

Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

**SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Committee Membership**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I report that pursuant to Standing Order 181 on 8 May 2026 the following changes were made to committee memberships:

- House Committee—the Member for Arafura replaced the Member for Daly
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee—the Member for Gwoja replaced the Member for Daly
- Legislative Scrutiny Committee—the Member for Daly replaced the Member for Gwoja
- Public Accounts Committee—the Member for Nightcliff replaced the Member for Arafura
- Estimates Committee—pursuant to paragraph 2 of the resolution of the Assembly dated 6 May 2026, the following members have been nominated: the Members for Drysdale, Fannie Bay, Johnston, Karama and Nightcliff.

**VISITORS
Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of students and teachers from Ramingining as part of their week at the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

**APPROPRIATION (2026–2027) BILL
Serial 63
and
TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 64**

Continued from 7 May 2026.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, in speaking on Budget 2026–27, I do so not for the sake of opposition but to highlight where I believe this budget falls short of the greater ambition needed for the future of the Northern Territory.

Budgets are about priorities; they reveal what governments value, what they are prepared to invest in and what kind of future they want to build for this place.

I acknowledge how hard it is to deliver a Territory budget. There is only a handful of us in this Chamber who truly understand the pressure of balancing competing priorities, rising costs and the expectations of Territorians spread across one of the most unique and complex jurisdictions in the country.

The Northern Territory is like nowhere else. We have a small population spread across more than 1.3 million square kilometres. Delivering services in Kintore, Kalkarindji, Yuendumu and Alice Springs will always cost more than delivering services in Melbourne or Sydney. Building roads, schools, homes and hospitals in the bush comes with enormous logistical and financial challenges. Every government faces those realities. Acknowledging those challenges cannot become an excuse for lowering ambition.

The Territory has long faced structural and financial pressures. About 70% of the Territory's budget is supported by Commonwealth funding, thanks to the Albanese government. That reality means we must start having mature conversations about growing self-generated revenue and building a stronger more sustainable economy and home. I support conversations about increasing Territory revenue so long as it is done responsibly, sustainably and without sacrificing our environment, communities, future and sacred sites.

We need long-term investments that create long-term returns. If households pay for water, large-scale mining exploration companies should not have unlimited access for free. A fair price and a framework on water for industrial use could generate an additional \$30m to \$40m annually for the Territory. That money could help