

To go hand in hand with the new public housing safety officers, the department will also introduce a new three strikes policy. This policy will implement a new structured process for the department, as landlord, to deal with problem tenancies. Territory Housing will have a new set of procedures to be followed to rectify antisocial behaviour. This will enhance the department's capacity as landlord to make applications to terminate tenancies. The department will be able to present more structured cases of reasons to evict when they take cases before the Commissioner of Tenancies. For tenants, it will also provide them with a clear, structured understanding of what is acceptable and what is not and, most importantly, what the ramifications are for disregarding behavioural expectations. We need to take strong action to manage the small number of tenants and visitors to public housing residences who do not want to comply with the rules and obligations associated with renting or visiting a public housing property.

This amendment bill supports the Territory government's A Safe Territory initiative to develop safer and more harmonious neighbourhoods and communities, and reinforces crime and antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

Madam Speaker, I commend this bill to honourable members, and I table the explanatory statement to accompany the bill.

Debate adjourned.

**EVIDENCE (NATIONAL UNIFORM
LEGISLATION) BILL
(Serial 172)**

Continued from 16 August 2011.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, in consideration of walking into this House and discussing this bill today, I turn my attention to what this bill attends to achieve, what the bill is, and the explanation provided to this House by the Attorney-General.

One of the great delights I had dealing with this legislative instrument before the House today is the second reading speech was one of the best and most carefully written second reading speeches I have ever read. That, then, leaves me with a choice, and I congratulate whoever wrote the second reading speech. In fact, I know who wrote it and I place on the record my congratulations. This second reading speech should become the benchmark for what second reading speeches look like.

I say that because not only did it discuss the legislation before the House, it carefully explained the changes between what was and what is to be.

It then leaves me with the choice, as I said at the outset, to deal with this response in two ways. I could spend the next 45 minutes going through the second reading speech and agreeing with the points in it or, if anyone wants to know what the Country Liberals' opinion is on this legislative instrument, I could refer those people to the second reading speech – and that is what I will do.

The fact is uniform evidence legislation has now been around for quite some time. When I studied for my law degree, it was actually the legislation I studied. I have to confess to a certain conflict of interest here; it is the one I am more familiar with than the Territory legislation. In fact, I am on the record in this House, about two years ago, suggesting uniform evidence legislation be introduced. I could stand corrected on that, but I remember talking about it in the past. In any instance, the judicial profession – whether they be sitting on the bench but, more to the point, those people who approach the bar table – have to deal with the laws of evidence of different jurisdictions, and that profession has now become quite mobile in this country. As a consequence, having similar legislative instruments operating across jurisdictions makes sense.

We, obviously, are indicating our support for this legislative instrument. I believe if we were to stand in the way of this legislative instrument we would be rightly criticised by the profession, and we will not pull that particular roof down on our own heads.

I note there are some variant constructs in this legislative instrument different to the actual concept of uniformity. However, they are matters pertaining to vulnerable witnesses, from memory, and children giving evidence. I do not have a major problem with that; I understand why that is being done. I also have some questions. I might briefly take this into the committee stages simply to get some time lines. In fact, I will give you the heads up on what those questions are. Those questions will deal with the roll-out of this particular bill. I note there are still transitional arrangements which have to be made in relation to this. What I am seeking some advice on is how quickly government is going to introduce those legislative instruments, or the further bill which will be introduced at a later date, to repeal relevant parts of the *Evidence Act* as it currently operates in the Northern Territory.

I imagine for government, of course, there would be some impetus and pressure being placed upon it because, now it has commenced this process with the bill which is before us now, the legal profession in the Northern Territory would be seeking the transition as a matter of some priority. In fact, if the minister could – no, I