37m was spent at Darwin Middle and High Schools. In the regions, not much money went into education.

It was great to open the STEAM centre a couple of weeks ago. M+J Builders did a fantastic job with that development and the renovation of the building. They worked with school students to do VET courses while they were building. It was great. They had a great working relationship with DLI and the school, and everyone was supportive of them. It is a great investment in our school community.

The Minister for Arts and the whole team was in Katherine for the Katherine Show in July, and we announced $1m for an all-weather structure over our bowls club. That will make such a difference to all the people who use that facility. They can have events, bowls nights and barefoot bowls year-round. Based on the number of times I see people using it now without an all-weather cover, it will be tenfold by the time that cover gets put up. I look forward to seeing that come to fruition.

We had an election commitment for the multicultural facility; I note that the minister spoke about that $1.5m facility. We have a vibrant multicultural community in Katherine who will have a facility where they can go and host their festivals. I know that in Darwin there are a lot of multicultural groups with their own buildings, but in Katherine they are always looking for somewhere to hold their festivities. The Red Cross has the Joy of Many Colours Multicultural Festival, and they hire out the Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre. It will be great to have festivals like that in their own building.

The Territory Energy Link is another big economic driver in our regions. The Territory Energy Link is a multi-user, multi-asset corridor which connects the Beetaloo Sub-basin to Middle Arm. It is designed to carry gas, fibre-optic cable, water, hydrogen and other essential services. That development is expected to generate tens of billions of dollars in economic activity and thousands of jobs over the coming decades. Some of it will be picking up in Elliot, Daly Waters, Tennant Creek, Katherine and other small communities and towns close to the Beetaloo; it will be great to see the development over time.

The Opposition Leader spoke about Nhulunbuy. It is evident that those opposite did not get the picture on how to boost or manage an economy. If we want future economic growth in places like Nhulunbuy, where things are slowing down, we must get the fundamentals right. People need confidence and security to invest in business. Small business people are the backbone of communities, but people will not invest in communities if they do not have the confidence. It is not about the government handing out money hand over fist, which we saw under the previous government. For Nhulunbuy to thrive we need to make sure the fundamentals are right to give small business the security and confidence to set up, make money and have a future.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory is poised on the edge of an economic boom that will position us as the powerhouse of Australia, potentially the world, and at the heart of that boom are our regions. Our vast regional areas, while remote, are the heart and soul of our Territory. Their economic prosperity underpins the economic prosperity for the Territory as a whole.

To paraphrase the euphemism, ‘One man’s trash is another man’s treasure’, Australia’s challenge in the energy space is without a doubt the Territory’s opportunity, particularly for our regions. Why do I say this? It is well known that Australia is at a crossroads when it comes to energy security. The east coast, particularly Victoria, has been hell bent on shutting down historical fuel sources. As a consequence, they are running out of energy, and their holy grail, renewables, is proving elusive. Major infrastructure projects are at risk, and projects, such as a major data centre planned for New South Wales, are not progressing due to fears the east coast power grids will fail under the burden of such an energy-intense project. Threats of rolling brownouts and full blackouts are increasingly likely as east coast energy supplies dwindle.

Herein lies the biggest opportunity for unprecedented economic prosperity that the Territory and, importantly, our regions have ever seen. That opportunity comes in the form of the Beetaloo Sub-basin gas reserve, one of the largest gas reserves in the world on—or I should say under—the Territory’s doorstep. Estimates put the reserve at more than 500 trillion cubic feet (TFC) of gas.

To put that in perspective, the INPEX project, worth $60bn, was built on the promise of 12 TCF, and the Beetaloo is over 500 TCF. Let that sink in for a minute. That is 500 trillion cubic feet of gas; it is enough gas to power the whole of Australia for, conservatively, the next 200 years. That means energy security for our kids, grandkids, kids’ grandkids and beyond.

This resource is game-changing for every Territorian, yet those opposite, when they were in government, introduced a moratorium on gas exploration in the Territory that almost derailed this opportunity from which our regions have the most to gain. They put on the handbrake for an industry that is vital to the Territory and Australia.

I admit that they realised the error of their ways a couple of years later, but did they embrace the opportunity and fast-track it? No, they sat on their hands for another five years before granting permission for exploration to continue in the Beetaloo. That is five years and who knows how many millions of dollars wasted and opportunities delayed by a Labor government with no vision for the Territory.

I listened to the Member for Gwoja speaking earlier about how important it is to invest in the arts, festivals and events in remote communities. He is right, but here is the rub: if those opposite had the vision to progress the biggest opportunity we have seen to achieve economic independence for our regional areas and the Territory as whole, such a discussion would be a moot point. It was an opportunity lost. It is no wonder they are now sitting on the opposition benches, defeated and depleted.

Thankfully, our Finocchiaro CLP government has the vision and drive to stand up for the gas industry, which is the key to the economic development of our regions. It is an industry that will drive the Territory’s economy, population and business growth. It will fund major infrastructure projects that will support innovation.

The Leader of the Opposition earlier lamented the challenges faced by the Jabiru community following the closure of Jabiluka. Imagine the future Jabiru would have been guaranteed if we had not lost almost a decade of progress in the development of the gas sector on Labor’s watch. Imagine, if instead of being on the brink of an economic boom today, we were five years in.

Why do I say that? Getting gas out of the ground is just the beginning of the economic opportunity gas presents for our regions. There is no question that the key to economic growth is cheap energy, which is what the Beetaloo Sub-basin will deliver. Once that occurs, the opportunities for our regions will only be limited by our vision, which is infinite.

There is the obvious benefit of gas for our own domestic use, for the east coast and for export; however, this will be the icing on the cake. The real economic prosperity for our regions will come from the cake.

Down-streaming of projects on the back of cheap, long-term energy, combined with the work our government has done in reducing red tape, creating the best regulatory framework in the country and leaning into critical infrastructure—such as the Territory Energy Link being progressed by my colleague, the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure—will be the real game-changer. Work is already underway to engage with sectors that can benefit from a reliable, low-cost, stable energy supply.

Energy-intensive industries are looking to the Northern Territory as a place to invest and secure their future and the Territory’s. Data centre projects on the east coast are being cancelled due to concerns of a lack of power, but in Darwin construction of our second data centre is underway. Four new subsea data cables are in train to land over the next couple of years, with a data highway being built through Central Australia,

connecting Darwin to Adelaide and beyond and saving milliseconds, which I have learned saves millions of dollars when transferring data.

It is not just about the cheap energy gas will provide; there are two other highly prized commodities our regions have to offer: space and sun. For advanced manufacturing companies, our regions offer open spaces which are perfect testing grounds for industries like drone technology and technology being employed to map mining opportunities using ground-penetrating radar, mapping underground mineral deposits faster and more accurately than ever before.

There is space to grow our solar energy production. The Opposition Leader mentioned SunCable earlier, intimating that this project is not supported by our government; that is not true. I have met with SunCable multiple times in the Territory and in Singapore to explore opportunities to utilise its resources in the Territory while it completes negotiations with our near neighbours to finalise its connection with Singapore. These opportunities will directly benefit our regions.

Large projects, like those underway in the Beetaloo, will create thousands of jobs, filled by thousands of people who require goods and services supplied by our small local businesses.

The Member for Barkly understands the benefits of the jobs being created in his electorate by the Beetaloo project. This will require up to 20,000 workers during construction, many of whom will make homes with their families in the Territory, buying coffee at local cafes, eating at local restaurants, shopping at local supermarkets, driving the wider economy, supporting small businesses and encouraging new ones.

Small businesses will be the backbone of the regions, providing the goods and services to those workers and their families. Each project will drive population growth, which in turn will drive increased services in the regions and upgrades to critical infrastructure such as roads. Population growth will drive investment in housing as well as services like education and health, improving the lives of all Territorians.

In my role as minister for Asian Relations, I have had the privilege of re-engaging with our Asian neighbours. During my visits to the region, it became increasingly apparent that Southeast Asian tourists are looking for something unique for their next holiday destination. Who better to accommodate a uniquely Territorian holiday experience than our regional service providers? This growing tourist market is looking for things they cannot get at home. They are looking for wide open spaces and immersion in nature. The regions offer this in abundance. We are already seeing businesses take advantage of the opportunity.

A fabulous example is the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Signature Walk set to launch in time for the 2026 walking season in Central Australia. The walk offers patrons a five-day, four-night, 54-kilometre adventure—I am told it is a fairly soft walk, with lots of camping and support along the way—through the Red Centre's outback. This is an experience only the regions of the Northern Territory can offer.

The opportunities afforded by our regions are enormous, and we are ready to support them to maximise these opportunities to ensure they thrive. Our Territory is vast; it is the Top End, the Red Centre, Kakadu and Katherine Gorge, the rich-in-resources Barkly region, beautiful Nhulunbuy and the stunning Tiwi Islands.

For the Territory to thrive, every region must be supported to thrive. Every member of our 17-strong CLP government team will do everything in our power to see the potential of our regions realised.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, if the question is whether we acknowledge the economic value of the regions, we do; I fully support it.

Regions are vitally important to the Territory and to Australia as a whole. Nationally, we have a big population concentrated around the coasts of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and so on. We do not have the big population in northern Australia, but as a whole we generate a lot of economic wealth for Australia. When you go from north Queensland, across the Territory and to northern WA, you see a lot of the fundamental industries driving the Australian economy. Whether it be coal in Queensland, iron ore in Western Australia, the agricultural regions and everything in between in the Territory, they generate a lot of the export income for Australia. That money goes to the Commonwealth and is redistributed to the states and territories through GST et cetera.

The regions of Australia are vital, and it is the same story in the Northern Territory. We have a concentration of population around Darwin and other major centres, but the economic growth for the Territory is driven from the regions because natural resources and industries are there.

I keep going back to this lovely document, which everyone knows I refer to—our CLP plan. When we came to government we identified five key industry sectors: tourism; Defence; agriculture; gas; and mining. All those sectors are spread across the Territory's regions, and they play a vital part.

Regarding tourism, we want people to experience the whole of the Territory, including the Aboriginal experience that the Member for Gwoja referred to. We should tap into and put on offer all these experiences. Let us develop them as well as we can.

Obviously, it is important where Defence is located. It is in different spots around the Territory. Darwin has the naval base and Robertson Barracks. There are other strategic bases around Katherine, with bombing ranges and all that there. We also have joint facilities, including Pine Gap. These important parts of national security are based in the Territory.

In Question Time the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries outlined the importance and growth of the agriculture sector. We are seeing that trend up. That spreads across all our regions. The development towards the Ord River area near Kununurra and in VRD is fantastic. I talked to people moving freight the other day in my electorate. They were moving sandalwood from the Ord to be exported and processed. There is all the other agriculture, such as mangoes, which was talked about.

We have gas and mining. The Member for Gwoja came up with a great idea; we need to work out a way of recycling solar panels. We are getting a lot of solar panels—we have a lot of sun—but how can we make a business out of them? We have to recycle them but make it cost effective. Solar panels are made from of a lot of critical minerals that have to be taken out of the ground and processed. I guarantee that most of the energy in processing and making solar panels is base load energy. The manufacturing process is probably driven by gas or coal.

People say, 'We have to go for renewables to make renewable panels', but that is not the way it works. We have to understand the fundamental reason we have these base load energy systems. The Territory is blessed with them. We all know about the offshore oil and gas, but the big opportunity comes in onshore oil and gas. If we develop it properly across the regions, we can generate our own-source revenue to help us get away from relying on Commonwealth funding going forward.

The Beetaloo is magnificent. It was stymied a bit on the way—which was a bit of a worry—through a moratorium placed on it by the previous Gunner Labor government.

I go back to my reference point of our CLP plan. We said that we wanted a safe and well-regulated gas industry because we wanted Territory gas to grow the economy. You may not like it, but this is what we said:

> *Labor has mismanaged our gas supply. They can't even give certainty to keep the lights on in our towns and regions.*
>
> *The CLP have always stood up for, and supported the Territory's gas industry, and this industry will proceed with certainty under a CLP government.*

That is what we are seeing now. I continue:

> *We have this incredible resource right here and thousands of Territory jobs could be created over the next 20 years. The gas from the Beetaloo is cleaner than fossil fuels and can be used to transition to renewables and create a new clean energy source.*

We are not against renewables. If there is a natural economic transition towards them, so be it; market forces will make us go that way anyway.

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

We have work to do on those, but gas and certainty of energy supply helps us do that.

> *Not only will gas grow our local economy but it will help Australia meet its emissions targets.*
>
> *Gas is the cleaner and cheaper pathway to renewables.*

It is better than coal and so on.

The Territory's gas can provide the solution to the East Coast power shortage and provide economic benefit to Territorians.

We are moving on that front. Think about the economic development from the gas in the Beetaloo; it is creating jobs in the regions, and this is where we need it.

We just heard about discussions between Prime Minister Albanese and President Trump; they signed a critical minerals deal. That is good. It potentially helps our projects, like the Arafura Resources projects. Our minerals sector—such as lithium—is where we can generate jobs.

These minerals are required for everything going forward in the future, particularly given that we want to get into semiconductors and all that stuff. They are driving a lot of our technology. As we move towards AI, a lot of these minerals will become more critical, and we need to develop our resources. If we do not do it now, we will be taken over by someone else. There is a certain investment window when there is an opportunity. If you miss out and start to delay it, putting moratoriums on it when you should not, you put at risk the viability of our wonderful sectors.

That is why I am all for this motion, in principle. I could not not vote for it, to put it that way. Let us acknowledge the economic value of the regions.

I never got to speak when we had the discussion on roads. Roads are important for connectivity and getting things through. In the 2025–26 budget we delivered a significant $2bn investment in roads infrastructure to upgrade, seal and maintain critical transport routes across the Northern Territory. This is connectivity, bringing our regions together and trying to get the best value that we can.

This investment reflects the CLP's commitment to continually improve the road network to connect communities, support economic development, improve safety and enable better access to essential services. I am a big supporter of strategically investing in roads; any time we have the money to invest in roads, that is fantastic.

Strengthening transport links benefits all Territorians. The minister for Logistics has already outlined upgrades to the national highways, remote access roads and flood-resilient infrastructure to suit our climate. We have to start taking a long-term view and building all-weather roads to our regions. That should be the ambition. We must connect Nhulunbuy and so on, so we do not get washed out during Wet Seasons and miss out on opportunities. I support all-weather roads to Port Keats as well if we can afford it.

If there is a disruption to coastal services, we must be able to supply our communities. When we build all-weather access there are better opportunities for tourism and for communities to develop in the regions, so I am all for that.

There is $289m for the Tanami Road upgrade, which is fantastic. The Tanami generates economic wealth through goldmining operations. McArthur River Mine is another big income generator for the Territory, supporting our regions. The national highway network is done in partnership with the federal government. There is $200m-odd for the Central Arnhem Road upgrade, which is great. It will be fantastic if we can connect cattle roads to where there is production so that we can get product to market. There is a range of others.

I am for this motion, but I also have to put in a word of caution. We need the money to invest in these things. That means when we plan for them, we have to budget for them and invest wisely. Strategic long-term investment in roads is good—I have no problem with that—but we must be able to afford it. That means we have to do the proper analysis. Will the roads actually work? Will the projects in economic production areas work?

Unfortunately, the previous Labor government had a history of going for big projects and putting out press releases before it would all fall over. Labor allocated money and spent wastefully on stuff that did not happen. I think there were great intentions, but the previous government did not deliver and wasted money. That waste of money means we cannot spend it on the stuff we need.

I will give a couple of examples. We are all aware of the ship lift. It started off as a $100m contribution towards a private sector development. Current estimates are that it will cost the government $820m, which means taxpayers are on the hook; it could be more. I am not against the ship lift per se—it is okay—but I do not think anyone in hindsight would say that it is worth $820m. That money could have been spent on strategic roads or upgraded the Port Keats Road. It could have done a lot of things, and we would have had a better return and value for taxpayers' money.

I will give credit that the Tiger Brennan Drive overpass has been delivered, but it was $100m over budget. Would we have done that if we knew that would be the total cost, or would we have invested that money elsewhere for a better return?

Here is the kicker. This is another one driven by press release. There were great intentions, but the skill in knowing a basic commercial case and doing the investigations before investing a lot of money was not there under Labor. I will quote from a press release from 23 May 2018 from the then Deputy Chief Minister, Nicole Manison. It states:

> *Deputy Chief Minister Nicole Manison today congratulated Seafarms on its significant announcement of Japanese global seafood giant Nissui's investment in the company and Project Sea Dragon …*
>
> *Ms Manison said attracting one of the world's largest seafood companies to make such a significant commitment to Project Sea Dragon is a huge vote of confidence …*

Absolutely—it sounds great. I continue:

> *… and will pave the way for the creation of 1,500 jobs once fully operational.*

That is fantastic. I continue:

> *Project Sea Dragon is a $1.45 billion prawn agriculture project that will see the development of up to 10,000 hectares of land for black tiger prawn production …*
>
> *'The Territory Labor Government backs Project Sea Dragon because it delivers a new industry for Australia—driven from the Territory—and will create hundreds of permanent jobs, including for Aboriginal Territorians'*

That is a wonderful regional outcome. It went on:

> *'We have invested over $56 million in roads that will help support this massive job-creating project. The NT will play a big role in the economic development of Northern Australia and today's announcement shows just how important we are.*

That was brilliant. It was a magnificent press release. It stated 1,500 jobs, but how many did it deliver? Zero. It was a $1.45bn project, but I do not see it. The development of up to 10,000 hectares of land did not turn out either. The press release said:

> *It is the largest of its kind in Australia.*

It might be the largest rip-off of roads; I am not sure.

Labor delivered roads to nowhere. The intention was right, but the delivery was crap. It was at the expense of taxpayers, and that is the problem. Territorians and others who want to strategically invest in the Territory suffer when do not have the funds to do it. We have been plunged into $15bn of debt.

We have to get it right, with due diligence and proper analysis. I do not mind investing, as long as we are honest about what we invest in and what we hope to do. Taking a long-term view is fine. I caution everyone: do not govern by press release. If I add the costs of three press releases, we have spent a lot. We are probably spending $300m per press release, which is money we do not have. We have to change that, which this CLP government is doing. The Treasurer has already said that we have to cut back on things because we do not have money.

The truth is that we all want to develop our regions; they are important to the Territory. I agree with the motion.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I thought we might go in a slightly different direction. I will highlight fantastic aquaculture projects in the regions.

One of my favourite things every week is receiving an email from the Thamarrurr Development Corporation with an update of what is going on. Week by week I see a highlight of the aquaculture sector developing in our regions. I have with me a collection of these newsletters, which I will table at the end.

The journey started in February this year when people from Humpty Doo Barramundi started training people from Wadeye in aquaculture skills. This program involved workers from Humpty Doo Barramundi travelling to Wadeye, as well as members of the Wadeye community travelling to the lovely Humpty Doo Barramundi facility. This program is funded in part through the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. It is a great initiative. In February they had hands-on training and learned what it is like to feed barramundi.

Later in April I received a lovely newsletter, which spoke of the first oyster grade at the Wurlpirrk oyster farm.

Mr Young: What is it called?

Mr MACKAY: Can you say it for me?

Mr Young: You know.

Mr MACKAY: I am trying to tell a positive story, but obviously the Member for Daly is used to talking things down. I will try to keep this positive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Direct comments through the Chair, and no interjections.

Mr MACKAY: They had the first farm grade for the 2023 batch in April this year, and that was exciting. There are a lot of great photos of that.

Later in May there was more training in partnership with Humpty Doo Barramundi, and there are lovely photos of everyone getting involved. I have an article from *Territory Q* business magazine about the oyster journey. There is a quote from a member of the Nganbe family about what it means to get involved in aquaculture:

> *'Growing oysters on-Country is a good idea' … 'We all want it to succeed.'*

Everyone wants it to succeed; it is a great initiative.

On 23 May the third batch of oyster spat arrived. The oysters are spawned at the Darwin Aquaculture Centre on Channel Island, which is a great facility full of wonderful staff. It is a credit to the NT Fisheries team that provides the spat that goes to communities and to Groote Eylandt, which is a customer as well. This was the third batch in three years. They have done one per year starting in April, then December the following year and May this year.

The Aboriginal Sea Company got involved and went to Wadeye to talk about the CBATT project (Community-based Aquaculture Training Tools), which is culturally appropriate training across northern regions. There was a workshop with a presentation by Groote Aqua and oyster basket-making training by Stott's Oyster Consulting Service, and they have photos of the oyster baskets in progress. That is a great partnership across the Territory.

In June this year the ASC and TDC progressed their plans for the crabbing business. It is beautiful country full of lots of mud crabs, and there is talk about how they can get their own mud crab harvesting industry in production. The Aboriginal Sea Company and TDC have been working together. There is a bit of a fun story as we get further along, but they are excited to get closer to launching a locally driven crabbing enterprise in 2025. We are only up to June, so no spoilers yet.

In September there was extra training for crab handling. They have big nippers—especially out there—so you must be careful and watch your toes and fingers. The training was well taken up, and everyone was happy. Theo successfully obtained his approved operator licence to manage a commercial crabbing lease, which is a great achievement for his future as they work to develop that crabbing industry.

In September this year the NT Government announced the closure of the Arafura West mud crab fishery. There were concerns raised to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries regarding the closure and if it would impact this budding business.

I am pleased to say that, after discussions, it has been overcome, and two or three newsletters later it was confirmed in writing from the TDC that the crabbing industry will still be able to take harvest and everything else. They are not part of the affected closure.

That is a great Territory-wide outcome. We want to see local jobs and aquaculture. I love fish farming, so maybe one day, alongside Humpty Doo barramundi on the menu, we might see a Port Keats or Palumpa

barramundi or whatever it might be—the more the better. All our fish should come from the Territory, and I do not like eating salmon.

There was an update in October that the Thamarrurr Sea Farmers that the new site went up, which is exciting. It is funded through the new Remote Jobs and Economic Development program for three years.

NT Fisheries is doing its part to make sure it all goes smoothly. This is an example of how the government can partner with an Aboriginal organisation in communities, with local families or with private companies, such as Humpty Doo Barramundi, to help build and nurture new aquaculture facilities in the Northern Territory and get that industry thriving.

It is a massive success. We have a lot of water in the Northern Territory, and a lot of coastal communities would benefit from aquaculture. I am excited to see what is happening on the Tiwi Islands with their prawns. It is a success story, and I look forward to seeing it develop.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Mr Deputy Speaker …

Mr Brown: Hey—Barkly!

Mr EDGINGTON: Thank you for the cheer squad over there. I am not sure whether they support the Barkly. I might have to go back through history to see how much support there was.

It is a pleasure to talk about the economic value of regions because of the work, investment and people contributing to economic development across the Northern Territory.

The CLP has a proud record. We are backing the bush and driving growth across our regions.

I acknowledge Aboriginal businesses. Last week I was at the opening of the NTIBN Aboriginal Economic Development Forum. I will work through the figures. Every dollar invested in Aboriginal businesses returns $6 for the Territory economy. There is a $3bn contribution across the Northern Territory, and $15bn comes from Aboriginal businesses nationally.

It was great to be at the awards night. I heard the Member for Arnhem speak about it. I congratulate those who won and the Aboriginal businesses across the Territory. There are Aboriginal businesses in my electorate. I give a big shout-out to them and thank them for all the work they do.

The CLP is delivering for all regions. You cannot rebuild the Territory's economy without the strength of our regions; the CLP gets that. We govern for all Territorians, not just those in Darwin and Palmerston but those beyond the Berrimah Line and down the track to Katherine, the mighty Barkly and Central Australia.

The Finocchiaro CLP government unveiled its Rebuilding the Economy Strategy earlier this year to make the Territory the best place to do business. Unlocking regional growth is one of the five priorities for achieving our vision to rebuild the economy by growing faster than anywhere else in Australia, playing to our strengths and growing and building on areas with high potential for job and wealth creation, including in our regions. At the heart of this strategy is our regions, the bedrock of the Territory's economy and home to key industries, particularly energy, Defence, agriculture, mining and tourism.

I will focus on my electorate. The economic value of my region to the Territory is clear and growing. I heard the Opposition Leader ramble about there being no economic growth plans, but we have had the Barkly Regional Deal since April 2019. Clearly the Opposition Leader, who was a former minister responsible for the Barkly Regional Deal, has no concept of what that deal was about.

Part of that regional deal—which I was a signatory to when I was Mayor of the Barkly Regional Council—is the Barkly Economic Growth Strategy. Sadly, the Labor opposition is not aware of what is in the regional deal, but there is the Barkly Economic Growth Strategy, the Barkly Regional Workforce Strategy and an Aboriginal workforce strategy. That is a bit of education for Labor, which did not focus on the region. That is in the regional deal, so I suggest those opposite take it off the shelf, dust it off and have a look.

Mining is a big part of the Barkly. We heard the announcement of the Arafura Nolans rare earths project, which is exciting news with potential for large-scale US investment. As well as royalties, it is expected that there will be well over 650 jobs in construction and 350 operational jobs for the region. It will also boost the region through the pipeline of service industry required to support the mine; it is estimated to be in production by 2029.

Mining is one of the major industries that creates economic value for the Barkly region. Our government's investment and focus is on making Tennant Creek the Territory's mining centre. There have been announcements about Verdant Minerals at Ammaroo, which is the phosphate project. It was granted mineral leases in early 2025. In further good news, mining authorisation was approved in recent weeks.

Avenira has the large Wonarah phosphate deposit along the Barkly Highway. The inaugural ore shipment from Avenira's Wonarah project is expected in quarter 1 or quarter 2 next year. This initial phosphate will support agricultural productivity, while the future project phases will create opportunities for high-value downstream processing, manufacturing and investment. This project is expected to create 50 jobs during construction and up to 100 direct local jobs, with further indirect employment and infrastructure investments flowing from it.

The Nobles Nob goldmine in Tennant Creek has a 20-year life. I was fortunate to be at the opening of the mine with the Deputy Chief Minister, where we saw the operation and met the people. It is a fantastic project for Tennant Creek, which will create a number of local jobs, investment in Tennant Creek and opportunities for small business.

This $94m project is expected to deliver an average of 60,000 ounces of gold per year over the life of the mine and create more than 160 jobs. The CLP is providing a regulatory and investment environment that helps get projects off the ground quickly and successfully. Other projects in the region include the Castile Resources Rover 1 Project for copper, gold and bismuth, which is southwest of Tennant Creek, and Tungsten Mining in the Hatches Creek area. The McArthur River Mine near Borroloola in my electorate has a mine life until 2040. It employs 1,320 people and contractors.

Our government is delivering on its commitment to grow the Territory economy, drive regional development and support long-term job creation through a strong, sustainable resources sector.

The Beetaloo is in my electorate. Those who know about the Beetaloo know that the Labor Party did not support gas in the Territory, and we were plagued by delays in getting those projects up and going. The Beetaloo is making progress, and it is creating economic opportunities and jobs for Territorians. It is creating a stronger regional economy in the Barkly and across the Northern Territory.

Labor left the Beetaloo in limbo for nearly a decade, stalling jobs and royalties and risking our energy security. The Beetaloo holds enough gas to power Australia for 200 years, and unlocking it will drive a gaslit recovery after a decade of Labor inaction. We are committed to backing the development of the Beetaloo and creating the economic opportunities that come with it: more jobs for Territorians; stronger regional communities; and long-term royalty revenue.

The opposition talked about SunCable. I think someone over there thought that it was in Elliott, but it is actually at Powell Creek. That highlights the problem on that side of the Chamber. They did not know where the SunCable project was. It beggars belief that they do not know where these projects are and did little to get them off the ground.

The CLP is also investing in the bush, with $4.14m to upgrade the power station in Borroloola. We will deliver our $20m commitment to build a new health centre at Borroloola. This is an example of the CLP government's commitment to working with Aboriginal communities, partnering with local businesses, organisations and the Australian Government to foster economic development in the regions.

Agriculture is another key part of the economic value of the Barkly. There are around 50 cattle stations across the Barkly, and all are significant contributors to the cattle industry and the wider $1.3bn agricultural sector. Importantly, they are supporting local communities in the regions. The NT cattle industry manages nearly half of the Territory's land mass, and there are more than two million head of cattle, making it a major contributor to the national and international beef supply chain.

In my electorate, down the road in Ali Curung, 170 kilometres southeast of Tennant Creek, the Desert Springs Melon Farm produces around 8,000 tonnes of watermelons annually. It is an incredible project which has been around for 17 years since 2008.

I give Centrefarm a shout-out, as it has done amazing work in the area. It is working on other land opportunities in the Ali Curung region and exploring further opportunities just south of Wycliffe Well. There is also the 5,700-hectare Larrimah agricultural precinct under development.

Crabbing and fishing is a big part of my electorate, which is about the same size as the Member for Gwoja's electorate. Around King Ash Bay, fishing, crabbing and tourism opportunities in the gulf area are being explored and utilised, creating opportunities and attracting visitors to the gulf area. It is an important part of my electorate. Crabs are highly prized and sell to seafood restaurants and retailers across Australia and overseas for anywhere between $70 and $100 per kilo.

The iconic Devils Marbles is in my electorate, as is King Ash Bay and Borroloola. There is also the Davenport Ranges and lots of tourism opportunities in the Barkly, including places like Aileron, with the Anmatjere Man on the hill, which is 17 metres high and weighs a massive eight tonnes. Mark Egan was the artist who put that together. That is another icon in the Barkly.

Our government recently announced a $1.2m investment in Battery Hill in Tennant Creek. This is important because we also announced a $500,000 grant to an interpretation project, which will assist with storytelling, digital content and upgraded signage at Battery Hill. Compared with the promises made by Labor during its eight years in government, failing to deliver anything at Battery Hill, this is an example of us getting on with the job and delivering.

Despite Labor promising in 2016 to upgrade the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre, after eight years it still did not finish the project. Coming to government, I was pleased to see that the CLP got on with the job and finished that project in Tennant Creek.

Small business is the backbone of the Barkly, whether it is a roadhouse, restaurant, construction business or civil business. The local hardware store just changed hands and is now owned by a local person. All the roadhouses in the region are delivering for locals and attracting tourists. Those who come from Tennant Creek would have heard the words 'Woks Up'. The Member for Gwoja and other Central Australian members should be well aware that they have a shop in Alice Springs as well.

All those businesses employ locals and contribute to the economy across the Barkly region. Our government is supporting businesses to ramp up operations. We exempted payroll tax for apprentices and trainees, and we are investing $1m to help progress further industrial land in Tennant Creek.

I have spoken about roadhouses. The Larrimah roadhouse is well known for the iconic Pink Panther Hotel, and it has recently changed hands. We have the Threeways Roadhouse. I spoke about the Anmatjere Man.

One of the important things about the Barkly and economic growth in regions is that you cannot speak about economic value without talking about roads. This is one of the most important subjects. We cannot unlock regional growth without connecting our regions, which will then enable us to connect the Territory to the world.

The CLP is making significant investment in our roads and enabling infrastructure, which is predominantly in the regions, under Budget 2025–26. This includes the $57.5m upgrade to the Tennant Creek–Townsville road, which is the Barkly Highway. This connects freight routes for the agriculture and mining industries and is an important road for locals living in the region, particularly as there are family connections between the Barkly, Camooweal and Mount Isa. It is an important road to have up to speed.

We have huge investment in the roads along the Carpentaria Highway. The Carpentaria Highway now has roughly 140 kilometres of dual-lane bitumen from the Hi-Way Inn. This significant investment commenced some time ago, after the federal Coalition government committed to upgrading that road. The 2025 budget also includes $28m to upgrade, widen and seal 20 kilometres of unsealed road along the Sandover Highway.

Another initiative the CLP is significantly investing in is the regional logistics hubs. That is a $440m equity funding commitment through the Australian Government. This network of hubs will ensure the Territory has the capacity to support an estimated $38bn worth of projects proposed in mining, minerals and energy across our regions.

Listening to Labor members I initially thought, 'You would have thought that they were investing in our regions'. I will speak about the failures. There was a significant number of promises made over many years that simply were not delivered.

Recently, there was an ABC article about housing in Borroloola. This caught my attention because the Labor government in 2020 committed $3.5m to build a 35-lot subdivision in Borroloola. Like many projects promised by Labor, not one shovel hit the ground. We are following up on Labor's failure in Borroloola. It failed to deliver a subdivision that was promised over a four-year period.

We talk about early childhood education and the importance of giving young people opportunities to excel, get an education and prepare themselves for the workforce. Labor, over a number of years, promised early childhood learning centres in Ti Tree, Borroloola and Arlparra.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON: Those early childhood learning centres were never delivered. Three significant projects to support education at an early age were never delivered by the Labor government.

Labor promised a new health clinic in Borroloola but never delivered that. That is an election commitment that we will deliver for the people of Borroloola. Health plays a significant part in being fit, healthy and able to participate in the workforce. On 26 April 2022 Labor promised 30 new dialysis facilities in the Northern Territory and 500 Aboriginal health worker positions. It also promised to double the funding for rheumatic heart disease, which was not delivered.

I will talk about the significance of airstrips and a recent announcement from the Commonwealth, which will work with the NT to deliver sealed airstrips in Ampilatwatja and Ali Curung. Labor promised that for Ali Curung four years ago. We are working with the federal government to ensure that project is delivered.

In 2018 the Labor government said that it would build a new BRADAAG facility in Tennant Creek and committed $5m. The other day there was a question about housing in Tennant Creek. Labor said that building the promised $5m BRADAAG facility would free up 19 public houses. It did not deliver the project, and 19 public houses are still being used by BRADAAG to deliver that alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program in Tennant Creek. Labor also promised in 2020 to build 12 staff accommodation units at the hospital. Additionally, there was an initiative under the Barkly Regional Deal to deliver 20 social and affordable houses; Labor built 12, which is eight short of the target.

When you put those three projects together, there should have been 51 homes. So far out of all those promises from Labor, we only have 12 homes. That is where the housing shortage in Tennant Creek is coming from.

There are a number of other projects. In 2018 Labor promised $5.5m for Turbocharging Tourism. I never got to the bottom of where that $5.5m went. In 2019 Labor promised to build a new watch house at the police station; it was never delivered. In 2023 Labor promised $11.5m for a watch house in Tennant Creek. The same media release came out 12 months later, with the same promise, and it still did not deliver.

Labor was managing the economy by media release, making a lot of promises but never delivering. The sad thing is that, under eight years of Labor, there was little investment in regions. Projects that Labor put money into over the last eight years include $164m on the Tiger Brennan Drive overpass, with a $100m overspend; that money could have delivered 200 houses in the Barkly region. There was $145m on the Darwin Civic and State Square redevelopment; $12.7m for a police station at Nightcliff, which was only manned between 8 am and 4.21 pm; a $35m payout to youth offenders; $12m to build a grandstand at Fannie Bay; a $14m overspend on Garramilla Boulevard; and a $7m budget blowout on the underground/aboveground car park at Parliament House.

The one that always caught my attention was $432,000 of taxpayers' money to move a bus stop from Cavenagh Street to Smith Street and back again. We all know about the unshaded structure on Cavenagh Street, which Labor spent $2.7m on. That money could have been spent more effectively in the regions instead of on an unshaded structure on Cavenagh Street.

Labor spent $4.3m on a consultancy into Health's COVID response, which ended up before the ICAC. I am still not sure what the detail of that was. There was a $2m overspend on the Myilly Point playground; $80,000 to review the unshaded structure on Cavenagh Street; a $1m overspend on the demolition of the Chan Building; and $220,000 on a renewable targets report, of which every page was redacted, which was made public after an FOI request.

This is the one that always worries me: Labor spent $40,000 to advertise Boundless Possible on a rocket launched out of Queensland in November 2018. Surely, that money could have been committed to something more beneficial to Territory taxpayers.

The Deputy Chief Minister's favourite is the $5,000 to rent a Christmas tree.

These are just some examples of Labor spending taxpayers' money over an eight-year period while neglecting housing in the Barkly. The nurses' quarters were never built; 19 homes were never freed up; the BRADAAG facility was never built; there was a lack of investment in roads; and it goes on.

Labor members talk about how they support the regions and have invested in them, yet do not know where the SunCable project is and that we have a Barkly Economic Growth Strategy, workforce development plan and Aboriginal workforce strategy. This goes to show that there was little investment or care for what was happening in the Barkly.

This has been a great opportunity to talk about what has been happening and the economic opportunities in the regions. I assure you that there are plenty of opportunities in the Barkly; it is the land of opportunity.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the motion by the Leader of the Opposition.

I thank the Member for Goyder for talking about my electorate in regard to the Thamarrurr Sea Farmers in Wadeye. That is a project I watch and work closely with. They do amazing work, and I acknowledge that. It is good to see that at least one person in the House is interested in the Daly electorate, because I rarely hear anyone speak about Daly when I bring up issues. It is a rare opportunity that it is brought up by government members, so I thank the Member for Goyder for that.

I will get back to that a bit later and talk about my experiences and the work I have done with the Thamarrurr Sea Farmers. They have shown me their vision for the Thamarrurr region on their homelands regarding blacklip oysters and traditional fish traps—which I was lucky to see being built—to ensure that there are local jobs on country for young and older people and that we get healthy food to the region. There is also the recently established crab business, which the Member for Goyder touched on.

Theodore Dooling recently received his licence. I know Theodore quite well; I have been out on his country many times. The pride he shows when he talks about setting up these opportunities through the Thamarrurr Sea Farmers is something that every member should go and see in a practical sense, not just reading about it from media releases.

It is still important to bring it to the House, so I acknowledge the Member for Goyder. I invite the member out; I will happily take him to see it. I know he has connections there through the acting CEO, Tracey, who I believe was his colleague at Humpty Doo Barramundi. I acknowledge the amazing work Humpty Doo Barramundi is doing with young people in the region with the Thamarrurr rangers.

I was lucky enough to sit in on a session to look at how you clean and get fish to market. However, to get fish to market we need good roads. I go back to the Port Keats Road and the staged approach. Both sides of government—Labor and the CLP—should commit to investing in good roads and look at staging that plan. This is what we are talking about regarding good economic opportunities for people in our remote and regional communities.

In Berry Springs there are many small agriculture businesses, such as mango farmers. There are mango farms in the Member for Goyder and Nelson's electorates as well. We should support and invest in good roads so that we get good fruit to market, which will mean we have higher-value fruit here.

Our regions are the heart of the Territory's economy. We take in a wide range of sectors from tourism to agriculture, which provide prosperity to the Northern Territory. I am proud that the former Territory Labor government knew that supporting the regions through economic growth plans could lay the foundations for the future prosperity of the Northern Territory.

We need to question what the CLP government has done with the Top End Region Economic Growth Plan 2022–23. Unfortunately we have not heard anything from the CLP government about where that has gone. It laid out the vision for the Northern Territory over the eight years that the economic plan has been in place for our regions.

In my electorate of Daly tourism plays a vital part in the economic story of the Northern Territory. In the Dundee Beach and Daly River communities there are many fishing lodges and charters to ensure tourists enjoy the Territory.

Litchfield National Park is also in my electorate. It is a beautiful big electorate. I acknowledge the expansion of Litchfield National Park. All members would agree that expansion is good for the Northern Territory. It will mean more camping and visitation. We will attract more tourists when we showcase our wonderful national parks, such as Litchfield.

My electorate office sits in the heart of Berry Springs at the Berry Springs Shopping Village, and a lot of foot traffic comes through. While many constituents come through, we also have many interstate and international tourists coming to my electorate office and asking what they can do around the region.

Many people are heading to Litchfield National Park, and they will usually ask for a tip, such as where the best waterhole is. We have many waterholes and have seen expansions of that. Buley Rockhole is a popular place as it is easily accessible for families and kids.

Central Valley was an expansion under the Territory Labor government. I have only camped there once, and it is a beautiful spot …

Ms Uibo: You cannot get a spot; it is always booked out.

Mr YOUNG: That is right, Opposition Leader; it is hard to book a spot. I tried to book a spot last Dry Season, and I came in a bit late because you never know in this job when you might get a weekend or two; usually you can only book something a few days out, but Central Valley is booked out months in advance. The website allows only six months to book ahead because it is so popular. Otherwise, people would be booking years out, so they have restricted it.

Mangoes are the largest horticultural commodity in the Territory. That industry contributes over $128m to the economy during harvest and employs 3,500 workers. Territory mango farmers produce 52% of Australia's crop and supply, and it is usually the first crop of the season to Australian consumers.

The mango industry is one of the most significant economic drivers in the Daly electorate. Mango production supports a wide network of local growers, transport operators, packaging facilities and export businesses, creating strong regional employment and investment opportunities.

During the harvest season, the industry generates substantial seasonal employment, attracting local workers, backpackers and short-term labourers. This seasonal workforce injects money into local communities for accommodation, retail and hospitality spending. The mango sector also stimulates secondary industries, such as refrigeration to store the mangoes, the freight and equipment, which has a huge economic impact on other industries across the Northern Territory.

There are many cattle stations in my electorate. One of the most famous ones, which I am sure many government members are aware of, is Tipperary Station. They do a wonderful job between Daly River and Adelaide River.

The agriculture industries in the electorate, such as the cattle industry, play a huge part in the Territory's economy. It is valued at approximately $1.2bn annually, including across the Daly electorate's economy, providing significant income, employment and investment opportunities for the region.

I was proud to be involved with the development of local decision-making agreements in the rural area and further towards Port Keats Road, amongst many Aboriginal communities. These, unfortunately, have been taken away by the Country Liberal Party.

Local communities have been working side by side with the government on the aspirations of their community. That can take time when looking at a holistic approach to housing, health, jobs on country and better education services for Aboriginal communities, then bundling it into a four, five or 10-year agreement.

I am constantly speaking about Emu Point; it is a small homeland of 100 people, give or take, with a few houses. When I was first elected in 2021 we had a community Cabinet in Wadeye, and it was suggested that we stay there for the week. I thought, 'Why Wadeye? What about the smaller communities along Port Keats Road?' Generally, because of the small population, they get missed, so we did a road trip. We started in Wadeye, then went to Palumpa and Daly River, which is further up the road, and stopped at Emu Point. The whole community of Emu Point was at that community Cabinet.

It was touching and inspiring that one 15 or 16-year-old young lady spoke in front of our Cabinet about the aspirations of that community. She spoke of the need for better housing; the community had not had any

housing upgrades since the early 1990s. There were no repairs, maintenance or upgrades to housing; they were deteriorating. That is a shame for all governments; I am not trying to blame any particular government. We are short of funding and rely heavily on the federal government to top us up.

When Labor was in government, this community had a high school attendance rate of more than 90%. I am not sure what it is now, but I will speak to the Education minister another time to see whether attendance is still up. Housing is key to school attendance, which leads to jobs for young people but, more importantly, enables people to stay on their traditional lands—their country—and to speak traditional language so that they have an identity when they grow up.

The Emu Point agreement was signed by me, Selena Uibo as the Aboriginal Affairs minister at the time and Nicole Manison. The agreement identified issues, with one of the priorities being housing. It says:

> *Additional houses to address overcrowding and maintenance to existing housing to bring them up to standard …*

At that time, the department did a lot of work looking at the population of Emu Point, collecting data on how many people were living there. It identified that the community needed four new houses. That housing is about to be handed over. I thank Big River Housing for its work in that space. It does a lot of work in the region and employs local people. It has done work in Daly River and is about to start work in Peppimenarti.

The agreement explores options to support Mulyung in the construction of additional houses to support local employment. Mulyung is the recently established Aboriginal corporation, which was embedded in the local decision-making agreement. It is now running successfully as an Aboriginal corporation. It works directly with the Northern Territory Government departments on these priorities.

The best thing about this document is that it holds everyone to account. When I head to Emu Point, the first thing that Terry Sams—the old man out there—says to me is, 'Dheran, we have the four new houses and upgrades to existing houses, but where is this at?' I previously followed up the four houses with the minister, saying, 'This was in the four-year agreement, and this is the next stage the community would like to go'. We kickstarted that, which employed local workers.

Education and ensuring all our kids attend school is key to economic development of our regions. We have seen the construction of additional education facilities. They had no accommodation for the school principal, Samuel Sailor, who has now left. He was the NAIDOC Male Elder of the Year last year, and he was living in a small room to the side of the school next to the classroom. Now there is accommodation for school principals and teachers there. Consistency and continuity of the school principal is important to ensure relationships are built with families and students, so the students feel safe and comfortable on their learning journey.

I was also proud of the establishment of a school council, which came out of the agreement. Under the agreement there are community wellbeing priorities, including establishing a ranger service, which leads to further jobs. Rangers play an important role in caring for country and for biosecurity in the Top End, with threats that may from the north into the Northern Territory. Aboriginal rangers are usually the first to respond to that.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr YOUNG: We are looking at a holistic approach. The Emu Point community is proud of this local decision-making agreement and put a lot of time and effort into it. It is unfortunate that this has been pulled away. We should not play politics with agreements like this because this is about improving people's lives and wellbeing. We talk about improving educational outcomes and jobs on country; that is in this agreement. I would happily take Minister Edgington to Emu Point to meet with the community to look at the new houses and the school. I highly recommend that the Education minister visits the school; it is a beautiful little school, with attendance at an all-time high.

I go back to the discussion on sea farms, which the Member for Goyder spoke about, and I appreciate his contribution. One of the issues constantly spoken about is ensuring that we have good roads that connect to Darwin. We can talk about these great initiatives like the blacklip oysters, the fishing industry with the traditional fish traps and the bait program, but we need connectivity to Darwin so that produce gets to market.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, could you round off? It is now 7 pm.

Mr YOUNG: That is no problem.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing forward this important motion. I move that the question be put.

Madam SPEAKER: The time has expired, Member for Daly. That concludes General Business.

PAPER TABLED
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Report of Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications

Dr RAHMAN (Chair of Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legal and Constitution Affairs Committee Report of Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications October 2024 to July 2025 and associated minutes of proceedings.

As rules, regulations and by-laws affect people in their day-to-day lives, it is important that the Assembly maintains a sufficient level of scrutiny of subordinate legislation to ensure that they keep within the purpose of the laws under which they are made and do not unduly affect people's rights.

As part of that scrutiny, the committee obtains advice from its independent legal counsel, Professor Ned Aughterson, and writes to responsible ministers regarding any questions and concerns the committee has with the regulation. Ministers reply with clarifications about the intended operation of the regulations or undertakings to correct any errors. This report places those letters on the public record and allows interested persons to see those clarifications or undertakings.

During the reporting period the committee considered 27 pieces of subordinate legislation. As detailed in the report, the legal counsel identified concerns regarding eight of these.

The committee is also responsible for monitoring compliance with statutory reporting requirements. For example, all Northern Territory Government departments and a range of other organisations are required to provide annual reports on their activities to the Speaker or relevant minister for tabling in the Assembly.

It is pleasing to note that during the current reporting timeframe the majority of agencies, independent offices, statutory authorities and government-owned corporations met their relevant reporting obligations within the required timeframe.

I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan approach in seeking to ensure a high standard of rules, regulations and by-laws in the Northern Territory.

On behalf of the committee, I also thank ministers for their response to the committee's queries.

The committee acknowledges the significant contribution by Professor Ned Aughterson and thanks him for his diligence in advising the committee.

I move that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute to a beloved Territorian who passed away on 5 September this year, Norma Elizabeth Fong Lim.

I acknowledge that a number of Norma's family members are here in the gallery for this testament to her life in the Territory. I thank Norma's eldest daughter, Dallas Clancy, son-in-law, Mike Clancy, and grandson, Ian Gore; third daughter, Judge Tanya Fong Lim, and son-in-law, John Duguid; fourth daughter, Katrina Fong Lim, and son-in-law, Tony Waite; second-youngest and fifth daughter, Camille Fong Lim; and youngest daughter, Lorelei Fong Lim—arguably the best of the group; I have to put that in there—son-in-law,

Neville Jones, and grandson, Brian Jones. Coming in second of Norma's six daughters is Michele Fong Lim, who is joining us online all the way from the United States. Hopefully everything is working fine for you, Michele. I am sure there are other friends, family and grandchildren who are tuning in. Welcome, everyone.

Norma was born in Darwin when it was called Palmerston on 18 February 1929. She and her sister, Irene, were born in the old Chinatown in Cavenagh Street, and their maternal grandfather was one of the first cooks at Government House in Darwin.

When she was three Norma and her family—her father, Chin Pon See; her mother, Pauline; her sister, Irene; and her brother, Wallace—moved from Darwin to Thursday Island and then to Sydney. It was in Sydney where her youngest brother, Greg, and youngest sister, Fay, were born.

Norma spent her happy formative years in the Emerald City, working at her parent's popular fish and chip shop during her school years and then full time. She learned the secrets of a good beer batter, the value of clean cooking oil and double frying her fish and chips, which remained a favourite with her family for many years to come.

She remembered the rationing of World War II, especially the restrictions on material. Norma was four feet, 11 and three-quarter inches tall—very compact—but do not let her size fool you; she packed a punch. Unfortunately, due to her size, the rations meant that her mother could not get that extra yard of material allowed for those who measured five feet tall and over; she fell just short. Norma would laughingly reminisce, 'My mum would scold me for not growing that extra quarter of an inch. I used to say that good things come in small packages, and when I said that to Alec, he replied, "So does dynamite".'

Height issues aside, Norma proved her mettle and true Territorian spirit when she agreed to return to Darwin with her beloved Alec. Although they were both born in Darwin, they did not meet until he returned to Australia from an around-the-world trip when mutual family friends introduced them in Sydney. Alec was fond of saying that he travelled all around the world to find a wife and then found the perfect one back at home. He also said that Norma had, hands down, the best pins in the family.

They returned to Darwin after their honeymoon in November 1955. Getting off the plane to a hot blast of beautiful Build-Up air, Norma learned quickly to ditch the stockings and nylon dresses. While Alec and his brothers ran the Vic Hotel, and later Lim's at Rapid Creek, Norma worked in the Fong Lim family store, Lorna Lim and Sons.

She and Alec started building their family. First came Dallas, and over the next 10 years came Michele, Tanya, Katrina, Camille and Lorelei—the youngest, smartest and most beautiful of all the girls. I might need protection after this. If security are watching, be ready for those Fong Lim girls coming for me.

Alec moved into wholesale food, alcohol and other beverages. He was a popular local identity and community member. When he won the race to be Darwin's Lord Mayor in 1984—a great year; good things happened that year—Norma was proudly by his side. She wholly believed in his dedication to their community and supported his vocation, even if it meant overcoming her natural shyness to attend the many functions and events which came with that important job.

While lady mayoress, Norma discovered a love and talent for Chinese watercolour painting. She held exhibitions of her work, and the profit from the sales went towards charity. From all reports, she made a pretty penny for many deserving organisations, including the then Handicapped Persons' Association and mental health association.

She was also an excellent cook. I hear Dallas is quite the baker herself. As Norma told it, she learned much of her traditional Chinese cooking from her mother-in-law, Lorna Lim. Many businesspeople and family friends had the good fortune and honour of being at the dinner table of the Fong Lim household. Alec and Norma's home was legendary for its warmth, hospitality and amazing food.

In her eulogy, her daughter Tanya recalled:

> *She taught us all to love good food and good people and was well known for being able whip up a fabulous meal at the drop of a hat.*

She said that she knows her mum's cooking helped her husband, John, to decide he wanted to be part of their family.

Tanya also talked about Norma's cheeky sense of humour. She said, 'Dad used to tell this story. After a hard day's work, he would always greet mum with, "Hello, mother of six", and one day when she was not happy with him about something, she came back quick as a whip with, "Hello, father of five".'

After Alec's passing, Norma found comfort in her family, particularly her grandchildren, whom she adored, and later her great-grandchildren. Norma would often tell people of her greatest achievement being her family. She was blessed with six beautiful grandchildren—Ian, Robert, Elizabeth, Alison, Brian and Alexandra—and later two cherished great-grandchildren, Charles and Florence.

She spoke often of her daughters, always with immense pride. She was proud of her daughter, Katrina, for choosing to follow in her father's footsteps as Lord Mayor of Darwin. Despite what they may tell you, I have it on good authority that she did not play favourites with her girls. In the end her girls looked after her so well, along with a core group of amazing carers.

I had the opportunity on many occasions to see Norma out with the girls and the love, tenderness and care they took in supporting her to continue to engage with the community, come to fantastic events that she enjoyed at Parliament House and continue to have a rich and full life. It was incredibly special. All the care and tenderness she provided as a mother over those years was repaid to her when she needed it the most. It is a credit to all of them. It is hard on families, and not everyone has the opportunity to be as loved as Norma was. It is a credit to everyone for their support over those difficult years.

When Norma passed away just last month there were many tributes from those who are locally based, interstate and overseas. In her honour, more than $7,200 was donated to Dementia Australia, which is a significant reflection of the love and respect that she inspired amongst so many.

They all spoke of a lady with grace, kindness and generosity. She was a great Territorian, a pioneer, a jewel, a legend, a wonderful person, a loving mother and an aunty who made the best fried rice ever. If you could be remembered for anything, you would want it to be that.

The Northern Territory is poorer for losing her, and we send our sincerest and most heartfelt condolences to the Fong Lim family. We are pleased to celebrate her life with this adjournment debate in honour of the enormous contribution she made in her family's lives, the lives of many Territorians and the fabric of our beautiful Northern Territory.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, the late Norma Fong Lim is a woman remembered for her kindness, generosity and, above all, deep love of family. Although I did not have the privilege of knowing Norma personally, in learning more about her life and knowing her impressive daughters, I have come to appreciate the remarkable woman she was. She embodied grace, warmth and quiet strength.

Norma was born in old Chinatown on Cavenagh Street in February 1929 to her parents 'Botany' Chin See Pon and Pauline Chee Quee. At age three, Norma's parents moved the family to Queensland and then to Sydney, where her parents operated a fish and chip shop. For her foundation years, Norma grew up in Sydney, working at her parent's shop and—I am sure—learning tricks of the cooking trade.

However, it seemed that the Territory was calling her back home to Darwin. In Sydney she met the young Alec Fong Lim. Norma and Alec were married in 1955 at St Andrew's Cathedral before returning to the Northern Territory—a place that would be their forever home.

Norma's greatest journey was her family. Together, she and Alec raised six daughters: Dallas; Michele; Tanya; Katrina; Camille; and Lorelei. Alec would often joke that he had enough daughters for a basketball team and one reserve. Norma was devoted to her husband and daughters, finding her greatest happiness in being a wife, mother and grandmother.

Those who knew Norma speak of her kind and gentle spirit, her artistic talent as a gifted watercolourist and a great and generous cook. Territorians remember Norma fondly, whether through her friendly smile at the shops, her calm presence at painting classes or the generosity she extended to friends and strangers alike. Many have shared memories online of how Norma and Alec contributed to our beloved Northern Territory community, not only through public service but through their kindness, humility and willingness to help others.

Although Norma spent her early years in Sydney, her heart belonged to the Territory. She loved Darwin's close-knit spirit as a community that looked after one another, celebrated diversity and shared in each other's joys and hardships. Norma Fong Lim will be remembered as a true old Darwin matriarch. Her love for her

family and community reflect the best of what it means to be a Territorian. Her life was one of quiet achievement, community and enduring love.

On behalf of our Labor team, we extend our deepest condolences to Norma's daughters, grandchildren, extended family, friends and loved ones. May Norma's memory continue to inspire kindness, compassion and unity among all who are fortunate to know her. May her legacy in the Northern Territory live on in honour of her life. May she rest in peace.

Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Madam Speaker, on 18 February 1929 a truly remarkable woman was born in Darwin—known then as Palmerston—to 'Botany' Chin See Pon and Pauline Chee Quee. This much-loved Territorian was Norma Elizabeth Fong Lim. I am honoured to pay tribute to her tonight.

Norma was 96 years when she passed away on 5 September 2025. She was the eldest of five children. When she was three years old, Norma moved with her family to Thursday Island where they helped run the family general store.

It was under the sparkling lights of Sydney, where Norma's family eventually moved, where she met the love of her life, who would bring Norma back to Darwin. Alexander Hung Soon Fong Lim and Norma married in Sydney and then moved to Darwin where they lovingly raised their six daughters: Dallas; Michele; Tanya; Katrina; Camille; and Lorelei.

I had the privilege of working with Camille as my ministerial adviser. She is an incredible woman in her own right and held her mother in high esteem. Camille told me that Norma's love for her family was immeasurable, and so was her passion for capturing special moments. With fondness, Camille remembers her mother having a Brownie box camera that was always in use.

Photography skills aside, Norma's culinary expertise was legendary among her family, friends and whoever had the honour of sharing her meals. It was no surprise that as they got older, all her daughters, except Lorelei, sought to replicate their mother's beloved dishes.

While she lived interstate, middle daughter and great cook herself, Katrina, was keen to find out how Norma boiled chicken. She knew it was not a matter of just throwing a chook in boiling water; it was about obtaining the juicy taste and texture her mother always achieved. Katrina rang Norma, who told her the method and ingredients. Katrina dutifully followed the directions, but for ages her mother's boiled chicken eluded her. I understand it was frustrating, to say the least. Then one day, when Katrina was in Darwin and watching her mother at work in the kitchen, she realised Norma added a piece of ginger the size of her thumb to the pot of boiled chicken. The magic was in the ginger, which Katrina maintains Norma had forgotten to tell her about. The story became family folklore, along with a family saying, 'Do not forget the ginger'.

Norma was not just a great cook of southern Cantonese Chinese cuisine; she started a tradition of cooking each family member's favourite dish for their birthday. Faced with a plethora of choice of delicious dishes from oyster chilli chicken, or *hoi yu gai* as they know it; sweet and sour pork the proper way—not orange but a pale yellow; steamed golden snapper with shallots and ginger; or the simple comfort food of eggy rice, Lorelei chose her mother's beef stroganoff as her favourite. It was so good that her daughter, Dallas, and her husband, Mike, looked forward to both his and Lorelei's birthday every year. He viewed the stroganoff and sweet and sour pork as both his favourites.

As mentioned by the Chief Minister, Norma was also an experienced fish and chip cook who, as confirmed by her sons-in-law, perfected beer batter and thrice-cooked chips. According to the family, she also excelled at steak Diane, slathering the steak with a rich red garlic sauce. I am told that commercial steak Diane paled in comparison.

Norma was an accomplished woman who supported her husband when he became Lord Mayor of Darwin. She was a fierce supporter of her family. Norma's memory lives on in her six daughters, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

I will read an extract from a letter written to Norma by one of her daughters:

'My fondest memory of you and dad will always be watching you dressed to the nines, with dad resplendent in his black tux, you dolled up and beautiful, a waft of Chanel No 5 in your wake and you both dancing, waltzing to perfection—never a missed step—and always in sync. That is how I will always remember you both. We will all miss you terribly, but we know you are dancing with dad now.'

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I pay my respects to the late Norma Fong Lim and her family. I did not know Norma personally, but I feel duty-bound, as the current custodian of the Fong Lim electorate, to acknowledge her passing, not least as a beneficiary of her legacy.

In my maiden speech I reflected on the fact that Fong Lim is, by NT standards, a relatively new electorate, having been created in 2008 as a composite of inner original Darwin suburbs and newer northern suburbs. It is named, as I frequently mention when I travel, after Alec Fong Lim AM, the first Chinese-Australian Lord Mayor. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1986 for his services to the community and local government. I reiterate that I am deeply honoured to represent a constituency named after Alec Fong Lim AM, the embodiment of Australia's most successful multicultural community. I proudly bare my father's name, alongside my eponymous electorate, knowing how much I owe them both. I extend those remarks to envelope Norma, knowing the extent to which she has been a pillar for the entire Fong Lim family, especially her husband as Lord Mayor.

Norma was 27 years old when she met the charming and handsome Alec Fong Lim in Darwin on his way back from overseas, where I believe he was on a junket to find himself a wife. Having returned unsuccessfully, he instead managed to snag himself a date with Norma and proposed after a whirlwind romance of six weeks. I am told she was saved from being left on the shelf, but I am not sure who saved who, based on the notes that I have.

Norma and Alec lived a full life together, having six beautiful intelligent daughters of whom we know about in different contexts. Norma valued teaching the girls to be strong, independent women and was clearly proud of them all. As a wife, Norma supported Alec through all his ventures, including his involvement in the family pubs, business ventures, wholesale groceries, alcohol, dress shops, the fruit juice stall and even his life as a bookie. After many years of practice, with Alec Fong Lim having held many significant posts in the interim, she was likewise serious in her support as lady mayoress and quietly offered sustenance.

She rarely stepped into the spotlight, by many accounts, insisting the spotlight was for Alec in the first instance. Nevertheless, she was still always willing to throw an impromptu dinner party, put on a frock and have dinner at a moment's notice or to offer her arm at functions. I learned that, in her time as lady mayoress, Norma explored her talent as an artist. She loved painting landscapes and fauna and holding exhibitions to sell her artwork. Many people, in this room in fact, have one of Norma's paintings in their office, and there are a few hanging in the chambers on the third floor of Nichols Place.

Her love of painting continued even when her dementia started to take over her life. She attended many paint-and-create sessions and usually put her spin on the subject. It was her own and, therefore, worth recognising in its own right. It was great to see her have something of her own beyond being a mother and wife. She loved colour and appreciated nature, which is evident through all the testimony about her paintings.

I also learned through Tanya's eulogy, which I hope she will not mind me drawing from, that while she supported Alec through his endeavours, particularly as lady mayoress, what is not known is how difficult she found public life a lot of the time. I quote from the eulogy:

> *While she was immensely proud of Dad, her shy nature made it difficult for her to attend so many social functions smiling nicely and making small talk. But like the queen (after who she got her second name) she did it well.*

When Alec passed away, she of course missed him dearly but was also happy to say good riddance to those social events. The exception was when she had the opportunity to go to Government House and meet King Charles, who was then Prince Charles. Her love and focus for family shone through when she asked him, 'Do you get to babysit your grandchildren often?', and he said, 'Oh no; I am not good at that.' She was a family person through and through; it was always at the forefront of her mind.

She was a stoic and humble stay-at-home mum, which probably shone through most after Cyclone Tracy, having to shoulder the burden of looking after the whole family in the wake of tragedy. Luckily, she and her four daughters were visiting her mum in Sydney at the time for Christmas when disaster struck. With Alec away doing cleanup in Darwin, Norma organised schooling for the four youngest daughters and made their lives as normal as possible, despite the devastation that had been brought upon Darwin. She knew that Darwin had been decimated, her brother-in-law had been killed and her eldest daughter and mother-in-law had been saved by police who collected them and took them to safe haven.

She would have been terribly worried about what sort of future would lay ahead, but she proved her mettle by working with Alec to get things up and running interstate and home in Darwin.

Her support for Alec was absolute by all accounts. She was there in good times and in bad, and theirs was a partnership of equals born of real mutual love and respect. She was by his side when he was forced to resign early as Lord Mayor because of ill health and, likewise, by his bedside when he passed just a month later.

To the family first and foremost, I say that I am proud to be associated with the Fong Lim name. That sentiment extends to the late great Norma Fong Lim as well as Alec Fong Lim. Lady mayoress Fong Lim was gracious, charming and kind—words used to describe her by the many people who crossed her paths over the years.

My sincere condolences go to all in the family here tonight and beyond—perhaps online.

Vale, Norma Fong Lim.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute to Mrs Norma Fong Lim, a remarkable Territorian who sadly left us on 5 September 2025 at the age of 96. I acknowledge all the family members who are here with us.

I had the privilege of meeting Norma earlier this year at her 96th birthday celebration at the senior's lunch hosted by the Chung Wah Society. I remember walking in to that room—filled with laughter, family and friends—and seeing Norma surrounded by many people who adored her. When I presented her flowers on behalf of our team, she smiled with that unmistakeable mix of grace, humility and quiet strength that so many people have described. Even at 96 she carried a presence that spoke volumes about the Territory's past and the extraordinary life she had lived.

Born Norma Chin Ling Ying in Darwin on 18 February 1929, she was the daughter of Chin See Pon—known affectionately as 'Botany'—and Pauline Chee Quee. Hers was a family deeply woven into the fabric of Northern Territory's Chinese-Australian story; her lineage stretches back to the goldfields, the rail camps and the early days of Palmerston and Pine Creek. Norma's childhood took her from Darwin to Thursday Island and later to Sydney during the war years before she returned to the Territory as a young woman.

In 1955 she married Alexander (Alec) Fong Lim. His grandfather, known as Fong Ding, migrated here in 1890, and Alec's father, Fong Fook Lim—known as George Lim—was born in Fountain Head in the Douglas Daly region in 1902. This family was instrumental in building Darwin's most iconic hospitality landmarks, including the famous Lim's Hotel and Sand Pebbles Restaurant. For those who have not made the connection—only some are old enough to have been to Lim's—this is now the Beachfront Hotel in Rapid Creek.

Alec would go on to become one of the Darwin's most beloved Lord Mayors, elected in 1984 and again in 1988, remembered for his generosity and civic pride. I am also reliably informed that he had a quirky sense of humour. Through it all, Norma was by his side, as a partner, confidant and quiet powerhouse. Those who knew her speak of her kindness, hospitality and artistry. She was a talented watercolourist, accomplished cook across many kitchens and matriarch whose home was always open.

Norma and Alec raised six daughters—Dallas, Michele, Tanya, Katrina, Camille and Lorelei—each of whom went on to succeed in their chosen paths, and together they have carried forward the values of service, resilience and family that Norma embodied.

Camille and I did the Australian Institute of Company Directors course together in 2022, and I have met with her in the last two or three years. I used to see her at many AICD events after that as well.

I was unable to attend Norma's funeral as I was in Sydney for the Multicultural Affairs ministers' meeting, but I thank Lorelei for providing me with the eulogies from the day and the moving letter to her mum. I was struck by many things, but there were a couple of takeaways I will share. She said, 'You showed me that forgiveness is never conditional. You taught me strength and resilience and to never be afraid to be vulnerable.'

The Fong Lim name is now etched into the Territory's history. It stands proudly on our electoral map, with the electorate of Fong Lim named in honour of Alec's legacy as Darwin's first Lord Mayor of Chinese descent. We heard from the Member for Fong Lim about this.

The beautiful road from the gates at East Point to the gun turrets was named Alec Fong Lim Drive after the popular mayor, as was Lake Alexander, due to the work he had done to develop the area and the family history of living on East Point Road.

Behind that public recognition lies Norma's quiet influence—the steady, gracious presence that supported and sustained that legacy. Her story reminds us that behind every great civic figure is often someone whose strength and compassion has shaped their family and community.

Norma represented so much of what defines the Northern Territory: multicultural roots; pioneering spirit; and a life built on contribution rather than recognition. Her story, and indeed the Fong Lim story, reflects how Chinese-Australian families helped shape Darwin through not only business and community life but also their enduring generosity of spirit. Put simply, they contributed enormously to the diversity and multiculturalism that Darwin and the Territory is known for. May it stay that way forever.

Norma's legacy will remain etched in the history of the Territory and the lives she touched with kindness, artistry and quiet strength.

My condolences go to the Fong Lim family. May she rest in peace.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I contribute on behalf of Georgia Politis, the photographer and storyteller behind the Darwin DiverCity Series.

Georgia had the privilege of meeting and photographing Norma Fong Lim, whose warmth, wisdom and lifelong connection to the Northern Territory left a lasting impression on her. What began as a simple portrait session became a heartfelt conversation between generations, which inspired Georgia to share Norma's remarkable journey and the legacy she represents for all Territorians. These are Georgia's words:

'In 2024 I came across a Facebook post featuring Norma Fong Lim. I immediately noticed her longstanding connection to the Northern Territory and made it my mission to ensure she was part of the Darwin DiverCity Series.

'Not long after, Norma came to the studio. Initially reserved, she soon began to open up as we started talking. Her eyes lit up with her every story. Together with her daughter, we spoke about Darwin for over an hour. Although her memory was limited, her recollections of the Darwin of decades past were vivid and heartfelt.

'She reminded me of how much the Territory has changed across generations—from water supply to roads and housing—and how important it is to appreciate the simple things in life. Norma is one of the rare Territorians who told me about Darwin before World War II, Cyclone Tracy and the Territory achieving self-government.

'She has seen the Territory destroyed and rebuilt. She has seen the Darwin CBD grow from ground-floor dwellings to a growing city and has seen the Territory grow into the population it is today. She is an example of still returning to the Territory at a time when there was so much uncertainty.

'When it came time for her portrait, she had a wise, soulful look. Though shy at first, she soon came out of her shell and thoroughly enjoyed herself. Capturing her was an honour. She looked incredible for her over 90 years, and it was a privilege to share her story, which spanned generations between us.

'Norma was unforgettable, and it is clear that many others who met her feel the same. That same day, I shared the portrait on my Facebook page to welcome her to the series. The response was overwhelming, with hundreds of likes, many shares and countless heartfelt comments. The people of the Top End recognised and adored Norma. Some reflected on the enormous changes she had witnessed in the Territory; others expressed gratitude for having met her, with some sharing memories that stretched back more than 50 years.

'Norma was one of those rare people you never forget. She had warmth in her eyes, a gentle voice and a kindness that radiated from her. She was happy to be there, often holding a photo of her late husband, Alec, close to her heart.

'When her photo was later displayed at the exhibition, many people paused in front of it to tell me stories about Norma and Alec. She was, without question, one of the most talked about people in the series. Her portrait sparked countless memories and connections. Whether it was about her late husband or her children, everyone had a story linked to Norma and her family.

'Norma's story is truly special. While many Territorians migrated to Darwin between 1950 and 1980, Norma was born here in 1929, a first-generation Territorian. Her father, 'Botany' Chin See Pon, was also born in Darwin—known as Palmerston then—in 1900 and grew up in Pine Creek where his father worked as a miner.

After studying in China he returned to Darwin and worked as a tailor before operating a billiard parlour in Chinatown.

'Norma's mother, Pauline Chee Quee, was born on Thursday Island to James Chee Quee and Moo Kim Kow. James, originally from China, once served as a cook at Government House for Administrator J A Gilruth, while Moo Kim Kow was born at the mining settlement of Bridge Creek in 1891.

'Pauline returned to Darwin to marry 'Botany' Chin See Pon in 1928, celebrating with a lavish wedding near today's Chinese Temple. When Norma was three, the family returned to Thursday Island to help run the family store after James Chee Quee's passing. During World War II, Botany moved the family to Sydney where he established a fish and chip shop.

'Norma's future husband, Alec Fong Lim, also had deep Territory roots. His grandfather, Fong Ding, arrived around 1888, likely as an indentured labourer on the Palmerston–Pine Creek railway, later becoming a miner and gardener in Pine Creek. His son, George Lim, became a respected businessman around Katherine, Alice Springs and Darwin.

'After World War II, Geroge acquired the Victoria Hotel which his sons, including Alec, managed for the next two decades, later establishing the iconic Lim's Hotel at Rapid Creek—home to the iconic Sand Pebbles Restaurant.'

I can attest to that, as my father used to drink there. I continue:

'In 1954 and 1955 Alec embarked on a world tour, reportedly under his father's instructions, to find a suitable wife. On returning to Australia, he met Norma in Sydney and quickly wrote home to say that he had found "the one". After meeting Alec's family and gaining their approval, Norma and Alec married in November 1955 at St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney.

'When she later arrived in Darwin in the middle of the Wet Season, dressed in stockings and her best outfit, she fondly recalled melting in the tropical heat.

'Together, Norma and Alec raised their six daughters, who are all successful in their chosen paths. Their family has since grown to include six grandchildren.

'Alec became a well-known entrepreneur and served as Lord Mayor of Darwin from 1984 to 1990, earning the deep respect and love of the community. Norma, always by his side, was known for her creative generosity and warmth and as a talented watercolourist and exceptional cook, particularly of Chinese cuisine.

'Norma embodied the Territory spirit—resilient, creative and deeply rooted in the history of migration, family and contribution. Her story spans more than 130 years of connection to the Northern Territory and stands as a testament to generational growth, change and legacy—an example of true diversity and the heart of Darwin.'

Thank you, Georgia, for this wonderful recollection of your time with Norma.

I seek leave to table a copy of the Darwin DiverCity Series, Series One 2020–2024 photography project by Georgia Politis to preserve the wonderful portraits Georgia captured of Norma and her legacy to the Territory.

Leave granted.

Mrs CARLSON: On behalf of the Wanguri community, Georgia Politis and my family, I extend my condolences to the family of the beautiful Norma Fong Lim. We appreciate her longstanding contributions to the Territory.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, Norma Fong Lim was a true Territory icon. I only met Norma a few times over the years since arriving in Darwin in 1995, but I have had the fortune to know three of her six girls, Katrina, Camille and Lorelei. I will not go anywhere near the argument about who is more stunning and talented because in my eyes they all are.

I will speak on how much the Territory has to thank Norma for and the legacy she leaves. Children are a reflection of their parents; based on her reflection in her children and my encounters with her, Norma was a beautiful soul. She was passionate about Darwin and committed to her family as a supportive mum and doting grandmother and great-grandmother. Norma was resilient—a trait she passed on to the three

Fong Lim women who I got to know over the years. While she may have been more comfortable staying away from the hustle and bustle of public life, her grace and patience in supporting her beloved husband, Alec, while he pursued life in the public eye will be something our community will be forever grateful for. It enabled him to be the best he could be and, in turn, give his all to his community, which they both loved.

Her gift to the community of her six amazing girls—each of whom have forged a path uniquely their own and, by their example, inspired others to chase their dreams—cannot be underestimated.

It has been mentioned that Norma was a talented artist. I stumbled upon this fact when attending a fundraiser many years back. I was attracted to one of the auction items—a painting depicting a classic Territory storm front coming in across the landscape—and I did not pay attention to who painted it; I just thought, 'Wow, I like that. I need to own that.' I was thrilled when I was the successful bidder.

I bumped into Katrina not too long after my successful foray into an activity I believe the Territory excels at, the charity auction, and expressed my excitement at my purchase. When I discovered it had been painted by Norma Fong Lim, I asked if I was right in understanding that was Katrina's mum, and she said that it was. I said, 'I did not realise she was a painter', and I recall that Katrina indicated that, at the time, sharing her artwork was a relatively new adventure for Norma. I remain chuffed at owning what I steadfastly continue to believe was one of her early works and possibly her first sale.

Our community is poorer for Norma's passing, and her light will not pass this way again. On behalf of my husband and my community, I extend my deepest condolences to all the Fong Lim family. Thank you for sharing your mum with us.

Madam SPEAKER: I convey my respects and deepest sympathies to the Fong Lim family.

Like the Chief Minister, over the last four or five years I have observed Mrs Fong Lim with one of her daughters, usually along the Nightcliff Foreshore. Every time I saw her with one of them I thought, 'How lucky is that woman to have so much love, and how lucky are her daughters to have her'.

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

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I mark Children's Week 2025, which is a time of celebration—there are many events across the Territory celebrating Children's Week—and also a time to shine a spotlight on the rights of children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This year it is 35 years since Australia signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the CROC), which was developed in 1989. Since then, Australia reports to the United Nations every five years on how well we are upholding those rights.

The convention outlines many fundamental rights that all children must have, including the right to thrive, learn, play and, crucially, to be heard. Article 12 of the convention is especially important. It says that children and young people have the right to have a say in things that are important to them and for adults to listen and take what they say seriously.

In the Northern Territory we are fortunate to have many youth advisory groups that embody this principle, like the NT Youth Round Table, the CREATE Foundation's Youth Advisory Groups, headspace, local government youth councils and numerous NGO youth advisory groups, which are providing young people with platforms to share their voices.

In my electorate we are working on different ways to ensure that young people have a voice. We are working with young people to develop a Bill, which I am looking forward to presenting to this Assembly in the future—a 'future generations Bill'—to ensure that all of our lawmaking in this Chamber protects those who will be living with the results of it.

It is important that we give children and young people a voice, listen to them and act on what they have to say. Otherwise, it is just tokenistic and disempowering. That is one of the reasons Children's Week is so crucial; it reminds us that children are the experts in their own lives, and we have a duty to respect and support them.

The convention also reminds us of other essential rights:

- Article 3 calls on all adults to do what is best for children and consider how decisions affect them.

- Article 4 makes it clear that governments have a responsibility to protect children's rights, assist families and create environments where children can grow and reach their full potential.

- Article 18 states that children have the right to be raised by their parents when possible.

- Article 20 guarantees special care and help if a child cannot live with their parents.

- Article 19 protects children from being hurt or mistreated physically or mentally.

- Article 39 ensures that children who have been hurt, neglected or badly treated have the right to help and support to heal.

I have no doubt that every person in this Chamber truly believes in the preciousness of children and that we all need to work together to make sure they can flourish. This year's theme, based on Article 42, is clear and powerful: everyone should know about children's rights.

I take a few minutes to make sure everyone in this Chamber is aware of children's rights and how we are travelling in the Northern Territory to protect them. Despite the commitments made by successive governments, the reality for children in the Northern Territory is alarming.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner reports that children are bearing the consequences of failed systems. We are going backwards on many fronts, such as early childhood development, preschool enrolments, education and employment engagement. Too many children—especially First Nations children and those with disabilities—face ongoing systemic disadvantage.

Just last month a child in the NT youth detention system was held unlawfully for 84 hours in isolation. They were denied food and medication as coercive tactics—in breach of legal safeguard provisions—which is a stark violation of their rights in the CROC under Articles 3, 19 and 39.

If we were truly committed to children's rights, this would never happen. If we were truly committed, we would raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14, invest properly in early intervention and ban harmful practices like solitary confinement and spit hoods. Every child entering detention would receive timely assessments for disability and mental health needs, not after months of neglect. We would restore that the principle of detention as a last resort, which is consistent with evidence, human rights standards and best practice for children. If we were truly committed we would close legal loopholes allowing mistreatment and ensure independent oversight of detention centres, fulfilling our obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.

Our children deserve more than words; they deserve a Territory where every child—no matter their background or circumstance—feels safe, supported and empowered. To the children of the Northern Territory—whether you are in remote communities like Yuendumu or Maningrida or a regional town such as Alice Springs, Katherine or Darwin—how we look after you today affects all of us every day into the future. We need to listen to you and make decisions based on making sure that you have a future where you can thrive and where your safety, wellbeing and opportunities are priorities for all of us.

Children's Week is a reminder for all of us to listen, learn and act. In the words on the great Nelson Mandela:

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

When we protect children's rights and listen to their voices, we build stronger families and communities and a stronger Territory.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I put on the record the death of a dear longstanding Katherine local, Werner Oswin Sarny. I will read out his eulogy, which his daughter, Jackie, sent me. His funeral was yesterday, but I was in parliament so I could not attend. Werner was born on 9 July 1938 and passed away on 3 October 2025. This is from Jacqueline Sarny—the youngest daughter of Werner and Patricia Sarny, also deceased—along with her sisters, Monica and Natalie:

'We are here to honour our dad, who is now at peace and reunited with our dearly missed mum.

'Dad was a hardworking, determined man who accomplished much throughout his life. His achievements were many, and the list of people he worked with and impacted is long. While I cannot name them all today, I can say this: dad was proud of what he built and deeply grateful to those who supported him along the way.

He was especially thankful to be embraced as a Territorian, despite not being born in Australia. Above all, he was a devoted husband and a loving father and opa, always focused on providing for his family.

'I am grateful that dad took the time, many years ago, to write down his life story. There are a few different versions floating around, each with its own unique details. As some of you may know, deciphering his words can also be quite challenging.'

Even though Werner had been in Australia for a long time, his accent was extremely strong up until the day he was unable to speak much more. I continue:

'Werner Oswin Sarny was born in Bad Godesberg, Germany, in 1938 to Austrian and German parents. He was the oldest of three children. Our grandparents came from large families rooted in the same region for generations—many of whom still live there today.

'When dad was just a few months old his family moved to Innsbruck, Austria, where they lived for nine years, including throughout World War II. Those years were marked by hardship, scarcity of food, poverty and uncertainty. Our grandfather worked on a vegetable farm, and our grandmother sewed clothing to make ends meet. As a child, dad picked wildflowers to sell at the local market. He also collected firewood to sell, sometimes getting in trouble for cutting wood he did not have permission to cut.

'In 1947 the family relocated to Lavamund, a small town of about 2,500 people, where my grandfather took over his father's shoemaking business. The family of five lived in a two-bedroom house and, while life was still hard, it was made a little easier as they had their own garden and more food.

'Dad found ways to keep busy, whether reading adventure novels, playing with discarded wartime ammunition—which I am told made impressive fireworks when thrown in the fire—and sometimes during school holidays he would go to Bavaria and stay with his grandmother. While there, he would work on the farm, ride tractors with his uncle and pick hops for extra pocket money. One memorable story involves dad swimming into a flooded river to retrieve logs for local farmers—a daring act that earned him a reward and, no doubt, a few grey hairs for his mother.

'At 14, dad began working in the family shoemaking business, Schuhhaus Sarny. After passing his shoemaker exams, he moved to Vienna to work at the Bally shoe factory for a few years. Dad expressed a desire to travel, but his father insisted he complete his master shoemaker training before he could explore the world. Dad did so, becoming the youngest master shoemaker in Austria, qualified to run his own business, with the aim to take over from his father.

'After completing his mandatory nine months in the national service, his wanderlust, as dad called it, remained strong. In 1959 he became a ten-pound tourist, when the Australian Government would sell tickets for 10 pounds to encourage migration. Dad set sail from Geneva to Australia aboard the ship *Flaminia*, arriving in Melbourne after a four-week journey. He worked hard to learn English during the voyage, though he arrived with only a basic grasp.

'Soon after, he began working at the Paddle Brothers shoe factory in Melbourne, where his expertise quickly earned him a foreman role. He learned to drive, made friends and picked up colourful Australian slang. For example, he discovered that being called "the right sort of bastard" was actually a compliment.

'In 1962 dad began travelling across Australia. He worked at a meatworks in Cairns, where he excelled due to his knife skills, which he learned from shoemaking. He drove his Volkswagen Beetle through Port Douglas and the Gulf Country of northwest Queensland. Eventually, he arrived in Darwin and found work at the meatworks. His plan was to drive to Western Australia, return to Melbourne and then head back to Austria, but fate had other ideas.

'About 100 kilometres outside of Katherine his car broke down. It was badly damaged and towed back by a kind passerby. The local mechanic at March Motors told him that repairs would take two months, as parts had to be shipped from interstate. While waiting, dad began working at the newly opened Katherine Meatworks. Once his car was fixed he returned to Melbourne, where he enjoyed what he called a hectic social life, and he spent most of his wages.

'In March 1964 he was invited back to Katherine to become the foreman of the by-product section of the meatworks, where he lived in a tent onsite. On his days off, dad explored the Top End, fishing and swimming in the Daly River and Kakadu. He was captivated by the billabongs, birds and breathtaking landscapes. His love for the region grew deeper with each adventure.

‘Over the next couple of years, he split his time between Katherine and Melbourne. With his savings, he bought a 1955 red convertible Porsche in Melbourne—a car he adored—which turned heads wherever it went.

‘In 1965 everything changed. Dad met mum at an afternoon dance at a St Kilda restaurant called Whisky a Go Go. After he dropped her home, in his words, they went steady. His plans to return to Austria were quietly shelved. In April 1966 mum and dad began a new chapter together when they moved to Katherine. They were both employed at the meatworks, with dad also working weekends as a tour guide at the gorge for local businessman, Eric March.

‘In those days, the tours were run by tying multiple four-person punts together and then they would tow them up the river to conduct the tour. Dad found joy and pride in guiding visitors through the gorge and helping people experience the beauty of the region he came to love so deeply.

‘That same year, mum and dad were given the chance to lease the North Bank guesthouse. Dad continued his work at the meatworks and the gorge, while mum poured her heart into the guesthouse, rising early to cook breakfast for guests and doing all the cleaning and washing for the property. Unfortunately, this meant the end for the head-turning Porsche, which was replaced by a more practical old ute.

‘Mum and dad were married in 1968, and they shared 55 beautiful years together. Whenever dad got a chance to tell someone how long they had been married, he would flash that cheeky grin, do a bit of mental math, divide that number by four and proudly announce the result. You see, they tied the knot on 29 February, a leap year, and dad never missed an opportunity to turn that into a joke. I can still picture him cracking himself up, delighted every time he delivered the punchline. It was classic dad, repeating the same joke with such joy that you would think he was hearing it for the first time.

‘Dad finished up at the meatworks in 1968, and in that same year they purchased the guesthouse and added a caravan park with 15 sites. In 1969 dad, along with a partner Brian Lambert, took another leap and bought the tour boat business at the gorge from Eric March. A few years later, they acquired the competing tour company, again with March's generous support. With this came more tireless work—often 80-hour weeks—but mum and dad still found time to raise three children—Monica in 1970; Natalie in 1972; and me in 1979—whilst growing the business.

‘Even as the business grew, at times employing up to 200 people, dad was not averse to doing any jobs that needed doing himself, including cleaning and unblocking toilets. One of his mottos was, “You cannot ask someone to do a job you are not prepared to do yourself”. This is a trait he tried to instil in me.

‘Dad dedicated over 50 years to the Northern Territory tourism industry. With his entrepreneurial spirit and mum's unwavering support, dad became a successful businessman and helped put Katherine on the tourism map by building new accommodation and expanding tour offerings that showcased the wonders of the Top End. Even after the devastating floods of 1998, which brought enormous losses, dad's resolve to rebuild never wavered.

‘As many of you may remember, he could often be seen on the forecourt of BP dressed in his signature khaki uniform and high socks whilst directing traffic, pumping petrol, chatting to locals and spruiking the Top End to the tourists. Dad was always in a hurry. He had a habit of diving headfirst into things at full speed, rarely pausing to consider the risks or entertain the possibility of failure. Whilst this served him well in business ambitions, it brought him undone a few times. One unforgettable example came when he was a sprightly 76-year-old. Spotting a tree that needing pruning, he grabbed the chain saw, set up an extension ladder and decided he could handle it solo. It did not go well. He fell from the top, suffering broken ribs and a punctured lung, ending up in a medically induced coma. Months in hospital followed but, true to form, he pulled through.

‘That was not his only brush with death; he had a few other close calls over the years and even stared down cancer and won. Resilient, stubborn and always charging ahead, dad was nothing if not unstoppable. He served on various tourism associations and received several accolades, including the Tourism minister’s award for excellence; the Qantas Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual; and, in 2000, the Order of Australia for his service to NT tourism.

‘He was proud of these honours but always credited mum for her role in his success. Their partnership was built on mutual respect and shared purpose. They never argued; they had only the occasional difference of opinion and always worked as a team. Although dad hoped one of us would take over the family business, none of us showed any interest whatsoever, much to his disappointment. Even when I pointed out that he

had not taken over from his own father's business, there was still an assumption that one day I would give in to his constant pressure.

'When dad's health began to fail in a way that, sadly, he could not beat this time, I stepped in to help. In doing so, I think he finally saw his wish fulfilled. Though I joined at that time when the business had scaled down, I have come to truly appreciate the depth of his commitment and his immense effort it took to keep things running all these years. While dad was the driver of Travel North, it took an army to operate it. It would not have thrived without the incredible people who supported it from the beginning and continue to do so. I sincerely thank each and every one of you for everything you did for mum and dad.

'Losing both our parents to dementia has been incredibly difficult, but we find comfort in knowing they are together again, finally at peace. Dad is survived by his sisters in Austria, Waltraud and Ingrid; his three loving daughters; and our families here today.'

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, this week we celebrate Children's Week, which is a special time to recognise the rights, voices and boundless potential of children across the Northern Territory.

Children's Week reminds us of something simple but powerful: every child has the right to grow up safe, healthy, happy and supported to reach their full potential. In the Territory that means making sure that every child—whether they live in Darwin, Yuendumu, Hermannsburg, Yulara, Timber Creek, Alice Springs or everywhere in between—has the same opportunities to learn, play and dream big.

Raising strong, confident kids is not just a job for families; it is the work of an entire community. It takes schools, teachers, early childhood educators, community groups, sporting clubs, health workers and many organisations who show up every day to support our kids. I acknowledge the tireless work of our childcare centres, family support services, youth organisations and libraries, which run activities that spark imagination and help children feel seen, valued and connected.

From the opening of Children's Week this Saturday at the Casuarina Library to playgroups in remote communities, these places bring families together and create a sense of belonging. Children's Week is also a chance to reflect on what it takes to give our kids the best start at life. That means investing in early childhood education, family support programs and safe and nurturing environments where children can grow and thrive. It means supporting people who support our kids—educators, carers and youth workers—and ensuring they have the resources, training and recognition they deserve. It means listening to our young people and hearing their ideas, concerns and hopes for the future. When we empower our children we build strong families and communities in the Northern Territory.

The theme of this year's Children's Week reminds us that every child has the right to be healthy, safe and heard. Those words should guide us in our policies, classrooms and community life. Let us keep working together to make the Territory the best place in Australia where a child can grow to be the person they want to be and be proud of who they are, where they come from and where they are going.

I will read the poem of the winner of the Casuarina Library's Children's Art Exhibition. This is 'Children's Rights and Global Warming poem' by Kirsten:

Every child has the right to play, to learn, to laugh, to dream each day
A world that is safe with skies so clear
A future bright without fear
But rising seas and burning air
Take away the things we share
Floods wash homes, the forests fall
And children's voices cannot stand tall
When heatwaves strike and floods run
It steals the chance for kids to grow.
Their rights to safety, schools and song
Are shaken when the Earth goes wrong
So hear the call both loud and strong
Protect the place we all belong
For children's rights will only stay
If we guard the Earth today

That is a powerful message.

I give a huge shout-out to the amazing Northern Territory Children's Commissioner and staff and thank them for their strong advocacy, hard work and commitment to Territory kids.

Happy Children's Week to all the families and community groups who will be celebrating across the Northern Territory.

I move on to another amazing event this week, which has already happened across the Territory. This week marks a moment of immense pride, reflection and celebration, being 40 years since the handback of Uluru-Kata Tjuta to its traditional owners, the Anangu people. History was made on 26 October 1985. The land was rightfully returned to the care and custodianship of the Anangu people. This moment recognised not just ownership but also a deep spiritual connection and significance, knowledge and responsibility that stretches back tens of thousands of years to the Dreamtime.

This year an amazing, deadly delegation of Anangu traditional owners from Uluru and Mutitjulu travelled to London to share their story and celebrate this milestone with His Majesty King Charles. They carried with them the spirit of country, the voice of community and the strength of culture that can continues to shape our nation.

Their meeting with King Charles at Australia House was a powerful reminder that Uluru is not just a national icon; it is a living, cultural landscape and a place of language, law, learning and identity for Anangu people. The delegation represented a bridge between old and new worlds built on mutual respect, recognition and enduring connection.

I acknowledge the traditional owners who made the long journey from Mutitjulu to see the King in London and thank them for representing our people and our country with grace and pride. I acknowledge Alison Carroll, Rita Okai, Selina Kulitja, Rene Kulitja, Harry Nelson, Rueben Burton, Craig Woods, Sammy Wilson and Tapaya Edwards who made the long journey.

I acknowledge those preparing for this weekend's celebration. The celebrations this week at Yulara and Uluru in Mutitjulu will mark tens of thousands of people coming together to celebrate this important anniversary. This weekend is about coming together under that great sacred rock, celebrating the strengths of Anangu culture, the resilience of community and the shared commitment to protect and honour this country's most sacred place.

Uluru is by far one of the most sacred places on this planet. We celebrate those who have fought for land rights and those who continue that work, including elders, families and young ones who live and breathe the stories of country every day. The handback of Uluru was more than a symbolic gesture; it was a turning point in Australian history. It taught us that returning land to the rightful custodians brings healing, understanding and hope for the future.

This is an opportunity for all of us to recommit to that journey, walk together, listen deeply and ensure that the next generation of Anangu children can grow up strong in culture, community and opportunity.

To the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, *palya*; thank you for your strength, wisdom, courage and generosity in sharing this sacred place with the world. This anniversary is a reminder that when we respect and invest in First Nations people, we rise together.

I am a supporter of a republic, but I celebrate this significant event of traditional Aboriginal Australians travelling from Uluru to see the King. It is an important milestone and celebration. To those who have their opinion on the monarchy, that is your opinion. Please do not use this experience to denigrate the amazing opportunity that many of our First Nations brothers and sisters had.

I share positive news that the delegation that went to see the King also provided him with art from that community. It is incredible, and we should celebrate that amazing piece, which was brought to life on canvas by Eunice Woods. It is great to have a beautiful piece of Aboriginal art now with King Charles to remind him every day of the importance of language, law and culture of First Nations people.

I look forward to being in Mutitjulu this weekend to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the handback of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker I seek leave to table the articles and news relating to the aquaculture journey at Wadeye, which I forgot to do earlier.

Leave granted.

Mr MACKAY: I pay tribute to an incredible story of accomplishment due to an amazing community effort and spirit. A pathway has been constructed at TRL Stadium between fields 1 and 2 to allow for disability access. This pathway was initially a vision to allow passionate rugby league fans, Charles and Mary-Lou McGregor-Shaw, to access the TRL grounds to watch their young sons play. Following a devastating car accident on Australia Day in 2024, Charles and Mary-Lou are wheelchair-bound and tenaciously working through years of rehabilitation. Watching their boys play brings happiness and an escape from the gruelling medical treatment.

The impact of this project has had a large ripple effect, marking an important step towards ensuring accessibility for all people with disabilities—as well as for the elderly, families with prams and young children—allowing everyone to safely access and enjoy watching their loved ones play.

Led by Melanie and Terry Moore—the owners of Virginia-based business, Paving the Way NT—a group of kind-hearted Territory people and community members have given their time and money to fund and install a paved pathway to enable all-ability access from field 1 to field 2 at the TRL Stadium in Marrara.

In addition to Melanie and Terry, I acknowledge and voice my immense appreciation to the other local businesses and individuals who generously contributed their time, resources and expertise, without asking for a single cent, for the betterment of others. The dedication of each of these local heroes has had a tremendous impact on the project and on the many members of our sporting community who regularly use the grounds.

I pay tribute to Hames Sharley Darwin, with a special thanks to Alex Quin and his team for his time and expertise in preparing the architectural drawings; M+J Builders and team for diligently managing all the regulations, building permits and meetings with government officials; Tru-Flow Services and team for undertaking the digging, groundwork preparation and irrigation works; HB Blocks and Pavers and team for supplying the large quantity of pavers required for the project; Sage Civil NT and team for providing all the raw materials needed to lay the pavers and complete the finishing works; and the Paving the Way NT for their hard work in laying the pavers.

I was lucky enough to go there the other week to see the progress of the path being installed, and it was incredible to see the young fellows helping with the seasoned rugby people. I note that Terry was there leading the project from about 6 am, and at about 9 am he went to coach a team. He is an incredible man; I pay special tribute to Melanie and Terry Moore. This is the kind of community spirit that fills me with pride and reminds me how selfless Territorians are when they hear of someone in need. I cannot thank them enough.

I also pay tribute to the great late Edith Joyce Hammerberg, known as Joy. She was a Goyder resident and owner of Zanadu Rural Retreat. She was known as a Legacy lady and insisted on being involved in the annual ANZAC march at the Humpty Doo Village Green. I have fond memories of seeing her there watching the parade. I thank her daughter, Gay Ramsay, for informing us of Joy's passing and her daughter, Kerry Walsh, who spoke on Facebook about Joy's long and interesting life. Rest in peace.

The winners of the Northern Territory Education and Care Awards were announced on 10 October. I am thrilled to congratulate Humpty Doo Primary School teacher—and also my mate's mum—Mrs Tracy Bond, who won the Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher category. Mrs Bond is an asset to the preschool and the whole Humpty Doo Primary School community, going above and beyond and working long hours to ensure everyone in her class is cared for and achieving growth every day whilst making learning fun. I have seen the art projects those kids have commissioned, and they are far more talented than I am.

Tracy is well known and loved, having taught at a number of rural schools, including when I was at Girraween Primary School. This win is well-deserved recognition of Tracy's years of dedicated service and compassion.

On 31 October we will celebrate World Teachers' Day, which reminds us to take off our hats to teachers and to celebrate and acknowledge all our amazing teachers who inspire, support and empower young people every day. I am pleased to see that Goyder's own Taminmin College principal, John Harris—my Year 10 teacher—the fearless leader of the school, is a finalist for Principal of the Year. I wish him good luck with that. Ms Lily Coats is also a finalist for Secondary Educator of the Year. It is a great school, and I highly recommend it. Congratulations, John and Lily.

Goyder resident, Jessie-Rose McDonald, was recently announced as the winner of the Early Career Excellence award at the 2025 NT Allied Health Excellence Awards. Jessie completed her Bachelor of Physiotherapy in 2023 and has worked in a variety of clinical settings. Jessie joined the team at Territory Therapy Solutions to further her skills, and her passion lies in working towards client-centred goals and helping people achieve positive change.

The Minister for Health will agree that allied health professionals are on the front line of keeping Territorians well, and they are doing a fantastic job every day. Allied health is the third-largest clinical workforce across the Northern Territory, so I congratulate Jessie on her win and thank her for dedicating herself to keeping Territorians moving freely.

In August there were the long-awaited local government elections. I am pleased to congratulate Mayor Rachael Wright on her election to lead Litchfield Council. I worked with Rachael for a number of years when I was on the council with her, and I consider her to be a good friend.

I pay tribute to the former mayor, Doug Barden, who has dedicated most of his life since he could walk to community service. I wish him well in his retirement. Doug is a fierce advocate for the rural area, and I still see him regularly at the markets.

I welcome new North Ward councillor, Daisy Crawford, to the council. She is a fantastic young mum in the rural area who is in tune with the needs of young families and their concerns about the Litchfield Council rate base.

To anyone watching who is keen to put up their hand for the North Ward by-election, nominations recently opened. The election will be held on 29 November 2025, and I encourage anyone who might be interested in joining the great Litchfield Council and representing their community to put up their hand. It is a tremendous honour.

I congratulate Kevin Harlan and Emma Sharp on being re-elected to the Litchfield Council. I worked with them for a number of years, and they are fantastic advocates for the rural area. I welcome Pauline Cass to the council, who I have known for many years, as I went to school with her son. While we might disagree on certain topics, I know that she has the community at her heart.

I give credit to the greedy Kris Civitarese, who took 47% of the primary vote when he only needed 33%. That is 17% he did not need, and he should give it back.

On 26 October Team Night Stalker—comprising Bees Creek residents, Alan Stalker, and his co-driver Jason Osborne—commenced the 2025 Aussie Muscle Car Run, raising funds for Variety to continue their great work in supporting kids and families facing challenging times. Team Night Stalker has been participating in the Aussie Muscle Car Run since 2015, and over the past decade it has raised over $110,000 for Variety. The 2025 run commences in Devonport Bluff in Tasmania and finishes in Hobart. Good luck, Alan and Jason. I am proud to support your efforts to raise money for Variety NT. I am sure you will share the Territory-tough spirit with the folks on the apple isle; I hope it is nice and warm.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, I will share a few reflections and acknowledgements from across our Casuarina community—moments that show what makes our area such a great place to live. Whether it is small businesses giving it a go, local sport bringing people together or volunteers quietly improving our neighbourhoods, there is a lot happening to be proud of.

Whilst I spoke last week about the cleanup efforts along Rocklands Drive, tonight I acknowledge the Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group for its ongoing care of our local environment. Recently, 37 volunteers came together at Sandy Creek and collected a full truckload of rubbish, keeping it out of our mangroves and Darwin Harbour. Their efforts protect our turtles and marine life and preserve this beautiful coastline for everyone to enjoy. A big thank you goes to everyone who rolled up their sleeves. It is another example of Territorians working together and showing pride in their community.

Closer to home—also known as my electorate office—I recognise a local favourite that has quickly become the heart of Casuarina Village, Queeny's Snack Bar. Since taking over just three months ago, Shazma Iqbal and her husband have turned Queeny's into a warm, welcoming hub for locals. With great coffee, fresh wraps and incredible cakes, it is no wonder it has become a local talking point. Shazma's energy and genuine connection with her customers make the cafe feel like home. It is a comfortable space where people can chat, relax and feel part of something bigger.

Earlier this month we had fun celebrating three birthdays on the same day: Christina Boothby; Tony Miaoudis; and my electorate officer, Sara Battye. We shared a chocolate cake and, as shoppers stopped to say hello, it reminded me how small simple moments—a coffee, a chat and a smile—can build real community connections.

Small family-run businesses like Queeny's bring life and character to our shopping centres, create local jobs and support our economy. If you have not yet, pop in and enjoy a slice of cake, grab a coffee and support this wonderful local business in Casuarina. For those wanting to work off that cake afterwards, Snap Fitness is next door.

Sport is at the heart of our community, and I will highlight recent achievements. Big things are on the way for Tracy Village sporting precinct, as the NT Government is developing a comprehensive master plan to guide the future of sport and community activity at Tracy Village. Consultation is open until 6 November 2025, and I encourage everyone to have their say; visit my office or Facebook page for details.

The Tracy Village Football Club raised $1,500 for Cancer Council NT in memory of the late Fred Adams. It is a wonderful way to honour his legacy.

Congratulations to Azzurri United Football Club for winning the 2025 Men's Premier League Grand Final against the Darwin Olympic Sporting Club. I give a special mention to head coach, Dimi Galanopoulos, for his leadership and passion. This win was the result of teamwork, strategy and dedication.

Another highlight was the Multicultural Cup 2025, hosted by the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory and supported by the NT Government. It was an incredible turnout, especially from Casuarina. The tournament celebrated men's wellbeing, encouraged healthy lifestyles and showed how sport can unite people from all walks of life. It did not matter what language you spoke or where you were from; everyone came together, chasing the same black and white ball across soft green grass. That is what community looks like. Thank you to all organisers, volunteers and players for creating an inspiring event.

I recognise the amazing team at the Top End Early Learning Centre at Royal Darwin Hospital. Continuity of care is important for children and families, and the centre has staff who have been there for over a decade. I congratulate Taemi for 15 years of service and Candace for 10 years. Their dedication makes a huge difference to many families in Casuarina, so I thank them. As a father of two young children, I understand how important it is for parents to know that their kids are in safe and nurturing hands. Their work is valued and appreciated.

I had the honour of attending the Shilanyas Mahapuja Vidhi—foundation stone laying ceremony—for the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir with Ministers Cahill and Charls. It was a deeply meaningful event for the Hindu community, marking the start of construction for a new temple and cultural centre. It brought together families, volunteers, spiritual leaders and elders united in prayer and purpose. The Mandir will serve as a place of worship, learning and cultural exchange—a true symbol of peace and belonging.

I especially acknowledge Mr Anand Panchal, a Casuarina resident and long-time BAPS volunteer. His quiet dedication reflects the spirit that strengthens our community. Congratulations to everyone involved; their hard work and faith are helping shape a beautiful new chapter for our multicultural Territory.

I recognise the quiet achievers of our healthcare system—our pharmacists. World Pharmacists Day was on 25 September and, although I could not thank them in person that day, my team delivered sweet treats and fruit platters to local pharmacies on my behalf.

Pharmacists are often the first people we turn to when we are unwell or need advice. They offer care, reassurance and practical help, with professionalism and compassion. I thank all pharmacies in Casuarina—Wizard Pharmacy, United Chemists, Territory Pharmacy, Chemist Warehouse and the RDH pharmacy—for their continued service and care. They know their customers, their families and their stories, and that builds trust and connection at the heart of our healthcare system.

Even though the official day has passed, I put on record my deep appreciation for all pharmacists who keep Territorians healthy and supported.

Looking at all these stories—from Shazma at Queeny's to the BAPS volunteers, Azzurri players, Tracy Village fundraisers, early educators and the Sandy Creek cleanup crew—one thing stands out: these are people who care, show up and give their time and energy to make things better for others. These are the stories that do not always make headlines, but they build our community's heart and strength.

To all those contributing in their own way, thank you. Your efforts may not always be in the spotlight, but they are seen, appreciated and deeply valued.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.