That was not going to be a defining step, that was just going to be the first of two conventions. It was not a defining step, it was a first step of two conventions that would be held before the second convention would hand up its recommendations to the government and parliament to make a decision on. You have run scared of the first step. That is a very sad day for the Northern Territory, and for all those people in the Northern Territory who passionately believe in statehood - and they are on both sides of this parliament.

I know my history of the Northern Territory, and believe many of those people who founded the CLP in Alice Springs all those years ago would be dismayed at what has happened here; that the party which was founded to be the independent and proud Territory party is running scared of Territorians and a debate on a future constitution of the Northern Territory. We have seen that from Marshall Perron in his comments in regard to the member for Solomon not being able to stand up for the Territory in Canberra. We have also seen the comments from Daryl Manzie in regard to what happened in this parliament last week. Regardless of your politics, both Marshall Perron and Daryl Manzie are held in pretty high regard by Territorians, and certainly by many people in the Labor Party as being people of integrity, even if we did disagree with their politics of the day.

I do believe now, as the Chief Minister, I have very sadly had to acknowledge that because the CLP has walked away from a bipartisan position, we are unable to maintain a bipartisan approach to an election in March next year and a convention in April; that this parliament no longer has the ability to take this forward and the next parliament will have to determine what it does in progressing the election to the convention, and the convention that follows and the timing for that. It is very sad. History will be written about statehood one day. We will achieve statehood one day, and other people will comment about the end of this parliament and the way it all collapsed in a heap at the last moment.

If the legislation does pass, and I urge the opposition - I understand they will support the legislation. At least we have the structure that will provide for an election and for a convention, which will be sitting there on the statute book for the next government and parliament of this Territory to take forward. At least, we have salvaged something from the wreckage of six years of bipartisanship. It is with sadness that I conclude my comments on the second reading. It is a very sad day that the CLP ran scared of the people of the Northern Territory.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HENDERSON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Madam Acting Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

WORK HEALTH ADMINISTRATION BILL (Serial 184)
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (NATIONAL UNIFORM LEGISLATION) IMPLEMENTATION BILL (Serial 185)
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (NATIONAL UNIFORM LEGISLATION) BILL (Serial 186)

Continued from 27 October 2011.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Acting Speaker, seven hours after I expected to be on my feet today, I finally find myself on my feet in relation to this legislative instrument.

I say at the outset, so there is no misunderstanding and the government is utterly clear on this, the principle of national harmonisation of occupational health and safety is supported by the Country Liberals. However, having made that observation, I now want to discuss the legislative package which is before the House today.

The package, of course, is a collection of three bills which we have agreed to take as cognate bills. We take no issue with the intention and the reason these bills are wrapped up together. I will make my comments largely on the national uniform legislation itself. I do not have any great intention to travel to the other two legislative instruments because they are, essentially, sundry to the core element of this legislation.

The Northern Territory government has signed up to a COAG agreement to introduce national uniform legislation in relation to occupational safety in the workplace. The Northern Territory government intends to make the startup date for this legislative instrument on 1 January in accordance with the COAG agreement. However, that then leads us to the first issues we have to deal with here. This legislation, in many of the corresponding jurisdictions, has now hit snags for various reasons. The situation in other jurisdictions means this uniform legislation will not be uniform and, moreover, will not be passed in other jurisdictions. I note the situation in Western Australia, the last time I checked - which was a few days ago - was Western Australia is still in the process of delaying the introduction of their equivalent of this bill for a period of 12 months. Reading between the lines in relation to their objections, it is still conceivable Western Australia may get to the point where they will not pass this