Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: He's an expert at these things Mr Speaker. Obviously he doesn't like having stones thrown back at him.

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: Brilliant repartee from the member for Nhulunbuy! Mr Speaker, I presume there is some requirement to control the outbursts from the member when they contravene standing orders. I would seek that you be aware of the contents of his interjections. I'm just getting a few things on the record, because I think its important that when the member for Nhulunbuy …

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MANZIE: … so the community has a good idea of the sort of person he is. I think that's really important.

As I was saying:

- actions instituted by consumers in relation to goods which they had purchased following inducements provided by a Year 2000 disclosure statement, such as where a product or service fails as a result of a Year 2000 service failure;

- Year 2000 disclosure statements made in the context of entering into a contract;

- Year 2000 disclosure statements made in the context of obligations imposed by a contract or a Commonwealth, state or territory law; or

- proceedings, or the exercise of regulatory or enforcement power, by a regulator or enforcement body.

A Year 2000 disclosure statement will not be taken to amend a contract unless the parties agree otherwise. Provisions of the bill will not alter any intellectual property rights.

The bill ensures that arrangements for the disclosure and exchange of Year 2000 information between competitors in an industry are exempt from section 45 of the Competition Code. Section 45 prohibits certain arrangements that have the effect of substantially lessening competition.

The range of exceptions in the bill maintains the capacity of regulators to carry out their statutory roles to act in the public interest, and ensures that the rights of consumers, as set out in the Competition Code and in the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*, will be unaffected.

By maintaining the rights of consumers and the rights of individuals to take action in the event of Year 2000 product or service failure, the bill will not weaken incentives for government and business to continue remediation work. The government intends to monitor the operation of the bill following its enactment to ensure that its aims are not being frustrated. Should any abuses come to light, the government will act swiftly to move appropriate amendments.

This bill, by significantly reducing barriers to disclosure and information-sharing by industry and government, will help accelerate the rate of Year 2000 remediation progress. It provides the opportunity for the Northern Territory to enhance its position as a leader in tackling the Year 2000 computer date problem. Any increase in the level of the Territory's Year 2000 readiness will obviously have positive effects on the Territory's competitiveness.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mrs BRAHAM (Local Government): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the *Local Government (Katherine Rates) Bill* (Serial 149) passing through all stages at these sittings of the Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (KATHERINE RATES) BILL (Serial 149)

Bill read and presented a first time.

Mrs BRAHAM (Local Government): Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to introduce the *Local Government (Katherine Rates) Bill* to the House. The bill is intended to remedy an error which has inadvertently affected the rates revenue base for Katherine Town Council. As members appreciate, rates and land are a prime source of revenue for municipal councils in the Northern Territory, as they are elsewhere in Australia.

Municipal councils in the Territory are required