a result of a motor vehicle accident. The scheme is a generous one in that compensation is provided, in most cases, regardless of who caused the accident, which avoids the stress, cost and delays associated with seeking compensation through the courts. Only two other jurisdictions in Australia operate similar no-fault motor accident compensation schemes.

The Motor Accident Compensation Scheme is funded by contributions from motorists paid at the time of registering or reregistering a motor vehicle. The Territory Insurance Office is the administrator of the scheme. In order for the scheme to be managed in a stable and sustainable manner, it is important for contributions to the scheme to move in accordance with underlying costs of operating the scheme and providing compensation benefits. In other words, it is important for contribution amounts to vary in accordance with factors such as growth in wages and salaries, health and medical costs, and the incidence and severity of motor vehicle accidents in the Territory. Contribution amounts also need to be sufficient to maintain an appropriate solvency position for the scheme to ensure its ongoing viability and that the scheme is sufficiently funded to provide compensation in the future for those seriously and permanently injured.

Under the existing provisions of the *Motor Vehicles Act*, I am responsible for determining motor accident compensation contribution amounts acting on the advice of the Territory Insurance Office Board. The government now seeks to implement a more independent and transparent process for determining Motor Accident Compensation Scheme contributions.

The legislation before the House today provides for the appointment of a Compensation Contribution Commissioner as an independent statutory officer responsible for determining Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme contribution amounts. In the discharge of statutory functions, the commissioner would be required to consider the recommendations of the Territory Insurance Office and to consult with me prior to making a final determination. The commissioner would be required to determine contribution amounts in accordance with the prescribed prudential standards aimed at maintaining an appropriate solvency position for the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme.

Determinations would also be measured against an affordability standard which would be expressed as a proportion of average weekly earnings. The regulatory parameters for the commissioner's determinations are to be established by regulation under the act.

The reforms embodied in the legislation will promote greater stability, accountability and transparency in the administration of the Territory's Motor Accident Compensation Scheme, and will ensure that Territorians injured receive timely motor accident compensation for as long as required.

Madam Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
Take Two Bills Together

Dr TOYNE (Justice and Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent bills entitled Victims of Crime Rights and Services Bill 2006 (Serial 44) and Victims of Crime Assistance Bill 2006 (Serial 45):

(a) being presented and read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings, the committee's report stage, and the third readings of the bills together; and

(b) the consideration of bills separately in the Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to.

VICTIMS OF CRIME RIGHTS AND SERVICES BILL
(Serial 44)
VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE BILL
(Serial 45)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Dr TOYNE (Justice and Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the bills be now read a second time.

The purpose of these bills is to implement this government's election commitment to reform support services of victims of crime. These reforms provide a fresh focus and approach to the needs of and support for victims of crime. This is one of the most wide-reaching reforms of victims' services ever undertaken in the Northern Territory.

Victims' services in the Territory are currently inefficient and uncoordinated. This has been the case for many years. The victims compensation scheme provided by the *Crimes (Victims Assistance) Act* has been operating at an enormous annual cost to the Territory, yet much of those costs have not been going to the victims of serious crime, the intended beneficiaries of this