

Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: A different start to the day, honourable members.

Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 11 Legal Studies students from Darwin High School accompanied by Kira Goodsell and John Shield. I would like to also especially welcome Zander Bodaghi, Ken's son. You will be quizzed later so make sure you are paying attention. Welcome to Parliament House and I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 116)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mrs PRICE (Local Government and Community Services): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The *Local Government Act* and the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations establish the legislative framework for local government in the Northern Territory, including the system for the election of local government council members. The majority of the amendments in this bill relate to the local government electoral regime. The bill also transfers jurisdiction to hear and determine matters under the legislation from the Local Government Tribunal to the new Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This bill is another example of how this government is continually listening to the people and working to improve the framework for local government in the Northern Territory.

The majority of this bill implements recommendations from the Northern Territory Electoral Commission's 2012 NT Council Elections Report. It also addresses proposals from councils identified during consultation which aim to improve the scheme of local government elections. The amendments will make efficiencies, improve the administration of elections, increase voter participation and provide options to reduce the costs incurred by councils when conducting elections.

The most recent general elections for local government were held on 24 March 2012. Those elections were the first to be conducted for all councils in the Northern Territory on the same date under the current legislation. The Electoral Commissioner was appointed as the returning officer by all councils. There were 156 vacancies.

Of 64 possible elections, 40 were contested. A total number of 237 candidates stood for election.

After those elections the Northern Territory Electoral Commission produced the 2012 Northern Territory Council Elections Report. The report examines and records the arrangements and processes used by the councils and the commission. It contained various recommendations aimed at improving practices and procedures for future elections. On 4 December 2013 the report was tabled by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and on 19 December 2013 the then Minister for Local Government and Regions directed my department to consult with the local government sector on the recommendations made in the report.

Submissions were received from councils and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory. A committee of representatives from my department, the Electoral Commission and LGANT considered the various submissions and other proposals which arose during consultation. The Electoral Commission proffered various ways in which the preparation, administration and conduct of elections could be enhanced in reducing costs and streamlining practices and procedures.

I extend my thanks to the Electoral Commissioner for the time and effort that has been put into the report and into discussing the proposed reforms. While some measures will be implemented simply through the altering of the organisational and administrative practices and procedures over time, other changes can only be effected by the amendments contained in the bill.

During the months of November and December 2014 officers from my department visited every council at their meetings across the Territory to explain and discuss the changes that are contained in this bill, which I will now set out in detail.

Firstly, the date of the next general elections for local government will be moved to the last Saturday in August 2017. Subsequent elections will be held every four years after that. This is a change from the current scheduled date in March 2016.

The change of date was recommended by the Electoral Commissioner because there could be three major elections due to be held in 2016. These would be the local government general elections, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly election and a likely Commonwealth government election. A national census will also be held in 2016. Given all these factors, it is preferable that the local government elections be held in a different year.

Apart from changing the year, consideration was given as to whether March was an appropriate month for local government elections. Councils submitted that holding elections in March posed problems. Firstly, when elections were held in March new council members did not have sufficient experience or familiarity with council matters to competently frame a budget for the ensuing financial year.

Secondly, because of the frequent public holidays in March and April there has, in the past, been difficulty in satisfying the requirement to hold the first council meeting within 14 days of an election. Thirdly, disruptive weather in March can hinder polling and reduce voter turn-out, particularly for regional councils in the Top End. I am advised the average rainfall for Darwin is 319 mL in March; however, it is only 5 mL in August. We are all aware of the havoc of the Wet Season.

Finally, the current system, where the polling day is unknown until fixed by the minister, has made planning difficult for the Electoral Commission and a set date will give certainty for planning purposes.

The new date, the fourth Saturday in August every four years commencing in 2017, will ensure adequate time and resources are allocated to both local government and Legislative Assembly elections. It will ensure new council members have time to acquaint themselves with financial matters well before they are required to set a budget. There will be a better chance of fine weather and accessibility to polling stations and planning will be more certain. Thus, the amendments proposed by this bill will result in the next local government general elections being held on 26 August 2017. Sitting council members and their terms of office will continue until the new election date.

The bill also seeks to extend the period during which casual vacancies may be filled by appointment rather than holding a by-election. The time period will extend from 12 months to 18 months before a general election. A by-election generally occurs where a casual vacancy has arisen due to an elected council member ceasing to be a member prior to the expiry of their term of office.

Councils, particularly those in the regions, have identified that the frequency of casual vacancies requiring by-elections has placed significant strain on their resources. Currently, if a casual vacancy arises within 12 months of the next general election, a council does not hold a by-election. Instead, councils are permitted to leave the position vacant or appoint a person to the vacant office until the next general election.

The legislation does not stipulate how councils choose a person to appoint to a vacancy, but in the past councils have used various means. Some choose to appoint the person who came in second during the previous elections and others have put out an expression of interest requesting potential candidates to state why they want to join the council.

Extending the time period during which vacancies may be filled by appointment to 18 months was presented by the Electoral Commission as an option to reduce costs. This option was supported by LGANT and most councils. The measure aims to achieve a balance between reducing the frequency of by-elections as a mechanism for filling casual vacancies and ensuring appointments are made in sufficient proximity to general elections so as not to corrupt the democratic process. The changes in this bill will mean during the current term of members, appointments instead of by-elections will be available from 27 February 2016.

In the future councils will have the flexibility to choose to conduct by-elections themselves or choose an electoral service provider other than the Electoral Commission. Alternatively, councils may still engage the Electoral Commission to conduct by-elections. Currently, the responsibility to prepare for and conduct local government general elections and by-elections rests solely with the Electoral Commission.

Prior to 1 May 2012 councils were permitted to appoint the returning officer who was responsible for elections. As mentioned, councils have identified that the frequency of casual vacancies resulting in by-elections has placed significant strain on resources. During consultation, councils wanted the ability to run their own by-elections or to engage a private electoral service provider. Giving councils flexibility to conduct by-elections themselves, or to select the most appropriate electorate service provider, may result in more competitive pricing and lower costs associated with by-elections.

LGANT is playing an increasing role in assisting councils to comply with obligations under the local government legislation. Part of LGANT's increased functions and responsibilities will include assisting councils to find and select a service provider for by-elections. LGANT will also produce a manual on how to run by-elections.

Under the new system the default position will be that the Electoral Commissioner will be responsible for by-elections unless the council appoints another person as returning officer. Once a vacancy occurs, if a council wishes to use a provider other than the Electoral Commission the council must appoint another person as

returning officer and have a service agreement in place within two months of the vacancy. If this does not occur the Electoral Commission will run the by-election.

The option for a council to run its own election or to use an alternative service provider only applies to by-elections. The Electoral Commissioner will be the returning officer for general elections. I am pleased the bill will be introducing a completely new way in which Territorians will be able to vote in an election in the Territory.

These amendments will allow municipal councils to decide to conduct by-elections by means of postal voting alone. If a municipal council decides that a by-election is to be held by postal voting only the council will need to have a willing electoral service provider, and the decision must be made and agreements in place within two months of the relevant vacancy.

There was strong support from the municipal sector for councils to be provided with the choice to conduct by-elections by way of postal votes only. Municipal councils believe that full postal voting by-elections will reduce the cost of by-elections as well as enhance the democratic process by ensuring greater voter participation.

There is a sound theory behind full postal voting. South Australia and Tasmania have already adopted a model for local government elections to be held by means of postal voting only. Furthermore, Victoria currently allows each council to choose its preferred method before each election. There are indications Victoria is considering a transition to mandatory full postal voting for all councils in future. I note the Northern Territory government currently uses postal voting services provided by the Electoral Commission in enterprise bargaining negotiations.

Full postal voting is not considered appropriate for non-municipal councils which do not have the infrastructure or postal services required to conduct elections on this basis. Allowing the municipal councils to conduct by-elections by post, however, would provide the opportunity to test the system and allow councils and the public to evaluate the risks and benefits. This will inform the feasibility of full postal voting into the future.

I will now address the change that will provide municipal councils with the option to choose to fill the office of principal member by way of appointment or election.

Elected council members fall into two distinct categories, namely ordinary members and principal members. Principal members are usually known by the title of mayor or president. Principal member responsibilities include chairing

council meetings, being council's principal representative and carrying out other ceremonial functions. Currently, the method for filling the office of the principal member is dependent on whether the relevant council is a municipal council.

Councils other than municipal councils have been able to choose whether to appoint a member to be the principal member or to allow the electorate to elect the principal member. Municipal councils have not had this option. Up to now the principal member of the municipality must be elected to office. A number of municipal councillors have expressed a preference for the ability to decide, on the same basis as other councils, the manner in which principal members are installed. The amendments being introduced today will make this possible.

I now move to the change provided by this bill which limits absentee voting on polling day to designated polling places. In certain circumstances voters are permitted to cast votes in locations outside the council area or ward in which they are enrolled. This is known as an absentee vote. The provision of absentee voting services at local government elections is currently consistent with practices for Commonwealth and Territory government elections. This means that an absentee vote may be accepted at any polling place.

As local government elections involve such a large number of polling places, making absentee votes possible at every single polling place is very expensive. The Electoral Commission identified the number of absentee votes cast on polling day in the general election in 2012 was only 5740. Despite the low number of absentee votes, the Electoral Commission was required to print an additional 350 000 ballot papers to accommodate possible absentee voting at all polling places. This resulted in the Electoral Commission and, ultimately, councils incurring unnecessary costs. Furthermore, absentee voting services place significant strain on staff and administration on polling day.

To reduce unnecessary costs and simplify the administration of elections, the amendments will allow the returning officer to decide which polling places will offer absentee voting services. This was one of the recommendations in the Electoral Commission's 2012 NT Council Elections report. Returning officers will be able to decide on the appropriate absentee voting centres after taking into account geographic and demographic factors. Returning officers will be required to advertise where absentee voting centres will be located.

This amendment will allow absentee voting to continue into the future but at targeted locations.

People wishing to cast absentee votes will need to attend the advertised polling places to do so. Of course, there will still be other options available such as early and postal voting.

Another change brought in by this bill will be a slight change to the deadline by which postal votes must be received. It will change from 6 pm on the sixth day after polling day to 12 noon on the same day. One of the reasons for imposing a time limit within which postal votes must be received is to ensure the count and determination of elected candidates occurs within a reasonable time frame.

The report of the Electoral Commission highlighted some avoidable administrative issues which arose during the 2012 election in relation to the 6 pm deadline. This included the need for vote counters and scrutineers to commence counting outside normal working hours, adding to the cost of the election without significant benefit.

Furthermore, the 6 pm deadline has previously led to delayed declarations and announcements of elected candidates at an unreasonably late hour as full distribution of preferences for all polls may take some time. Changing the deadline by which postal votes must be received into the count to 12 noon on the sixth day after polling day will address these administrative issues and reduce the costs incurred by councils without impacting the outcome of elections.

Where the commissioner has been appointed returning officer for a by-election the commissioner will be able to determine appropriate polling hours for polling places. Currently polling hours must be between 8 am and 6 pm on polling day for general elections and by-elections. However, for a number of by-elections in remote areas with low voter numbers this requirement has proved to be an administrative burden and unnecessary cost.

It was recommended that the commissioner be given the ability to determine the hours for polling places in by-elections. The Electoral Commissioner advises that the hours will be set according to an analysis of expected voter turnout, the number of postal and early vote applications received and other relevant practice such as past experience.

While the amendments give this discretion to the Electoral Commissioner, who has particular expertise in the administration of elections and special circumstances of the Territory, it will not be given to other returning officers.

A direct result of being able to set more appropriate polling hours will be the results for a by-election may be declared earlier and councils

will be able to save on operational costs on polling day.

The next amendments I wish to discuss allow the amalgamation of ballots in single member vacancy counts. This is a technical and administrative change which will not affect the outcome of vote counting.

For Northern Territory local government elections the single transferable proportional vote counting method is used to determine all vacancies regardless of their number. That is, whether a council area or ward has one or multiple vacancies which are to be filled, the counting methodology set out in the regulations must be strictly applied. Under the current system of counting all ballot paper transfers are done separately.

These transfers include ballot papers in excess of a quota from an elected candidate. They also include transfers from candidates who have been excluded from the count as they have the lowest number of votes. The transfer value of these ballot papers may vary from a first preference vote that has a transfer value of one to a ballot paper in excess of a quota being considerably less than one.

This currently prescribed method of transferring votes and preferences from excluded candidates is a critical element in the single transferrable proportional vote counting method that must be retained for multimember elections.

In single member vacancies, however, once the candidate achieves the quota the candidate is elected and there is no transfer of votes above the quota to other candidates at a lesser value than one. The only exclusions are of candidates with the lowest number of votes and these will always have a transfer value of one. As the transferred votes will always have a transfer value of one, the ability to allow the amalgamation of votes being transferred in single member vacancies will be more efficient. It will considerably shorten the period of time required to determine the result of an election.

This particularly applies in cases where there are large numbers of ballot papers or a large number of candidates. Importantly, this will have no effect on the result. By way of example, in 2002 a by-election for a principal member of a municipal council involved 16 candidates and nearly 29 000 formal ballot papers.

Under the current system there would have been in excess of 1300 transfers to achieve a result. This compares with 14 transfers required under the new process where the amalgamation of votes will be allowed. I am pleased these amendments

will simplify the vote counting process for single member vacancies.

The next amendment I wish to speak about extends the availability of postal voting and early voting services to all electors. Voters are currently allowed to apply to submit an early vote or postal vote only if they meet certain eligibility requirements. These requirements reflect the old electoral policy that votes should be cast at polling places on polling day. In the past postal and early voting services have been restricted to exceptional cases where voters are unable to vote in the usual way.

The risks involved in collecting, securing and counting postal and early votes have been significantly reduced through stronger legislative provisions and better administrative practices in recent elections. This is evidenced by the dramatic increase in electors applying for and casting postal and early votes in the Northern Territory, state and Commonwealth elections.

The benefits of providing electors with the option to cast early, postal or polling booth votes are many. They include reducing polling day costs and increasing voter turn-out by providing more convenient voting methods. Indeed, the Australian Electoral Commission already adopts a liberal interpretation of the eligibility criteria for early voting and allows voters to vote early without requesting a reason, either in person or by post. I am sure this amendment will be popular as it will allow any elector to vote at an early voting centre or by post after applying to do so.

The final amendments I wish to address are those concerning transfer of the jurisdiction of the local government tribunal. These amendments are not related solely to the electoral regime. *The Local Government Act* currently provides for the existence and operation of the Local Government Tribunal. The tribunal has jurisdiction to hear various matters, including those relating to eligibility for council membership, conflicts of interest, electoral disputes and appeals against disciplinary committee decisions.

Consistent with government's intention to cut red tape and create a one-stop shop for civil and administrative appeals, these amendments will abolish the Local Government Tribunal and transfer the jurisdiction to hear matters under the *Local Government Act* to the recently established Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

I also bring to your attention amendments to the *Darwin Waterfront Corporation Act*. That act is administered by the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment and currently allows appeals to the Local Government Tribunal.

Accordingly, a consequential amendment to the *Darwin Waterfront Corporation Act* has been made so the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal will have the jurisdiction to hear matters arising under that act.

The majority of this bill contains electoral amendments to improve the electoral framework for local government in the Northern Territory. I am pleased to now have the local government portfolio and to be able to introduce this legislation for the benefit of the sector and all Territorians.

I commend the bill to honourable members and table the explanatory statement to accompany the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (REMISSION FOR RESENTENCING) BILL (Serial 99)

Continued from 22 October 2014.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I welcome the Darwin High School students. That is my old school and it is great to have you here today. Hopefully we behave while you are here.

The opposition supports this bill. I thank the minister, his office and the departmental staff who provided me and my team with briefings. This bill responds to suggestions to reform the resentencing process raised by the NT Court of Criminal Appeal in two cases. Those two cases were *Atkinson v The Queen* [2013] and *Leo v The Queen* [2014]. Recommendations in both cases sought the power to remit the case back to the original sentencing judge for resentencing.

In *Atkinson v The Queen* the appellant successfully argued that a property forfeiture that occurred under the *Criminal Property Forfeiture Act* 15 months after he was sentenced under the *Misuse of Drugs Act* should be taken into account, and if known by the original sentencing judge a lesser sentence may have been imposed.

The Court of Criminal Appeal reaffirmed and extended this view in *Leo v The Queen*, recommending the power to remit for sentencing be available in a wider range of situations, including where the original sentencing judge incorrectly applied the law.

I was briefed on this legislation by officers from the department and I thank them for their time. I also sought the advice of other stakeholders on the detail of this bill. The Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory raised whether the amendment gave full effect to the recommendations made by the Northern Territory

Court of Criminal Appeal in *Atkinson v The Queen* as indicated in the second reading speech. I put these concerns to the Attorney-General and thank his office for the response. I am informed by the President of the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory that this amendment was discussed with the association's board members.

In *Atkinson v The Queen* the court referred to the recommendation for statutory reform made out in a similar case in Victoria. At [14]-[15] in *Regina v McLeod* the Court of Criminal Appeal in Victoria called for legislative change, noting it was unsatisfactory for the issue of subsequent forfeiture of property to be dealt with by the appellate court. In *Atkinson v The Queen* the court observed:

Subsequent forfeiture is not a true appeal ground, precisely because the sentencing judge could not know what the appeal court subsequently learned about the forfeiture. The need to take account of the new information about forfeiture meant that in every such case the appeal court was required to act effectively as the primary sentencing court, which was not appropriate.

In our view, the proper approach, where forfeiture occurs after sentence and has not been able to be adequately taken into account at the time of sentencing, is for the sentenced person to have the right to apply to the sentencing judge (or another judge of the sentencing court, if the sentencing judge is unavailable) for a review of the sentence in the light of the subsequent forfeiture. This would ensure that every case of subsequent forfeiture could be considered on its merits, by the judge (or at least the court) which imposed the original sentence.

Legislative change would be required to enable this procedure to be adopted. Given the frequency with which forfeiture occurs, we recommend that this be done as a matter of urgency.

Those observations are equally applicable in the present proceedings and in relation to the Northern Territory legislation.

It was noted that the second reading speech stated the bill accorded with the recommendations of the Court of Criminal Appeal in both cases. It was on this basis the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory raised that the amendment may not have achieved the full effect.

The practical application of the amendment continues to require a sentenced person wanting subsequent property forfeiture to be taken into account to seek leave to appeal to a Court of Criminal Appeal before the matter could be remitted to the original sentencing judge. It was viewed that this would cause additional expense and inconvenience to the courts.

It was incumbent on me to raise this with the Attorney-General. I appreciate his time in responding as the query was raised by law practitioners on the practical application of the amendment against the judgment recommending a change in the process. I welcome the Attorney-General's clarification that the amendment does not apply the full recommendation and takes the position as applied in Victoria. I also take the advice from the Attorney-General's office that the bill is supported in its current form by the Chief Justice. I sought the Attorney-General's clarification on the bill and welcome his advice, which I am sure he will give in his closing remarks.

Consultation with stakeholders and those affected by the legislative change strengthens the legislative process. I thank officers in the Attorney-General's department for their work in this area which includes, of course, the implementation phase of the legislation. It was interesting to look at this bill and to speak to practitioners to gain their views. I thank them for their time.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I support the bill presented today. Some years ago I raised this issue with government and people said, 'Too bad, you get what you deserve' ...

Mr Elferink: That is still what I say.

Mr WOOD: I say the same thing. However, there was a case of double punishment for the one crime and this allows a judge to take that into consideration.

I am not against forfeiture of property, but you had one crime with two punishments. This bill takes that into account. This is only an option for a judge not a requirement and that needs to be clarified. When talking about justice, it is better to have an option for that to occur according to the circumstances. That was not the case previously.

I support what is proposed by the minister. The second last paragraph of the second reading speech says:

The provision of the power to remit is an additional power which will not preclude the Court of Criminal Appeal from re-sentencing the appellant, if appropriate. The transitional provisions of the bill ensure that

the Court of Criminal Appeal will be able to remit matters for re-sentence in all appeals heard after the commencement, even if the appellant was found guilty or filed appeal documents prior to commencement. This bill will enhance the administration of justice and ensure that the most appropriate court re-sentences the defendant following a successful appeal.

The words are 'if appropriate'. That is key to the fairness of this bill. It allows a judge to make a decision with the best range of options possible according to the circumstances. That is what a judicial system should be all about.

Mr CHANDLER (Police, Fire and Emergency Services): Madam Speaker, I will add a few points and also mention other legislation introduced by the Country Liberals government over the last two-and-a-half years which helps focus on reducing acts against law and order in the Northern Territory.

It may take some time for people to understand what we have been doing and how that will be achieved. As a government, we want to make Territorians feel safer on our streets.

There have been some remarkable turnarounds in law and order across the Territory. Much has been said about TBLs. However, whilst TBLs can be resource intensive they are having long-term benefits across the Northern Territory.

The legislation introduced today is another piece in the jigsaw required to provide a whole-of-government approach to law and order issues. In the future we will talk about how we can improve the legislative framework for our police force to do its job in the Northern Territory.

I could go through some of the statistics directly related to TBLs. They are interesting, but statistics often do not mean a lot to people and in the Territory can be quite dramatic because of small numbers. They can be volatile; up one month and down significantly the next.

Rather than talk about individual statistics I would rather talk about nurses contacting the government to say they have not seen such a quiet Saturday night at Katherine Hospital, and ambulance officers not bringing in people with tomahawk, knife or other injuries sustained from drunken violence on our streets. Let us talk about ambulance officers who do not have to deal with as many issues on the street because of the improvement TBLs have made.

Let us not talk about statistics, let us talk about the fact the Labor Party said it would walk away from a program that is welcome in Alice Springs,

Tennant Creek and Katherine. When mayors of these towns speak to you – I spoke with the Mayor of Alice Springs, Damien Ryan a few weeks ago. It would be frightful to think what would happen if you removed TBLs from Alice Springs.

As Police minister I know how intensive TBLs are on police resources, but we are also working on other ways to deal with that. Let us talk about the business people in Katherine who are not dealing with smashed windows every night because drunken behaviour has reduced since TBLs were introduced. Look at the community benefits this program is bringing to the Northern Territory.

Do I think TBLs would be problematic in the greater Darwin area? Yes I do, because it is a different playing field to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. If we have a good program working in other areas we need to try it in Darwin. Police work is about being one step ahead of the others.

This legislation introduced by the Attorney-General is another piece in the jigsaw being put together by a good government because its focus is on what is happening on the streets. It is not what is happening in this building, the bureaucracy or departments, but how it can reduce the number of victims through reduction in law and order issues across the Northern Territory.

I have pages of statistics I could read to demonstrate how the approach of this government is improving law and order issues on our streets and putting a legislative framework around our police force and the judiciary to ensure they are well supported. If that makes their job a little easier, and the other piece of the jigsaw is put into place and people see the picture, you will understand why this government is taking the approach it is.

Is there more to do? Yes, but over time that picture will become clearer. There is method to the madness of putting together a robust legislative framework so police officers doing their job on the street every day are protected and can do what they do.

There is still a long way to go, no doubt about it. We have some unique challenges in the Northern Territory. Successive governments have dealt with the unique issues we face in the Northern Territory. Other jurisdictions may touch on them to a lesser extent. There is work to do, and this is just another piece of the jigsaw.

I back this legislation and applaud the Attorney-General for bringing it on today.

Mr ELFERINK (Attorney-General and Justice):

Madam Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions. I am grateful for the communications we received from the shadow Attorney-General because it enables us to iron out some of the bugs before we end up having a bug fight. Clearly the shadow Attorney-General has received some sage advice about the operation of this amendment.

A valuable exercise in these circumstances is to look at the other side of the argument should some of the proposals I have heard in the ether find life. The comments in *McLeod*, supported by *Atkinson*, about the two-tiered changes proposed – I quote from *Regina v McLeod* specifically:

The need to take account of the new information about forfeiture means that in every case this court is required to act effectively as the primary sentencing court, which is not appropriate.

That is the part that we are talking about here.

In our view, the proper approach, where forfeiture occurs after sentence and has not been able to be adequately taken into account at the time of sentencing, is for the sentenced person to have the right to apply to the sentencing judge (or another judge of the sentencing court, if the sentencing judge is unavailable) for a review of the sentence in the light of the subsequent forfeiture. This would ensure that every case of subsequent forfeiture could be considered on its merits, by the judge (or at least the court) which imposed the original sentence.

Forfeiture alone is not grounds for appeal and should not be! If you do not want to fall into the trap that has been identified, if it is a trap by the courts and the judges, do not sell drugs. Do not commit offences that will see you subject to forfeiture legislation in this jurisdiction. Do not do things that will get you into trouble with the law, particularly indictable offences which will get you into trouble with the law a lot.

I recently spent some time in the High Court of Australia in the public bleachers watching the case of Emerson roll out and seeing that the forfeiture legislation, as imposed by the Northern Territory, would clearly get the support of the court. The subsequent decision indicated the impression we got inside the courtroom was correct and forfeiture was, in that instance, perfectly acceptable and the legislation should be allowed to stand as it does.

For somebody to cry foul and say, 'It is not fair. I got this big sentence and now they've taken my house away', is something they can deal with in

the courts. I have little sympathy for people who peddle drugs. You will not find me bleeding from the heart or crying tears of anguish when people have their houses taken from them, even after they have been sentenced, as a result of the normal process.

A fellow by the name of Dick Foss had fallen foul of the law, had been sentenced and then we took his house away. He was very upset with that and my short answer was, 'Here's an idea, don't sell drugs'. Sorry, it was not Mr Dick Foss. Somebody else came to me with a similar plaintive cry and my response was exactly the same. So often these people say, 'I wasn't supplying, I just gave it to people'. They need to read the legislation on what supply means because there is no requirement for a financial transaction. In any instance, if you have kilograms of cannabis or amphetamines in your possession, whatever is considered to be a commercial quantity under the schedules, you are probably flogging the stuff. If you are not flogging it you are giving it away because if it is for your own use you should be dead.

We are prepared to listen to the court in this matter but for one important reason, I do not want to see an appellate court become a court of original jurisdiction. This was also the issue outlined in the *Atkinson* and *McLeod* cases. A court of original jurisdiction, for those honourable members unfamiliar with the term, makes the original decision. Under the current circumstances the court receives an appeal and decides, subsequent to that time, the sentence, for whatever reason, was manifestly excessive, inadequate or there was some other problem with the sentence.

The response from the court is, 'Under the current legislation we will give you a new sentence'. The problem is if the sentence is subsequently appealed you end up in front of the full bench of the Supreme Court to deal with a minor sentencing matter. It makes sense to fling it back to the lower court – the original sentencing court – to deal with the matter.

This raises the issue from the members opposite: if you do that, why does the first court of appeal not hand down the sentence? The problem with that is the need to maintain a hierarchy of courts. Effectively, you walk out of one court across the corridor into a court of equal jurisdiction saying, 'We're not happy with the result next door'. It must go up for somebody to determine if the sentence was inappropriate for any reason, then you can send it back down. That is what we are being asked to do today and it makes sense. Send it back to the original court to make a decision so any further appeal coming from the matter goes back to the court of appeal.

To allow it to become that flat is to ignore the hierarchical system of our courts. As Attorney-General, I would not be comfortable in eroding the hierarchical structures of the court system in this or any other jurisdiction.

As Attorney-General, it is my job to defend the courts not only from criticism in the public domain, but also from procedures which erode their integrity. The hierarchical system of the courts is ultimately one of the great sources of the court's integrity. For that reason, I do not agree with the idea of making a court of a similar nature – for example, a Magistrates Court dealing with another's decision – the appellate court. The appeal must go to the superior court, and if it needs to be referred back to the court of original jurisdiction so be it. It places the court system within the appropriate hierarchical construct.

Beyond that, I thank honourable members for their comments and thoughts on this matter. This is politically dull and boring for many people, but these are necessary amendments we must make on a regular basis to ensure our court system works effectively for the true welfare of the people of the Northern Territory.

This matter has now been dealt with by this House; it is housekeeping as much as anything else. It has excited some people to encourage us to take further steps, but we will not do that in the interests of good public policy. I thank honourable members for their contributions and I look forward to the passage of this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr ELFERINK (Attorney-General and Justice) (by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS Reorder of Business

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the House from now considering ministerial statements.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Education the Key to a Bright Future

Mr CHANDLER (Education): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to update the House on the many wonderful things happening to reform education in the Northern Territory. As you all know, a quality education is the key to ensuring

the future of the Territory is bright. It contains the building blocks to a strong, skilled local workforce and community. We want our young Territorians to become confident, capable global citizens. This approach is a fundamental part of the Country Liberal government's Framing the Future strategy.

Since 2013 a genuine focus of this government has been to rebuild the education system. We have set a fiscally and socially responsible direction to build the Northern Territory's future prosperity. To achieve this, the government has commenced the implementation of an ambitious reform agenda focused on improving educational outcomes for all Territory students. I expect every student in the Northern Territory will have access to quality education no matter where they live.

We are focused on improving Indigenous student performance. We want to ensure our students have the best possible outcomes and results across all our schools and communities, whether they are remote, regional or in Darwin or Palmerston.

We are aiming to create an education environment where striving for excellence becomes everyone's responsibility – teachers, parents, students and communities. I ask all parents and guardians to ensure their kids attend school. Attendance is imperative if we are to improve learning outcomes across the Northern Territory. Our hard-working committed school staff ensure students are safe and engaged in age-appropriate learning when they attend school. Industry groups are working with us to make sure our students are work ready and able to make a successful transition from school to employment. We are already seeing results as we consolidate and move forward on a range of planned key activities.

As Minister for Education I have driven reform for the last two years, and that hard work is now bearing fruit. One of the most significant achievements has been the completion of *A share in the future*, the first major independent review of Indigenous education since *Learning Lessons* in 1999. The review painted a bleak picture of the level of achievement of Indigenous students in the Northern Territory and the state of learning in many very remote schools. It highlighted the challenging context in which education services are delivered in the Northern Territory and provided positive guidance on how, through a long-term coordinated and strategic plan, our Indigenous students can achieve positive outcomes from their schooling.

The review's recommendations have guided the development of the *A share in the future*, Indigenous education strategy. Commencing this year, this 10-year strategy will focus the efforts of

schools on delivering effective programs which are proven to make a difference for Indigenous students. It aligns the efforts and resources of both the Northern Territory and Australian governments towards a common goal. It builds on work we have commenced to support families and children as they embark on their learning journey in the early years, and will continue to support them to engage with and attend school regularly.

We will be working closely with communities during 2015 to ensure Indigenous students in the Northern Territory have access to quality secondary education options. We will be supporting Indigenous parents and students in the later primary years to consider their options and make successful transitions to their secondary schooling pathway.

A comprehensive workforce strategy is being developed to ensure our remote education services are delivered by highly skilled and motivated educators and their support staff. Ultimately we want Indigenous students in the Northern Territory to be successful and confident in their education journey and to achieve outcomes consistent with their non-Indigenous peers. I am confident this strategy will deliver that.

While our focus is very much on Territory students, we are also looking to capitalise on the growing demand for international education services. We have committed to building stronger relationships with our northern neighbours and developing the Northern Territory as an international education training hub. The Territory's proximity and strong links to Asia, as well as its culturally and linguistically diverse society, are points of difference that can be leveraged to increase our international student numbers. Implementation of our 10-year Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy will guide our efforts to achieve this.

By 2024 we want the Northern Territory to be the destination of choice for students from Asia and for international education and training to be one of our top five export earners, up from eleventh where it now sits.

The government is committed to ensuring the Northern Territory has a contemporary legislative framework to support our current needs and one that enables innovation in the way education services are provided into the future.

Our work to reform the Northern Territory *Education Act* continues. In 2014 a comprehensive community consultation process allowed parents, teachers, principals, students and other interested community members to have input into what the new legislation should look like.

A total of 42 group consultation workshops involving over 260 participants were held across the Territory including workshops in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nhulunbuy. A total of 45 formal submissions were received, demonstrating a high level of community interest and engagement in the consultation process. All the feedback received during consultation has been considered and is being used to draft a bill that will be put out for further public consultation this year.

The Our School, Our Future plan has been implemented to provide greater autonomy for schools. It will empower principals and the school communities they lead to decide what is best for their local circumstances. Consistent with commitments from the Australian government, we are reducing red tape and providing schools with the freedom to make decisions and manage their resources to support the specific needs of their students.

The central bureaucracy has refocused its role from one of compliance and administrative processes to one which supports schools to drive improvement and focus on student learning. Our School, Our Future provides a fairer, more transparent way of operating, and clarity around accountability for decision-making and the allocation of resources.

As part of this plan global school budgets, including the new student needs-based funding model, were announced in September 2014 with implementation in all Northern Territory government schools for the 2015 school year. Global school budgets will improve the targeting of resources, provide schools with greater flexibility in decision-making and establish a clear framework for forward planning. For the first time principals and their school communities have a line of sight to their full resourcing package and can make decisions on how to utilise their resources in line with their local priorities and needs to deliver the best possible education programs for their students.

Historical differences in how funding and staffing were allocated have led to complex and varied arrangements for schools. Our new funding model will ensure budgets are distributed simply and transparently, and are driven by the needs of students.

An additional \$23m over four years was recently announced to assist schools to transition to the new school funding model. This is in addition to the \$17m already provided. This commitment acknowledges that schools need time to transition to the new funding model and manage the inequities of past funding arrangements to bring their budgets into balance.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of school councils and principals during 2014 to prepare their staff and schools for the new way of working, which I am confident they will find to be more efficient and effective. While all schools will operate with greater autonomy under global school budgets, schools can also apply to become an independent public school and benefit from even greater decision-making powers.

Independent public schools benefit from increased flexibility and responsibility to shape the ethos, priorities and direction of the school. They report directly to the Department of Education's Chief Executive, have increased delegation over staffing and infrastructure matters, have the flexibility to shape curriculum offerings and teaching and learning programs, and operate with a board rather than a council.

Six schools were successful in their application to become independent public schools in 2015 – Braitling, Larrakeyah, Leanyer and Wulagi Primary Schools, as well as Darwin High School and Palmerston Senior College. These six schools are leading the way in implementing this new model of working and there will be further opportunities for other schools to apply to become independent public schools in 2016.

An additional \$1m investment in 2015 and an additional \$2m in subsequent years has been provided to support the introduction of independent public schools. We are committed to embedding this model and acknowledging exceptional schools in our system.

The Northern Territory has been investing in early childhood education, and recent results indicate this investment may be starting to pay dividends. Our investment in this area continues to enhance the early learning services and support available to children and parents across the Territory.

We have increased focus on early years by investing in early childhood. Changes to the student teacher ratio in this critical stage of schooling resulted in a boost of 63 additional teachers working in early childhood classrooms in 2014. This additional support acknowledged the importance of the formative years of schooling and the imperative for our schools to maximise the learning opportunities offered to our early learners.

Through the Families as First Teachers program 34 staff are working in remote communities supporting over 4000 adults and children in early learning, literacy and numeracy at home, and parent capacity building. Importantly, they support parents and children to make successful transitions to preschool, a critical stage where children begin to make positive associations with

schooling which will influence their attendance and engagement with the education program over the longer term. Proficiency in literacy and numeracy is essential for young people to succeed in their education and life beyond schooling.

In 2013 the Northern Territory government convened an expert literacy and numeracy panel to provide best practice, evidence-based advice on how the Territory could best focus its efforts to improve literacy and numeracy skills across all stages of schooling. Recommendations of the panel underpin literacy and numeracy improvement strategies that are now being implemented in classrooms and are guiding regional and systemic support provided to our teachers.

We are committed to and have completed a review of middle years schooling to strengthen the quality of education for middle year students from 2015. The review identified opportunities to strengthen the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the middle years model introduced eight years ago. It found while there were many examples of outstanding practice contributing to improved student outcomes in the middle years, there had been a lack of systemic direction of this stage of schooling.

We have implemented a plan to ensure clear, consistent and best practice approaches are implemented in our middle schools and there is a shared vision of what constitutes quality middle schooling in the Northern Territory.

The Country Liberals government is committed to ensuring our students leave school work ready and are able to contribute to the Northern Territory's economic growth. By supporting our schools to provide students with access to accredited vocational education and training programs and school-based apprenticeships in local industry we are building their work readiness. Currently the Territory has 252 school-based apprentices and trainees. While data for 2014 will not be finalised until March 2015, we can already see more than 1000 middle and senior year students in the Territory completed a full vocational qualification in 2014. That contributed to their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training and to the skills they require for a job.

In 2014 there were 898 structured work placements for 560 students with around 400 Territory employers. This is a significant contribution by employers to the future workforce of the Northern Territory for which the government is grateful. The Territory has embraced employers in our school-based training programs and they are increasingly engaged to participate

as active partners in the training offered in our schools.

Through the Pastoral Futures program the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, the Indigenous Land Corporation, the Central Land Council and the Northern Land Council all work together to train young Indigenous people in Central Australian schools for a range of rural jobs in the pastoral industry. This program, which completed its first full year in 2014, resulted in 15 students completing Certificate I courses. A number are now undertaking their final Certificate II training in 2015. For many of these students this achievement provided positive demonstration of their ability to succeed in education and training in a way they may not have been able to before.

The Department of Education, Palmerston Senior College and employers work together with a registered training organisation to deliver Certificate II programs in Transport and Logistics. These industries are critical to the future of the Northern Territory and suffer significant labour shortages. In 2014, 12 students participated in training, three students are now working full-time in these industries and a further three are continuing their studies at Certificate III level.

I was honoured to recently launch the police cadets program at Palmerston Senior College. This pilot program will see 17 students from Palmerston Senior College gain training and qualifications while completing their education. It is a wonderful initiative and will support our youth and nurture them to become good citizens.

Work is already under way with a number of other industry partners in fields such as mining, childcare, hospitality and information technology to further develop future pathway programs.

In addition, we have made significant investment in schools, with the construction of major new facilities and a program to update existing facilities. Construction will commence on a new \$30m facility for Henbury School on the grounds of Dripstone Middle School. This leading edge, purpose-built facility will cater for 120 middle and senior year high-support special needs students, and will provide for the growing educational demands of students with special needs in Darwin.

Design is already well advanced for a new state-of-the-art facility – \$11.6m for the Northern Territory Open Education Centre on the grounds of Darwin High School which will become part of the Bullocky Point Education Precinct. This facility, developed with a \$3m contribution from INPEX, will position the Northern Territory as a leading provider of distance education services in our region.

In 2014 we completed a \$1m new canteen for Taminmin College, an \$880 000 refurbishment of the administration block at Yuendumu School, \$1.5m in new classrooms at Larrakeyah Primary School and a \$1m extension at Durack preschool. In addition, \$1m went into new classrooms at Darwin Middle School.

We have also completed construction of five child and family centres in Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Ngukurr, Palmerston and Yuendumu. These centres provide integrated early childhood services, including education and care as well as health and parenting support.

In response to improved student attendance we have provided funding to improve infrastructure at five schools involved in the Remote School Attendance Strategy: \$1.6m for three new classrooms at Maningrida School; \$1.2m for two new classrooms and refurbishments at Borrooloola School; \$1m for a new economics building at Ali Curung School; \$900 000 for two new classrooms at Shepherdson College and \$0.5m for sports ovals and ablution upgrades at Ntaria School.

Progress is being made to establish trade training centres at schools in the communities of Nhulunbuy, Galiwinku, Borrooloola, Ntaria and Maningrida to add to the 12 centres already operating across the Northern Territory.

We have continued to pursue our commitment to provide Indigenous communities a greater say in how their schools are operated and provide increased opportunities for strengthened models of local governance.

Following extensive consultation and collaboration, in 2015 Docker River School will transition to become part of Nyangatjatjara College, an independent school run by the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, which currently offers a secondary education program in the community. This new model, which has unanimous support of the local community, will provide the children of Docker River with seamless delivery of education from preschool through to Year 10 by the same provider. Through the college's board, local community members will have a greater say in how their children access education services.

Establishment of the Tiwi Education Board to provide a single model of governance across Melville Island schools is another example of how Indigenous people are embracing the opportunity to take the lead and influence education service delivery in their communities.

We continue to provide around \$16m in support to the non-government school sector in the Northern Territory to provide choice for parents in the

education of their children. None of this reform would be possible without the support of our dedicated and professional teaching workforce, which is arguably charged with one of the most important roles in our community.

With the Northern Territory Teachers and Educator's 2014-2017 Enterprise Agreement now finalised, our teachers can at last benefit from a well-earned pay rise. Teachers received the backdated pay rise on 12 February 2015.

Our reforms are starting to deliver results. The Territory's performance in the 2014 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN, showed promising improvement, with the two-year gain for students moving from Year 3 in 2012 to Year 5 in 2014 bettering the national average rate of improvement in reading, spelling, grammar, writing, punctuation and numeracy. Notable improvement was also seen in the Northern Territory's Indigenous student grammar, punctuation and reading results, which improved at a rate greater than the national average. Territory non-Indigenous students moving from Year 3 to Year 5 also bettered the national average for mean-scale score improvement in every category. However, there is still much work to do to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, particularly for our Indigenous students.

I am confident our comprehensive reform agenda will continue to impact our student results and ensure Northern Territory students gain the fundamental literacy and numeracy capability to enable them to contribute as active and educated members of our society.

The year 2014 also saw the greatest number of Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training completions since its inception: 1315 senior students completed the certificate. That is the highest number ever of Year 12 graduates. Fifteen of the top 20 students in the Northern Territory were from government schools, with top students from Centralian Senior College obtaining an outstanding Australian Tertiary Admission Rank of 99.9, something worth congratulating.

Our public education system continues to improve and deliver better results for Territory students. I am committed to continuing to implement the government's reform agenda. In 2015 we will see implementation of *A Share in the Future*, Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024. We will continue to foster strong relationships with the Australia government which has agreed funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory will target implementation of the Northern Territory Indigenous Education Strategy. Early implementation of the strategy will include a suite of initiatives which target sustained improvement

in literacy and numeracy outcomes and student attendance.

Among other things, the Australian government's remote flexible literacy program has commenced in 15 remote primary schools. This program provides structured literacy learning based on the Direct Instruction model implemented in Cape York Peninsula. Standardised literacy and numeracy testing across all schools will better assess our students' learning and progress, and will identify areas of specific need.

Construction of a residential facility in Nhulunbuy aligned to Nhulunbuy High School will commence following a period of community consultation to ensure it meets the needs of students and their families. This will be the first part of a \$40.5m commitment by the Northern Territory government to expand the availability of regional boarding places for remote and very remote students and will be assisted by funding from the Australian government. The combined focus of both the Northern Territory and Australian governments has already resulted in strategies being implemented to improve student attendance in very remote communities. This unprecedented level of collaboration between governments and communities throughout 2014 has seen early growth in student attendance in targeted school communities, and discussions are under way to identify ways to strengthen and sustain these programs over the longer term.

We will continue to work to finalise reform of the *Education Act*. An exposure draft of a bill for a new *Education Act* is currently being developed and will be released for further public comment later this year before it progresses to implementation in 2016.

Recognising the importance of providing educational choice to parents, we will continue to provide financial and in-kind support for the non-government sector of schooling. We will work to further enhance this relationship between our schooling sectors to improve teaching and learning programs for the children they support.

As part of the Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy 2014-2024 we will work on establishing an international grammar school in Darwin. This school will offer an internationally recognised secondary curriculum and attract greater numbers of international students to the Northern Territory. In addition to Henbury School and the Northern Territory Open Education Centre, priority infrastructure projects for 2015 include the regional boarding facility in Nhulunbuy, jointly funded by the Australian government, and \$2.35m for a childcare centre in Ntaria.

A high-performance education system relies on quality leadership and staff. We will continue to strengthen the capacity of our classroom teachers and school leaders through the provision of high-quality professional development.

The Visible Learning program has been implemented in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions. Based on the success of this program over 1800 teachers in the Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Arnhem regions completed foundation workshops prior to the beginning of the 2015 school year to support the roll-out of this highly successful program across the Northern Territory.

We will continue to value and develop our local workforce from within the Territory, with a particular emphasis on growing the capacity of Indigenous teachers. Thirteen of the top teacher graduates from Charles Darwin University are now permanently employed in Northern Territory government schools. This move is part of an ongoing strategy to enhance education outcomes for students by investing in high-quality teachers. A further 16 Charles Darwin University graduates have been offered fixed-term contracts in our schools, including four from the More Indigenous Teachers scholarship program. We are focused on ensuring teachers who train in the Northern Territory get jobs in the Territory.

A five-year investment of \$25m is also providing new and refurbished teacher housing, substantially improving living conditions for teachers in remote communities.

In the first term of 2015 each student from preschool to Year 12 is eligible for a further \$150 Back to School payment. The scheme assists families to offset costs of purchasing educational items such as school uniforms, text books, stationery, school excursions and student identification cards. This is in addition to our \$200 Sport Voucher Scheme which assists families to cover the cost of their children's involvement in sport, recreation and cultural activities.

We are delivering an ambitious package of reform – no doubt about that – but one that is focused, sustainable and grounded in evidence of what works. No longer will we be satisfied with substandard performance, outcomes or service delivery. We are implementing programs we can measure and check the progress of. We will not waste resources on unworkable programs.

Our plan is long term and outcomes are focused and resourced. It will make a difference to parents and families, to school teachers and leaders and, ultimately, to the most important stakeholders of all, our students. Together we must provide educational opportunities that lead to

bright futures for our young people, who depend on a prosperous and strong economy in the Northern Territory.

I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr GILES (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister for Education for this statement. Not long after taking the role of Chief Minister I advised the Minister for Education our focus is on driving economic reform in the bush and making sure we have jobs for remote and regional Territorians in the future. Part of that is making sure we have suitably qualified and educated young Territorians, particularly Indigenous Territorians in regional and remote areas, to fill those jobs.

Minister Chandler undertook a range of reviews, most notably the Wilson report into Indigenous education and a review into the *Education Act*. These look at how we can improve performance in education, support teachers, parents and principals, and particularly support students so we achieve better learning outcomes. This is a long pathway in providing reform.

The *Learning Lessons* report produced by Bob Collins in 1999 was supposed to be the panacea to drive reform in Indigenous education. It has not achieved that and there is now an opportunity for a new direction. I commend the minister for taking his time to get the enabling framework right in a range of areas, most notably Indigenous education.

It will take a long time to fix this because there is much work to do. In 2013 the Northern Territory government commissioned the Indigenous education review, the first major investigation since 1999. The findings of that review are captured in the *A share in the future* report. The government is committed to implementing a comprehensive plan to bring about improvement for Indigenous students and offer greater opportunity for their future.

The case for change in Indigenous education is extremely strong. We have been performing so badly for so many decades and these kids need a greater level of opportunity. Many Indigenous children, especially those in remote communities, suffer from disadvantage even before they get to school. The Australian Early Development Census collects information about 5-year-olds around Australia and compares them to the national level. It provides an insight at the community level into the learning and developmental needs of young children.

It is also a useful predictor of future development, indicating how prepared children are for the

learning experience before they get to school. This measure, which is accepted nationally, demonstrates by age five unfortunately, to the detriment of these children, Northern Territory Indigenous children are already a mile behind children in like or unlike circumstances around the country.

The proportion of Territory children assessed as developmentally vulnerable in four or more of the five measured domains is the worst nationally. We should hang our heads in shame, but as politicians we have inherited this generational level of poor outcomes in children's developmental needs.

Our data indicates our Indigenous students in very remote areas are the most at risk. If our Indigenous children are already disadvantaged before they reach school, it follows they will find it difficult to engage in productive learning when they get to school. Our literacy and numeracy data shows this is the case. The literacy and numeracy results for Territory Indigenous students in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, or NAPLAN, show we have the lowest nationally. Our performance declines with increased levels of remoteness; the further you are away from Darwin the lower your level of outcome.

By Year 3 the literacy and numeracy results for the Territory's Indigenous students in very remote schools are behind Indigenous students in very remote schools located in other parts of Australia. This does not improve as they progress through the later years of schooling. By Year 9 Territory Indigenous students in very remote schools are, on average, five years behind Indigenous students in very remote schools in other parts of Australia. That is, on a like-by-like basis, they are a long way behind.

These results are unlikely to change while school attendance continues to be an issue for Aboriginal students across the Territory. Less than 40% of all Indigenous students attend school for more than four days per week. This reduces to less than 25% for very remote Indigenous students. To put that into context, less than one quarter of very remote Indigenous students are turning up four days out of five every week.

Few students attending school less than four days a week will achieve national literacy and numeracy minimum standards. They are behind the eight ball before they start school and when they get to school do not turn up enough and fall further behind. Children who do not experience success at school are not likely to stay at school so there is a cumulative effect.

Our data shows Indigenous student enrolments drop substantially at the start of secondary school. For an estimated 800 Indigenous students in very remote schools at the end of primary school only about 100 remain at the end of secondary school. That means 700 out of 800 fall away.

In 2014, 17 Indigenous students in very remote schools – out of everybody living in very remote areas – achieved a Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training. Between 2006 and 2014, 201 Indigenous students in very remote locations in the Territory achieved their NT Certificate of Education and Training.

The achievement of these students, and the teachers who supported them, is outstanding. Faced with many challenges getting to school in the first place, transitioning from primary to secondary and then achieving their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training is fantastic.

However, from a numerical point of view it is not good enough. We should be assisting Indigenous students, remote students and all students in the Northern Territory. We need to do better. We need more students complete their primary schooling and accessing quality secondary schooling options which lead to jobs or further education and training. On one hand we are building the economy and making sure there are jobs in primary industries and fisheries, mines, energy and a range of other areas. On the other hand we are trying to develop the students to take those jobs in the future. The plan of this government is to develop northern Australia by developing jobs, protecting our environment, building our social and cultural values but making sure we have the kids coming through. Getting the enabling structural framework right for education is the important component to drive it ahead.

The *A share in our future* Indigenous education strategy aims to improve the outcomes by taking a long-term focused approach to changing the way education services are delivered and measured to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Territory. These students deserve real career choices and opportunities both within and beyond their communities. A quality education is the foundation to achieving that. Creating a strong foundation for our Indigenous students in their early years will ensure they are able to enter primary school with the skills and attributes to succeed in their education.

I remember many years ago working in Canberra providing social and economic policy advice for a government department. We were doing a lot of analysis on Indigenous education outcomes across the country. The school of thought then

was if a child could not achieve between kindy and Year 3, particularly the end of Year 3, second phase, third phase, fourth phase, fifth phase intervention later in life – whether through schooling, vocational education and training or employment – would always be a challenge because they had received a bad start in life. Getting that start in life is the most important attribute. I was always told between kindy and Year 3 is the most important time to ensure we get the kids right for school.

The Families as First Teachers program is a government initiative. It is currently delivered in 21 remote communities across the Territory and we plan to expand it. It engages parents in the healthy development and early learning of their child from birth. Currently, over 2000 young Indigenous children already benefit from the holistic early learning program. Programs run in Ali Curung, Umbakumba, Angurugu, Borroloola, Elliott, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Kalkarindji, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Nguiu, Ngukurr, Ntaria, Numbulwar, Papunya, Ramingining, Shepherdson College at Galiwinku, Wadeye, Yirrkala and Yuendumu.

Indigenous students need to achieve in literacy and numeracy if they are to be successful at school.

I will step sideways for a minute. One thing recently announced was an increase in Indigenous employment in the public service from 8%, when we came to government, to 16% by 2020, a major task. Not everyone agrees with targets and setting quotas, but we believe it is important to have a vision for that.

We are putting a range of initiatives in place to achieve this. We commit to the public service taking on 120 students each year, guaranteeing a job between the AO2 and AO5 levels to ensure they have an opportunity in life. We are also working on how we improve the numeracy and literacy levels of people already working in the public service. We want to assist people to be and achieve all they want to. That is part of our response.

Indigenous students need literacy and numeracy skills so they can be successful and pathway through life. We recognise, as part of the employment component in the public service for Indigenous employees, we need to take responsibility for – 120 guaranteed jobs between AO2 and AO5 level each year within the public service.

There will be a focus on centrally supported mandated and highly structured literacy and numeracy programs in the school environment in remote and very remote schools to ensure

students have the important foundation to learning – numeracy and literacy.

Fifteen government primary schools have been selected to implement a new flexible literacy program supported by the Australian government. The program drives improvement in literacy learning through the use of Direct Instruction. I thank the Minister for Education. In the face of much adversity and criticism he has driven the agenda for Direct Instruction to provide improved outcomes for students in the Northern Territory. There are critics of this model, but it supports a mobile student population and the dynamics of many Territory students. Well done for having the strength and tenacity to face that adversity.

The Direct Instruction program provides teaching and learning consistency in remote and very remote schools where it is acknowledged there are issues with student engagement and achievement because of high staff turnover, staff mobility and student attendance. School leaders and staff have already commenced training and are starting to implement the program, which has been highly successful in remote communities in far north Queensland.

It is important that Indigenous students complete school and have pathways to employment, training and higher education opportunities. The Direct Instruction model provides opportunity for a more seamless supportive education environment.

Tailoring secondary education programs and providing a strong transition support model will build on reforms in the early and primary years to ensure young people have options for their life beyond schooling. We are setting people up with hopes and dreams for the future. Ensuring quality secondary education is provided in urban and regional areas, accompanied by residential options for the very remote students who attend them, will also support this component.

I remember speaking to the Minister for Education and my colleagues about the boarding school option for remote students. I know it was discussed by the previous government and also federal governments – current and previous – and this government. I have long supported this as a model to provide respite to students, parents, teachers, principals and school councils all wanting to get kids in the classroom healthy, having slept well, and been fed well to receive an education. It is not always widely supported and is a challenge.

In the member for Stuart's electorate and her home town of Yuendumu – I believe it is the WETT program. The challenge of talking about a boarding facility at Yuendumu for regional areas has been a topic of much discussion, heated and

otherwise. At the end of the day we listen to the community and consult, but we know the educational outcomes at Yuendumu and the surrounding regions are not to a standard many Territorians want or the standard parents of students in the area want. It is difficult.

The former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard – I am not speaking verbatim – was keen to have five boarding schools built in the Northern Territory – I am happy to be proven wrong, Minister for Education. Yuendumu was one, with another in Wadeye in the member for Daly's electorate and one in the Arnhem region. I have spoken with senior traditional owners in the Arnhem region about that school. Initially a remote area was considered, but the remote area discussed was not cost-effective mainly because getting power, water and sewerage to the location – I think it was Garthlala – meant infrastructure services for the school were about \$80m or \$90m alone, and that was a challenge beyond all challenges.

The Education department and the minister have spoken with traditional owners about what we can do. We have now agreed to construct a residential facility at Nhulunbuy. It also fits with the change in demographics at Nhulunbuy – the closure of the Rio Tinto refinery. We are now in the early stages of construction of a residential facility at Nhulunbuy as a first step towards achieving the residential component and delivering educational outcomes.

It is a challenge for many parents to have their kids in a boarding facility, whether it is on a weekly or term basis. We want those kids to have slept well, have good nutrition and hygiene and to be in the classroom so they can achieve the learning outcomes.

As part of the boarding school component, community consultation is a must. It will ensure parents have input into how and where the residential facility will operate and what its design will be, and give them confidence their children will be supported in the best way possible to complete their secondary education.

Student engagement and attendance at school will be critical to ensure kids have an opportunity to succeed in learning from a schooling and employment point of view, and also in life.

They need to attend school regularly from early childhood to secondary schooling. They need to be supported in their education by their family and their community. Through our focus on attendance locally, and in partnership with the Australia government – I thank Senator Nigel Scullion – we are making gains and have seen improvements in the number of children attending school.

They are not the biggest gains but gains nonetheless. They are not uniform, but they are gains. Student engagement and attendance at our schools is improving. The Remote School Attendance Strategy involved 30 NT government and four Catholic schools in 2014. While I would like to see bigger improvement, overall the program has seen an 11% increase in the number of students attending school in 2014 compared to 2013.

To all the education professionals whether teachers, principals, Education staff or Remote School Attendance Strategy employees – the people in the yellow shirts at communities – who are getting kids to school, congratulations! Every additional student is a positive outcome.

Not only is the strategy employing people in communities, it is getting kids to school and giving them an opportunity. However, much more work needs to be done. Schools in Elliott, Yirrkala and Ngukurr each saw a greater than 10% increase in their attendance rate. Congratulations to those schools. It is good progress but more needs to be done because it is not universal.

Indigenous students need to attend school as regularly as non-Indigenous students if they are to exceed in their learning. Focused strategies to address school attendance will be implemented by schools and the Education department. However, in partnership with communities, other service providers and the Australian government, we need to continue working to address factors that have an effect on school attendance such as the timing of royalty payments, alcohol, substance abuse and even the timing of sports carnivals and major events. It is topic often not discussed, but we have to make sure we collectively do our bit to get those kids to school.

They need to be at school for the full 40 weeks of the school year. In all schools, but particularly in our most challenging schools, we must support a high-quality and stable workforce that is skilled and motivated. Investing in our local Indigenous workforce is a key to that. Our Aboriginal employees must be supported and developed in their roles and must have access to professional development to further their career in education.

The challenge for the Territory's Indigenous students is great, but through a sustained strategic approach to implementing these reforms we will make a difference. This parliament will make a difference to the lives of current and future students, Indigenous and otherwise, in the Northern Territory, and we will ensure our Indigenous students are successful and confident in their educational journey. There is much more to be said with regard to the education of students in remote and very remote communities.

I will sum up on my contribution to date. We have a plan for the future of the Northern Territory; we call it our north Australia plan. For remote and very remote Territorians, especially Indigenous, it is about ensuring we support development of culture through a social and environmental prism, have an investment framework for growth in jobs and partner with organisations such as the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council, Anindilyakwa Land Council and the Tiwi Land Council. We must also ensure kids have the right opportunities to attend school, we support the educational framework and give control back to communities as part of the north Australia agenda and our Indigenous Affairs policy.

We say to communities and traditional owners: no longer will government be enshrined in a centralised model in Darwin. We are looking at putting it back to communities as part of our reforms to local government. The minister for Local Government spoke about it earlier today. That is why we changed the toxic shire model to regional councils; we broke the shire model down in the member for Daly's electorate. That is why we put 63 local authorities in place and why LGANT funded each local authority an amount of \$50 000 to give them an opportunity for decentralised decision-making and to drive reform in their own communities.

It is also why we are handing back Territory controlled community health centres to become community controlled health centres. It is why we want communities to have a greater level of say in the operation of their schools – independent public schools, global school budgets or the role of the parent and teacher council in communities. We want people to own it. It is not about taking away decision-making from local areas in Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek or Darwin. It is about giving back and saying, 'We support you driving reform in your community, for your people and for your country'. Eleven-and-a-half years of Labor saw the voice of Aboriginal people in the bush taken away. We are giving it back.

We support communities making the decisions they once did before that was taken away. We support communities running their own agenda. We say self-determination and empowerment were never properly applied in the Northern Territory, and never properly supported or tested. This includes education, health, housing and economic development – all the social and economic parameters that drive development of communities socially, culturally and economically. It is about saying to those communities, 'We hear what you want to do. You want to be in charge of your destiny.'

That is the direction we are taking. Whether it is the Indigenous education review, boarding

schools, development of pastoral properties, creating the buffalo industry or supporting Territory health centres, it is about giving control back to people. It is saying, 'We know you will make mistakes'. Everyone in society, professionally, socially or otherwise, makes mistakes. Because you are Aboriginal and living in a remote community does not mean you should be judged harshly and have your decision-making capability and capacity taken away. This is a consultative environment. This government listened in opposition and is putting together an agenda. Decentralisation is the way we are heading and is our plan moving forward.

North Australia is the overarching strategy, but to roll out north Australia in a range of areas it is about decentralising. It is about setting up regional development committees in our major regional centres. It is about listening to the tourism bodies in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy which were taken away by Labor. It is about setting up local hospital boards and letting local people drive the health agenda in regional centres. It is about giving infrastructure jobs back to communities or small business – civil construction or otherwise – and saying we support local Territory companies not interstate ones. It is about giving back to the Northern Territory.

I commend the Minister for Education on his statement. I know he has worked tirelessly, particularly on three major areas of education. He should be congratulated for doing this in a whirlwind of Labor and union hostility. At the forefront of his mind and mine is kids getting the best education, particularly the most vulnerable who need the most support.

Peter, you have my full support. This is the agenda we will run. Keep moving forward with Families as First Teachers, Direct Instruction and the boarding school model. Keep letting the public know what is happening. Make sure there is consultation, but drive the agenda forward because Territory kids deserve the best outcome they can get and they have not received that to date. An 11% improvement in school attendance is a fantastic outcome.

The structural framework needs more work and you are driving it. You should be congratulated. You have the full support of government. I look forward to the next statement on this important topic coming before this House.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

PETITION
Petition No 41 –
Banana Freckle Eradication Program

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a petition from 738 petitioners praying that the banana freckle eradication program is stopped. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motional agreed to; petition read.

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the petition of banana consumers of the NT brings to the attention of the House that the banana freckle eradication program in the NT is not taking into account that we are able to eat bananas with this blemish.

We, the undersigned, humbly petition you to stop the eradication program and allow us to eat the many varieties of heritage-style NT bananas of our choice.

MOTION
Note Statement – Education the Key
to a Bright Future

Continued from earlier this day.

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I thank the Education minister for bringing forward this important statement. I am sure I will hear some moans and groans from the other side when I say dropping a statement on our desk as the minister delivers it is not the right way to go.

We want constructive, informed and well-researched debate in this Chamber. There is an expectation in the community that we get our facts, figures, data ...

Mr Chandler: You know who to blame.

Ms MANISON: ... and look at it. Instead, we have a statement dropped on our desk as the minister is delivering it.

Mr Westra van Holthe: You can blame the member for Nhulunbuy.

Ms MANISON: It was a far better convention ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Please be quiet while the member is on her feet.

Ms MANISON: ... when a statement was provided the night before so some thought could go into it.

Mr VOWLES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 51 referring to members speaking without interruption.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Johnston. Yes please, a bit of quiet while the member is speaking. Member for Wanguri, you have the call.

Ms MANISON: Mr Deputy Speaker, some work could happen around that because the community has an expectation that we have detailed debate and look into issues. Instead it is being thrown on our desk. I would like more time to prepare something, do more research, get more figures and check a few facts but I am a bit on the hop here.

I would have liked more time to prepare a detailed statement, as the minister has. His department works on it, it goes to his advisers, who look at it, he looks at it then delivers it and it is a thorough piece of work.

I thought the government would want people to know what it is delivering in its statements, be proud of the achievements it is plugging in statements and want as many Territorians as possible to hear the contents. No, the government drops it on the table without any time for the opposition to prepare. It is not a good government process and should be looked at.

Let us talk about education, because it is vital to the future of the Territory. I have no doubt every member of this Chamber values education and understands how important it has been in their life. It brought us to this Chamber able to debate long detailed statements, which is very important.

It makes a difference in people's lives and is the key to opportunity. It is the key to a life full of prospects – a job to secure future income and to support their family. It is a critical area governments need to get right.

We do not shy away from the fact we have the biggest problem with education in the nation. In the Northern Territory we have the highest proportion of children not meeting benchmark literacy and numeracy standards, which is a shame. We have the lowest school attendance figures in the country, and regardless of whether you live in urban centres, the bush or remote towns, if you go to school every day you will get an education. If children do not attend school every day their opportunity for an education is greatly diminished. Attendance is a priority we need to focus on.

The CLP has a big reform agenda for education. Under this reform agenda we have seen some approaches to education I do not agree with: cuts to the education budget, teacher numbers, support staff numbers, subject selection with bigger classrooms and less support for students. This is a real concern and has been part of the CLP's education reform agenda since 2012.

With bigger classrooms and fewer teachers we see an approach which moves away from secondary education being delivered in the bush to reforms driven by ideology as opposed to educational outcomes. What parents say, and what teachers and families want, are schools and the Education department being focused on delivering educational outcomes. They want changes based on the fact they will drive improved educational outcomes in the Northern Territory. It seems a lot of this reform agenda is driven by budgets and ideology, which is of great concern.

Another concern with regard to education is instability in the CLP government. We have had six Education ministers at the post – a lot of swapping and changing. The same people seem to come back into the job, but people want a more consistent approach. Rather than six different Education ministers they would like stability.

What have we seen in education under the CLP government since 2012? We have lost at least 185 teachers and staff from the Territory's public education system. Teachers have a huge impact on a child's education and we want quality passionate teachers, the best teachers, in the education system because they can make a huge difference to the life of a student. Instead we see a government determined to have fewer in the classroom dealing with bigger student numbers and less support within the system. In both the department and schools there are fewer people to support teachers to do their very best. They go into the profession because they want to make a difference and are passionate about education and the difference it can make to society.

We have also seen about \$125m in budget cuts to education, which is a shame because the money you invest in education up front will save a lot down the road in the criminal justice system. You will have a more productive economy and will be supporting fewer people in the social welfare system. There is no doubt education is a good investment.

When I look at the cuts the CLP government has made to education, I think about the logic in its approach to education. We often hear the government say we have the worst education results in the nation, the biggest problems in our education system and the biggest challenges.

Nobody doubts we have the biggest challenges and everybody wants to overcome them. However, their policy approach and implementation going forward is to cut resources to education.

If crime is going through the roof, houses are being broken into left, right and centre, and there are antisocial problems in a park down the road, by that logic you would have fewer police.

Another example I heard – my colleague, the member for Fannie Bay used it before – is the emergency department is flat out, people trying to get in, the waiting lists are long so you have fewer doctors. It does not add up. Having less resources and less support in the education system will not drive the better education results we want to see. It is not sound logic.

We have heard concerns from teachers – I have not seen so many teacher rallies for some time – and school council meetings. The school councils tend to have some passionate parent members who want to see a strong education system in the Territory. They have seen the consequences of some of the decisions this government has made.

For example, global school budgets had a disastrous roll-out. Towards the end of last year, when principals and school councils were working hard to finalise their budgets for the new school year, stories started coming through thick and fast. They came from members of the Chamber who were hearing them from school communities. Parents were talking about it and school councils were raising concerns.

The minister committed to no school being worse off under global school budgets, and that was far from reality. Schools were worse off under global school budgets. We saw huge shortfalls in the budgets of some schools. We saw up to \$1m in some senior schools, with massive teacher number cuts having to be considered. I had examples from local primary schools delighted to teach their students different subjects. These had to be reconsidered. Other schools had to cut teacher numbers and assistance to teachers. They had to make some pretty tough decisions about how they would get their budget to add up.

Some stories were quite concerning to hear. Yes, some schools managed to get their budget in the black because they cut and cut until it reached the black.

This year some schools are still worse off. They have made cuts to staffing and to programs. They have less support and less choice for students. Classroom sizes are bigger in some schools. That happened because of the disastrous roll-out of global school budgets. At the end of last year

letters were sent to the Education minister from school councils to alert him they were worse off because he seemed to have his head buried thoroughly in the sand. The promise that no school would be worse off under global school budgets is not the case.

The government has conceded that and that the Education minister was wrong. Schools were worse off under global school budgets. That became apparent when, in the reshuffle before the last reshuffle after the failed coup, the member for Araluen was again appointed to the Education post and the government provided \$23m over four years to help deal with the funding shortfalls as a result of global school budgets. That certainly demonstrated schools were worse off under global school budgets.

The feedback I am getting from stakeholders – I would like to have called a few more in preparation for this – was \$23m over four years does not cover the shortfalls. Schools are still cutting. As a result schools have lost teachers and subjects. I have been informed there were huge shortfalls in the special school sector, which were not anticipated, as a result of global school budgets, and some schools are still worse off under global school budgets.

It appeared to be cut by stealth, which concerned parents. They want schools focused on education outcomes and want principals focused on delivering better education outcomes not preoccupied with budget troubles and running a business. The issue of global school budgets has not gone away.

A sensible government approach could have been – why go all out in the one year? – to trial it. You did it a bit with the independent public schools, but then you went all out. It has been a disaster and caused quite a lot of stress.

In his statement the minister mentioned the government's priorities with the change to teacher numbers and the emphasis on investing in early childhood education. The government felt that was where we could get the most gains – to get kids on the right path. I did not see many schools benefiting from that. Overall we have still had a net loss of teacher numbers and that is not a positive thing; that is cuts to education.

Your statement refers to the Transport and Logistics program and a VET pathway. I was lucky enough to attend a presentation from Mike Harrison, who was with Group Training NT for a long time. That looks like a fantastic initiative with Education and schools working directly with industries to create job pathways for students while attending school.

It would be nice to see government working with key industries needing workers where there is an interest from students. That is a sound approach and was an interesting project to hear about.

The statement discusses school infrastructure. It is a challenge going forward because we have growing areas and new developments. Within my electorate the suburbs of Muirhead and Lyons – the amount of housing and the high demand for public education there. Families want access to local schools which puts pressure on schools to cater for growth.

Last year I attended Dripstone Middle School presentation night and graduation for Year 9 students. There were lots of kids. As the northern suburbs grow there will be more pressure on local schools. In the city there are more units and new developments placing more demand on public schools. Some schools will always be in high demand and other schools have room for more enrolments and could be better utilised.

There is work to be done and it is important to know we have an infrastructure program which will meet future demand. The capital works and repairs and maintenance budgets have gone backwards somewhat under this government. In 2012-13 capital works had about \$61m on the books and that is now down to about \$50m. There is less going into the new school infrastructure we all want ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 77, I seek an extension of time for the member for Wanguri.

Motion agreed to.

Ms MANISON: I am happy the government is proceeding with the new Henbury School and Bellamack special school. However, we know a special school at Palmerston has been planned for some time, being announced in May 2010. It seems for the first few years not much work happened, but it is good to see we are progressing down that path so the residents of Palmerston get a new special school.

In my electorate I am happy that after much work, advocacy and representation by Henbury School Council it is also able to secure a commitment from this government to build a new special school. I am very grateful to the minister and Mr Ken Davies in the Education department, who have both provided me with updates and allowed me to attend public consultations. It is wonderful to see Leanne Taylor working on that project as she is thoroughly experienced in building new school infrastructure and does a great job. I look forward to seeing that completed.

My only issue is we made the commitment in 2012 and had to do some pushing to get you there. You are there now and I, and the school council, are both grateful. That will be a wonderful piece of school infrastructure and I am glad we got there in the end.

We have the worst education results in the country and the most challenging conditions to work in. We are dealing with a high proportion of people from a low socioeconomic background who have huge issues with housing, overcrowding and remoteness. We have some big challenges. English is a second, third or fourth language for many of these kids.

Getting kids to school is essential. It is a shame, when you look at our NAPLAN testing, that from 2008 to 2014 we have not seen the improvements we wanted to. I have the 2008 to 2014 results from Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 in reading and numeracy and you can see not a great deal has changed. There is more to an education that reading, writing and numeracy but they are critical. It is a concern that we are still not reaching the marks and improvements we want.

I sometimes feel disappointed because we were seeing some incremental improvements. When the 2011 NAPLAN results came out – I refer to an article in *The Australian* by Justine Ferrari dated 13 September 2011 titled, 'NT students make great strides in NAPLAN but still behind national average'. It read:

The most improved students in Australia are in the Northern Territory, where the rise in national literacy and numeracy test scores has outstripped the rest of the nation.

An analysis by the Territory Education Department comparing this year's test results with the same students' results in 2009 shows their scores rose higher in 11 of 12 tests than the average increase nationally.

There were small gains but, comparing cohort to cohort, there were improvements in the right direction and what we needed to see. We need improvement each year. I refer to an ABC news article in 2014 on NAPLAN testing titled, 'NAPLAN report: NT test scores stagnate, Minister calls for 'dramatic structural change' to education'. It says:

The Northern Territory's Education Minister has called for dramatic changes to the school system after a report showed test scores for NT children from years three to nine have either remained stagnant or declined since last year.

When I look at the government's agenda of cuts to teachers numbers, cuts to support staff, bigger classes and less support for students I cannot see how having fewer teachers and resources will drive better results. That is concerning. We want better results, but it seems we went from a period where investment was made – we have never shied away from strong investment in education; it is something we are proud of and committed to because education is critical to the Northern Territory. It is critical to giving kids a life of opportunity. However, under this government we have seen cuts to education and it is not paying off; it is not the way forward in education.

With regard to school attendance, it is good to see work has continued on the Every Child, Every Day initiative because attendance is critical to getting on top of education issues in the Territory and driving better outcomes.

It can be very frustrating. Going through some data in the short time I had I can see, school by school, it paints a different story. You can feel the frustration many people in the Education department have and many principals and teachers. They know if they can get kids to school every day they will get a good education but the challenge is getting them there.

I welcome the efforts made regarding attendance. The CLP government has recognised attendance is critical to improving the results we desperately want to see.

I again thank the minister for bringing forward this important statement. We wholeheartedly agree that education should be a top priority of the government. Investment is needed in education. We all want to see our children get a good education so they can have a life full of opportunity and we will have a better Northern Territory.

Mrs PRICE (Local Government and Community Services): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement to the House today. Education is something I am passionate about, especially for remote students. I am lucky both my parents worked at the school which, in turn, made sure I attended every day.

Education in the Northern Territory is a massive exercise. We have around 3700 school-based staff, including dedicated and professional teachers, school leaders and Indigenous assistant teachers. One of my cousins is a teacher at Yuendumu School. Over 1900 teachers are in classrooms every day providing Territory children with the greatest opportunity to learn and develop. Research has shown teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student

achievement. Quality teachers mean better outcomes for Territory children.

To ensure we have quality teachers for our students the Teacher Registration Board was established. The board is responsible for administering teacher registration and ensuring only persons who are fit and proper, appropriately qualified and competent to teach are employed as teachers in the Territory. The board also administers the Northern Territory's highly accomplished and lead teacher certification process. This process recognises and rewards high-quality classroom-based teachers who can demonstrate achievement of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the highly accomplished or lead career stages. Thirty-three Territory teachers have undertaken the rigorous assessment process and met eligibility requirements. Certification is nationally recognised.

To ensure the Northern Territory has skilled and experienced teachers when and where they are needed a strategic workforce planning framework is being developed. This will assist to identify current and future workforce needs and ensure we have contemporary recruitment practices that place the right people in the right job in the right location.

Talking about the workforce, as part of the recent teacher enterprise agreement negotiations and in consultation with the Australian Education Union, the Northern Territory Department of Education teacher permanency policy was reviewed and now provides for permanent appointment based on merit selection. This will support the shift to increased school autonomy and provide the framework for school communities to recruit the most appropriately qualified staff to fill permanent vacancies at their school.

Another part of attracting quality teachers is to make sure they are well paid and supported with allowances when living in remote areas. Our teachers are among the highest paid in Australia. Our remote teachers receive a range of additional allowances, relocation assistance, study assistance and housing support in recognition of living in isolated and sometimes challenging circumstances.

In partnership with the Australian government as part of the Stronger Futures funding package, \$25m is being invested in new and refurbished remote teacher housing. This investment will substantially improve living conditions for many of our educators in the remotest parts of the Territory, many of whom work far away from their home base.

New teachers to the Territory are provided with a comprehensive orientation and induction program which provides an introduction to the Northern Territory's education system and includes four-wheel drive and cross-cultural training.

A recently released national report commissioned by the Australian government through its Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group recognises improving teacher quality starts with ensuring we have the right people entering teacher training and they receive quality training and support. The report recommends changes to the way teacher education is delivered, and provides advice on how it can be improved to better prepare new teachers for the classroom.

The Territory will need to closely consider the report's recommendations but would agree, in principle, to the importance of quality teacher education programs and investing in high-quality teachers as a foundation to improving student learning. We must continue to work in partnership with our tertiary providers to develop a local education workforce and provide career opportunities for Territorians, particularly Indigenous Territorians.

The More Indigenous Teachers Initiative aims to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in Territory schools through a range of scholarships. Currently more than 25 students are being supported to complete teaching qualifications through this program.

Teacher education scholarships also support Territory residents enrolled in a full-time teacher education degree or equivalent teacher qualifications at a Northern Territory tertiary institution. Currently 12 students are being supported through this program to complete their teaching degrees.

In 2015, 13 of the top teacher graduates from Charles Darwin University have been offered permanent employment in Territory schools. A further 16 graduates have been offered temporary contracts. This includes four scholarship holders from the More Indigenous Teachers Initiative scholarship program. A range of professional learning and support services are offered to our teachers.

Remote teacher support offices are located in each of the five regional centres. These offices are the first point of contact for school staff and they assist to resolve answers to questions. They identify issues for broader action and proactively support teachers in very remote Indigenous schools.

Strengthening the capacity of school leaders and teachers to provide high-quality teaching and

learning programs and create a culture of improvement and success for all students is important. We are delivering this through the implementation of programs such as Visible Learning and Direct Instruction.

Over 1500 Top End teachers attended Visible Learning workshops held in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Gunbalanya and Ramingining prior to the start of the 2015 school year. Those teachers engaged in discussions about how to better use data to access and tailor student learning and reflect on what works well in classrooms.

A high-performing education system relies on quality leadership, quality staff and high standards of professional practice at all levels in all schools. The Territory's hard-working and valued teaching workforce is delivering this.

Teachers are the connectors between information and knowledge. This government values our teachers and will continue to support them. I want to thank the truancy officers who go around the community tirelessly getting the kids to jump in the bus and get to school. I am proud to have my nieces at Papunya do this every day. I want to congratulate them on their good work.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement. It is difficult to give a good response because of the short time to look at it. There is a huge amount of information in this statement and some things could, on their own, make up a whole statement.

The member for Stuart spoke about teachers, Indigenous education and truancy officers. The government often talks about taking responsibility. The need for a Commonwealth intervention and the supply of truancy officers highlights the fact some parents do not take responsibility for sending their children to school.

If the government wants a sign things are changing one would be no longer needing truancy officers. They take responsibility away from the people who should be sending their kids to school, the parents. Parents are not, therefore we need truancy officers. I hope it is only temporary because one of the dangers in introducing a scheme like that is people become used to it and think someone will ring the bell and the bus will pick the kids up. Perhaps kids should be riding their bike to school because they love school or their parents have told them to wake up and get to school. I hope truancy officers are not around in 10 years' time.

Sometimes we do not have the facts to go with the statement. I have heard Education ministers from both sides make statements about Indigenous education then out comes the Department of

Education annual report and the numeracy and literacy figures are not too good.

If the minister wants to make a detailed statement on Indigenous education it would be good to see figures for attendance which make sure the people attending are the people attending. We had the argument in relation to SIHIP employment, where the federal government said 20% of the workforce would be Indigenous. The real question was: are the same 20% being employed. In other words, are the same children attending school day after day? I hope so, but if we are to debate whether the government's policies are making a difference we need to see the facts. Are the same children attending these schools day after day and what percentage of those kids are turning up 95% of the time? If you only turn up 50% of the time you are not getting an education.

We need to know what the figures for literacy and numeracy are because if you want people to work they need basic skills to get a job and improve their lifestyle.

Whilst I appreciate the minister made some statements about focusing on improving Indigenous student performance, we do not have any figures to say that is the case. One of the problems with these statements is they are simply sentences with nothing to back them up.

The minister mentioned the Indigenous education review, *A share in the future*. I am not sure how many reviews of Indigenous education we have had. The previous government had a few, the federal government had a few and Noel Pearson probably had a few. We have had lots of reviews but have they made a difference?

I often argued with previous Education minister, Syd Stirling that we have had reviews and new ideas, but I reminded him my good wife – she is probably sick of me mentioning this – had a grade six education in a mission school based mainly on the rote system. She can probably read and write better than a lot of Indigenous kids can today. We made the process of education so complicated it has become an industry in itself instead of going back to basics and seeing how much effort you need to learn your multiplication tables.

This is not just in Indigenous education. When I go into a shop I expect someone to work out if something costs \$5.10 and I give them \$10 I get \$4.90 in change. Today many people cannot do that in their head; they have to work it out on the cash register. We have lost some of those important skills and, to a large extent, the so-called education revolution has lost sight of the basic goals. Those in this parliament with teaching skills might disagree, but my wife went

through a basic education and has good reading and writing skills. Some of what I see today concerns me. We may need to rethink our approach to education. Some people may use those methods and you cannot say everybody is not succeeding. Some schools are achieving and that is great. Today we have a statement without all the facts we need to see if we are improving education and things are moving forward.

I have heard many statements from both sides of parliament on Indigenous education. Here we go again, another review. Perhaps I should suggest the Minister for Education provides a statement with some meat on the bones so we can see if these policies are making a difference. We can then debate the issues around those policies. This is one of the most important things parliament can discuss and influence. If we are to give Aboriginal people a chance, a good education is one way for people to avoid the poverty cycle many end up in.

The minister mentioned international education services. I heard a rumour the government wants to build an international grammar school. How will that fit with existing secondary schools? We have Essington, boarding schools in the private sector, and Darwin High School, which is known for delivering good education to many people over many years. If government's intention is to build an international grammar school, how will that fit with the existing school system? Will it compete or is it to attract people from overseas?

Going back to the days when Tom Harris was Minister for Education, he and a number of important people sat at Berrimah Farm one day. There was a big announcement we would have an international grammar school in Darwin and, as you can see 25 years later, the cows still graze in the paddock. The government of the day had the idea of bringing international students to Darwin but it failed, partly because of the economics and perhaps it did not have the educational backing it needed to succeed.

I would like the minister to expand on what international education services means and whether the government intends to build a school. If so, what is it all about?

The minister has had many debates over independent public schools. I have received information regarding one of the schools in my electorate which still has concerns about funding. The minister, pre-Christmas, said there was nothing wrong with the funding model. Yet the government decided over Christmas, when there was a different minister, to give an additional \$23m over four years. The impression everyone has is you have admitted there was not enough

funding and that is why you have allocated \$23m over four years.

Minister, there is still much concern. If one of my school councils is writing to you because they are not happy with their budget you should not be shrugging your shoulders and saying everything is okay; you need to talk with those people.

This has been going on for months and school councils do not need this uncertainty. They want to ensure teachers are paid, the bills are paid and they do not have to cut corners because the government has not allocated enough money to make sure the school is running properly.

The member for Wanguri looked at many of the issues around student teacher ratios. The Country Liberals has committed to ensuring our students leave school work ready. Again, I have heard that many times from both sides. I hope both sides make sure our kids are work ready and have a good education regardless of where they live in the Territory.

The minister mentioned the Pastoral Futures Program, which is great. I have seen some information from the Cattlemen's Association and I think Luke Bowen had a fair bit to do with it. My daughter did a jillaroo training course at Mataranka Station and was employed at Wave Hill Station. She worked at Cattle Creek and Oban Station near Mt Isa then back to Kidman Springs, the government station on the Victoria River. That was because she went to a rural school, learnt how to ride a horse, drink a beer, have a smoke and became a ringer. She still has some of those bad habits, unfortunately, but is not on a horse anymore. She is a good kid and has learnt how to string a bull up under a tree and turn it into steak. That was the education she received and I am in favour of that type of program.

Has the government looked at the future of Mataranka Station? The university is pulling out of that station. I remember many discussions about a possible prison farm or work camp in Katherine and there may be some use for that station ...

Mr Elferink: Still under examination.

Mr WOOD: We should not let go of it. With so much emphasis on the growth of the Northern Territory, especially through increased cattle production with China and Vietnam possibly coming on board, we need to ensure education in those areas is continuing and expanding if possible. Could the minister give us a report on Katherine rural college? I call it Katherine rural college rather than Charles Darwin University Rural Katherine Campus because ...

Mr Elferink: We dinosaurs know what you are talking about.

Mr WOOD: How is the college going? Is it training sufficient young people to go into the pastoral or agricultural industries? It does not get a mention but could have been covered.

I am interested in the police cadets program at Palmerston Senior College, a good idea. How many young people are involved in it? We had Army cadets in one school and now we have the police cadets program. It would be nice to put a little more meat into these statements so members of parliament understand what is happening there.

It is great to have expansion of special needs. The statement said a new \$30m facility for Henbury School will commence on the grounds of Dripstone Middle School, which is fantastic.

The Northern Territory Open Education Centre is moving. We asked questions about that a number of years ago. What will happen to the old building? The minister said it was 30 years old. My house is older than that and I am not planning to knock it down.

Many things in the statement need discussing, but unfortunately I have not had time to get through everything the minister covered. Whilst I understand where the government is coming from in not providing statements until the last minute, the flip side is if parliament wants a reasonable debate it needs to make sure people can give a reasonable response. My response today is not as good as it could be, but I wanted to make a few comments. There are so many things I cannot cope with them all.

Minister, next time you make a statement break it up and hone in on a particular issue. That would make for much better debate in this House.

Mr GUNNER (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, my contribution will be along similar lines to the member for Nelson's. No one could make the point better than the member for Nelson. We know the member for Nelson can talk about anything, anytime and has shown that many times in this Chamber.

He spoke for 20 minutes, maybe longer, on education. However, his contribution would have been better if he had more time to prepare. There is an issue in this Chamber at the moment.

I thank the minister for bringing forward a debate on education, an important issue. There is no doubt we appreciate the opportunity to discuss education in this Chamber. Without doubt, discussion of the education of Territory children deserves more than the minister spending 30

minutes reading scripted remarks circulated once he starts his contribution. A higher level of debate on issues would be much better. We need to find a way to work through this. The government has points it believes are strong enough to prevent circulation of ministerial statements. The impact of that decision has been to reduce the level of debate in the Chamber.

While the government might think it is not acceptable to provide statements the day before or the morning of, the solution currently before us is to deliver a 30-minute statement, carefully prepared and scripted, etcetera. That level of attention should be given to a statement. However, to expect a quality debate in this Chamber is not the way to ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Fannie Bay, this is a statement on education not an opportunity to make a statement regarding statements. I draw you back to the subject matter please.

Mr GUNNER: The quality of the education debate in this Chamber will be lacking as a result of the education statement not being circulated earlier. There is a comprehensive list of things in this statement.

Earlier today I suggested to the member for Nelson and others about 15 or 16 items could almost become statements in their own right because they deserve that level of attention. If we had been provided with the statement earlier we could make sure they received the attention they deserved ...

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! You have given the member a clear directive and he does not seem to be paying attention to it. He has not said the word 'education' once since he has been on his feet.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of Government Business. Member for Fannie Bay, could you be relevant to the statement on education please.

Mr GUNNER: The first thing mentioned is the *A share in the future* report, the Indigenous education review. That could be a statement itself. The quality of the statement would be better if we were given notice. The *A share in the future* report on Indigenous education is, without a doubt, important but only receives a couple of paragraphs. As the member for Nelson said, it is almost a motherhood statement. We would appreciate more detail on that as well as most things in the statement.

The Indigenous education strategy coming from the Indigenous education review lacks significant

detail. The opposition could have contributed more to this debate ...

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 258:

A Minister may make a statement on government policy, or on a government decision, or on a government action or on proposed government action at any time when there is no question before the Assembly: provided that copies of the statement are available for distribution to all Members when the Minister commences their statement.

That standing order has been complied with. Moreover, we would happily continue providing statements well in advance but for the fact you guys keep leaking them and we keep reading about it in the newspaper.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, thank you.

Mr WOOD: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I am not sure what the point of order was or what it relates to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order was quite clear. The statement was provided to members of the opposition according to the standing orders of this parliament.

Mr ELFERINK: The point of order is the member, despite the Deputy Speaker's ruling, continued to talk about an issue when told not to. I have just pointed out the standing orders have been complied with and he is whingeing about something which complies with standing orders. We would love to provide statements earlier if the opposition did not leak them to the press.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, you will have ample opportunity to respond when you get the call.

Mr Wood interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, please.

Mr Wood: I can hear you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, and I can hear you too, that is the problem. The member for Fannie Bay has the call and I would appreciate it if he was heard in silence.

Member for Fannie Bay, please continue and stay within the subject matter of the statement.

Mr GUNNER: The minister can deliver a statement – I am not saying he is contravening standing orders – but this could be 15 or 16 statements all deserving the attention of the House and quality debate. Our shadow minister for Education did a tremendous job considering the time provided to contribute to this debate. She is very much across her brief. The member for Nelson spoke well on the subject considering the time available to him to respond.

The member for Nelson made some very good points around the Indigenous education review, the Indigenous education strategy and some policy debates we should be having about what we are measuring, what we are trying to teach and the genuine outcomes. Are some of the things we are measuring arbitrary? Are they the wrong outcome? Should we be doing different things with a greater impact? Those are all worthy of a longer and more considered debate.

I was a little surprised with international education services and the absence of the grammar school being discussed, even reference to Charles Darwin University. If we talk about overseas links, particularly Asia, how we can work our school environment into our higher education and how can we attract and retain overseas students? That is worthy of a longer, more considered debate with more notice. That is also missing from this statement.

Global school budgets is worthy of a statement itself. I have been to quite a few schools, school council meetings, assemblies and school activities and it is only early in the year. Without doubt one of the main issues has been global school budgets, the significant pressures put on schools and some very serious decisions school councils have had to make when working with principals.

One school has gone into the red to make sure it keeps the teachers it needs to deliver the education it promised to. Another school decided not to go into the red and is struggling with an absence of teachers it needs to deliver the education the school body deserves. There are two different responses from schools facing similar pressures. Another school is keeping a close eye on enrolment because it is poised – 10 fewer students and it will be in financial trouble, 10 more and the gamble it is taking this year with teachers and classrooms will pay off. These are significant pressures faced by schools.

With these statements and debates, the more time you have to prepare and talk to school councils the better the debate. With my experience and the work I have done with school councils I can make those comments. We should be making more detailed comments and giving greater

feedback with more depth than we are at the moment.

The CLP rescue package of \$23m for schools we saw over the Christmas break almost went through to the keeper amongst a bunch of other events that blew up. The CLP made massive changes to our school system and funding that required a rescue package – it had to rescue schools from themselves. Unfortunately the rescue package has not gone far enough. The feedback I have received is things are the same as at the end of last term – schools were panicking going into the Christmas break and are now panicking in term one. It has not fallen through to schools and is a serious issue.

One school in my electorate is now independent, Darwin High School. Some schools in my electorate decided not to go to the independent school model, but since global school budgeting are now feeling significant pressure to consider the independent school model based on finances; they think it may be a better way through. I believe people do not realise the impact of changing from a school council to a board, the implications and how that would change the nature of a school.

Six schools are now independent and we will see how they travel. A level of debate has been absent from the pertinent point of a school council transitioning to a school board and the fact it will not be the same. It is mentioned in the statement, but is worthy of more detail and better debate in this Chamber. It is a huge issue.

There is brief mention in the statement of early childhood education. When I had an opportunity to speak yesterday – I refer to my remarks from yesterday which went to the type of government we should have, what good government is and what the priorities are:

Government is about ensuring we all have the opportunity to build a better future for ourselves, our families and the whole community. We believe the central role of government is to ensure all Territorians, no matter where they live, where they come from or who they are, have the opportunity to live meaningful and productive lives. That opportunity starts in ensuring we have world-class health and education systems. We have enormous challenges across the Territory in providing not only these services, but ensuring outcomes that should be the norm in a First World country such as ours.

Further along:

We have a generational problem and need to be serious right from the start, from the start of the early days of childhood to turn the hardest challenge facing us as Territorians into a positive future.

I went on to say:

Let us be clear, the measure of our competency as an administration, a jurisdiction and a self-governing Territory is how we tackle this challenge of the lives of those amongst us who are the least fortunate, who are born with the prospect of shorter lives, less hope and more challenges. This task should be borne of optimism which will bring successful change to their lives and our Territory.

This is a massive issue and something we have to confront as a House, preferably bipartisan, because we share many issues in this House. In debate, as it should be, attention is on the differences we have. However, this is a big one. It is in the statement but, without doubt, is worthy of a statement in its own right with as much debate as possible.

Again our contribution to this issue would be better, broader and involve more members if we received the statement earlier. Something the minister mentioned in passing is huge and worthy of more attention than we can give it now.

This statement is full of many big things – the Indigenous education review. Right on! This covers a comprehensive list of things. It might lack a little in the grit and the detail. It might be worthy of 15 or 16 separate statements in and of itself – worthy of a lot of attention.

The statement mentions Families as First Teachers, the literacy and numeracy panel and the review of middle years schooling. I would love to hear from the minister on this. I will not say it is a passion, but when I was shadow Education minister I was interested in a review of middle schooling. The government announced it soon after. There is much to look at regarding middle schools in the Northern Territory. I would love to hear from the minister further about conducting a review of middle schooling. The statement had a few paragraphs, but I would love to hear more. It is an important education change and has made a significant difference to the system in the Northern Territory and is worthy of review. It is the right time for a review. It deals with some very difficult years in education.

I had some fascinating conversations with highly-qualified middle school principals and teachers. They had some excellent thoughts, suggestions and feelings about where it has gone and what is

happening. I would welcome a longer, more detailed contribution from the minister about middle schools as it tackles some big changes.

The cuts hurt that area because it is important in middle school to make sure students do not disengage. Middle school is the time where disengagement is a real risk. I saw some fantastic programs being conducted in middle schools to make sure students stayed engaged and active in the school community and learning. Those programs were most at risk through the cuts which necessitated larger classrooms and timetable changes to accommodate fewer teachers.

Middle school was created in recognition of the change and gap between primary school and high school, the changing dynamic of the student cohort, the pressures they were under and the risk factors of disengagement during the middle school years. They are particularly vulnerable to the CLP cuts. I would love to hear more detail from the minister on middle schools.

The minister went on to vocational education and training, structured work placements, school-based training programs and the Pastoral Futures Program. There may not be enough detail in that for a statement, but it is a fascinating program and I am interested to hear more. There is the Transport and Logistics Program, the police cadets program and Henbury School, a big one.

It gets a mention, but the debate around Henbury School is quite fascinating. The member for Wanguri, the shadow Education minister, could talk for ages about Henbury School. The member for Casuarina has a particular passion for Henbury School too, as do most on our side. We would love to hear more from the minister about Henbury School, what is happening and the attention provided to students.

The Northern Territory Open Education Centre is on the grounds of Darwin High School. I will not talk about some of the problems I have been briefed on because the challenges are being met and overcome with the government. Darwin High School and the NT Open Education Centre relationship will be a good one, and there are some small issues around making sure it fits and works on-site. It is an excellent project worthy of more attention and debate.

The relationship between NTOEC, Darwin High School and INPEX is worthy of more focus; it is an excellent model. I could speak in more detail about the issues but believe we can successfully meet them so will not raise this as a dire drama or anything. There are some things we are working through at the moment worthy of raising and discussing but I will not do that without checking

some things with the Darwin High School chair, school council and principal.

I heard some scoffing but it is quite genuine. As the local member there are some things I would like to talk about regarding what is happening there, but I do not want to put what I know and was briefed on a month or so ago because I know something is in motion. The department and the CEO were very responsive, and the new minister has been responsive in the past. There is every chance, as far as I am aware, they are being met so I will not raise them in a negative way with the minister. That is a good example of where, as local member, I would like to get more into the meat of that but I will not.

The Remote School Attendance Strategy is a huge thing. There are also trade training centres and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy – NAPLAN. That receives a lot of debate in our school communities and many parents talk to me about it. Most recently and specifically it has been raised at school council meetings – briefings to school councils. This happens at the start of most years; it is not a new thing.

There is a fascination with NAPLAN about how it is working, how the school is travelling, how the school takes the results and translates them into individual student plans or classroom plans and how the school is changing its focus in response to NAPLAN. There is a lot in NAPLAN worth debating and I am impressed with how our schools break that down. It has been a while since I was the shadow, but I am impressed with how they break NAPLAN down, translate it into the school system then to individual school working plans and classroom working plans. I am happy to talk about that in more detail because it is worthy of the attention.

The Australian government national partnership agreements are big things – the Visible Learning program and others. The statement is a comprehensive list of things the minister has brought in. Many things are worthy of longer debate; education is worthy of better debate.

The member for Nelson made a good contribution, as did the member for Wanguri, but both are capable of a better contribution. We should be aiming for that in this Chamber and work together to make it happen. We need to address the issue.

This is probably a good issue to use as an example. Education is a huge issue and a cornerstone for many things we want to achieve. Many of the things we want to do in the Territory economy start with education.

We also need to talk, as a parliament, about what we do before education commences – before day one grade one. Many conversations I have had with NGOs go to making sure students do not start too far behind on day one grade one. Lots of evidence shows students can start school day one grade one already too far behind the pack. We need to make sure everyone starts at the same level on day one grade one. They are in the classroom and we have, in some respects, set them up to go from there. Much work needs to be done before that pivotal grade one year. Those things are worthy of attention and better debate in this Chamber.

Mr ELFERINK (Attorney-General and Justice):

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would love to see better debate in this Chamber not only in relation to statements, but legislation as well. Several members have whinged about receiving this statement in accordance with Standing Order 258. I agree that it would be much better if statements could be circulated the night before, or at the very least on the morning of the statement's introduction.

The problem is on one occasion the member for Nhulunbuy leaked a statement and it found its way into the public domain prior to us coming into the House and debating it. It is a problem when, all of a sudden, we are talking about stuff in the public domain before the government announces the policy.

The defence from the other side was, 'Why wouldn't you do that?' The reason is it is a long-standing convention in this House that you do not leak those things. You wait until the minister reads the statement then you can respond with a bit of experience.

If we return to the policy of giving you the statement on the morning – no, that is not true. I defended the position of the Labor Party amongst my colleagues ...

Mr VOWLES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Can I ask for your decision on talking to the education statement? I do not think he is speaking to the statement at the moment and I ask for your ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Johnston. Attorney-General, I would ask you to return to the statement.

Mr ELFERINK: We would be happy to circulate statements but even after the warnings we gave we provided a statement and sure as eggs it was back in the public domain. If memory serves me, we were reading about it in the newspaper, and now they whinge.

I have been the defender of the Labor Party amongst my colleagues, but it is hard to defend the Labor Party and say we can trust them to hang on to a statement when that happens. All we would ask, for the sake of quality debate, is when something appears with the word 'embargo' attached to it or embargoed implied in its delivery, it is treated accordingly.

I have just come from a standing orders meeting where the leader of opposition business raised a few issues. He placed some ideas on the table worthy of exploration; they have to be fleshed out. The member for Fannie Bay might try to flesh out some ideas to get around this problem.

There has to be an element of trust, even amongst political foes, otherwise this place decays. We end up waving the standing orders around, you guys keep saying we are a pack of bastards for not circulating a statement and we keep poking the finger at you. How does that improve anything? It does not, and I would like to improve a few things, so let us aim a little higher.

Returning to the statement on education, this government is changing philosophy. The Labor Party, whilst in power, would often make statements in relation to education. I do not think for one second the Labor Party was disingenuous or dishonest in its intent. I do not like to quote from the *Learning Lessons* report because it has been severely undermined by the conduct of its author. Frankly, if the author's judgment is a yardstick in relation to anything he should not be given a great deal of credence. I will skip over the *Learning Lessons* report but will not blame the Labor Party for relying on it because the author's judgment was not known until much later on.

There were a number of other attempts by the Labor Party whilst in power to deal with this. Unfortunately, Labor policy decayed into the answer always being more money and we heard it again today. NAPLAN results, we were assured, would go up if we spent more money. Over time, more staff were taken on and much more money was spent. Over five or six years the education budget damn near doubled. NAPLAN results did not improve so we doubled the expenditure but did not see an improvement.

You come to a point, when heading down that path, where you say, 'Hang on, we are spending a lot more money on this problem yet the problem steadfastly refuses to go away'. We must start looking at other elements of the package and how we roll it out, which the minister is trying to do. Direct Instruction is a clear and unambiguous attempt to change the philosophy of getting kids into classrooms, how we keep them there and what we teach them.

The minister said one community – Warruwi, I think – has a version of Direct Instruction. They got the kids off the plane, provided shelter during Tropical Cyclone Lam and took them to Ludmilla School. The kids paid attention, learning exactly what they had under Direct Instruction. They did not miss a beat. What they were learning in Warruwi was available at Ludmilla School because it was immediately transportable. Moreover, the kids had their bums on seats, the classroom was full and there were no distractions. They were not running around and there was no distraction in the classroom.

If we can produce that in every Aboriginal community in the Territory, let alone every school in the Northern Territory, it would be an achievement of monumental proportions. I often heard former Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, lament that the biggest challenge in education was getting kids into classrooms.

When I was the member for Macdonnell I remember walking into a classroom in Mt Liebig one day where there was a teacher – I expect that teacher has long since moved on. The teacher was reading a novel. I said, 'What are you doing?' and they said, 'I'm reading a novel, why not?' 'Is it not a school day?' 'Yes, but no kids have arrived.' This teacher then said, 'If kids do not come to school I do not teach them'.

I find that poor because it meant there was no buy-in from the teacher. There may not have been any kids in the community, perhaps they were at a sports carnival, but there was no attempt by the teacher to do anything other than read a novel. That was disappointing and frustrating.

It comes down to the heart of this debate and is something I have become increasingly convinced of over time. You can see it in the way global funding is being adopted by certain schools. If I think back to my school days, certain teachers were important and left such an impression that to this day I remember them and what they taught me. There were a number of them: Helen Coburn, Graham Parker, Warren Snowdon and a number of others. The member for Daly laughs about Warren Snowdon. I was never a full-time student of his, but he had the same passion he has taken into politics.

Whilst Warren Snowdon could never be accused of having the same political ilk as the current member for Port Darwin, he was engaging with the students and cared about his job. Whatever you think of Warren Snowdon you have to admire any chalkie who cares about their job.

I remember those chalkies very well and that they lifted me. My fondest high school memories are of

Helen Coburn and the English class she taught. When I did my major at university – I was a high school dropout and went to university afterwards – for my Arts degree I chose literature as one of my majors because of Helen Coburn's influence on me as a kid. She made English literature a living, breathing, beautiful thing. There was real passion as well.

Would class size have mattered to those chalkies? The answer is probably not. Look at class sizes throughout the OECD. In South Korea class sizes are 40 to 45 yet their results remain consistently high because they have engaged teachers. It is that Asian ethic of whatever you do you do it at 100 miles an hour and do it well. In those places you obtain good results with large class sizes. However, they work bloody hard and are dedicated and focused chalkies.

In Finland class sizes are the lowest in the OECD – or one of the Scandinavian countries – and there is no significant difference in the level of education of kids coming through the secondary school system.

People talk about class sizes. There is strong evidence to demonstrate class size in the formative years matters because of the quality and level of attention a preschool or Year 1 teacher gives to the students. Intuitively, if you are a parent you get that. The kids need to bond with the teacher in a parental role, but once they get to middle primary kids are much more independent so the teacher's role in the classroom changes substantially. They go from a semi-parental role to a teacher role.

You hear class size is the driving force. I do not agree because there are more subtle things in play. Go back to that classroom in South Korea and ask the kids, 'What is the input from your parents?' In countries like South Korea, Japan and China the parents are actively, almost excruciatingly, engaged in their kids' education. There is Kumon, the out-of-hours tutoring product you can purchase in Darwin which comes from Japan. These parents are very engaged with their kids.

We talk about what we can do in schools. The quality of engagement with kids from day one is what makes the difference. Look at engagement with kids in Seoul or Tokyo where the parents are completely there. They go to classrooms where the teachers are engaged with their students' education. You have engagement from day one.

I am not an education expert, but when my kids were two we had them learning the alphabet and we would read basic stories. *Rascal the Dragon* was read in our household. By the time my kids reached preschool they were literate, mainly

because of my wife's involvement because we are a one income family. We made that decision. Occasionally, she gets a bit of part-time work, but we are a one income family because we can give the kids the support they need. We have engaged kids. My kids have literacy levels far in advance of some of their school colleagues.

There are other kids who also have literacy levels far in advance of classmates. When you talk to the parents – guess what? – the parents are engaged with their kids. The teachers who are producing results are the ones engaged with the kids in the classroom. The quality of engagement is the one consistent factor.

In Africa you will see a guy sitting under a tree teaching a classroom of 30 with a bit of slate and some chalk. Those kids are literate because in Africa education matters. Their parents, who may not be literate, are sending their kids to school to get an education even if school is nothing more than a tree with a blackboard and some slates. These kids are literate and numerate. It is about the passion, the drive, the engagement and the desire to see kids lift themselves up. You see that emotional buy-in, then you start to see the philosophy this government is rolling out, and you realise this Education minister is trying to set up that buy-in.

In schools that have decided to take the risk with global budgeting – Larrakeyah Primary School, which my kids attend, is one – there is an engaged and switched on committee. They are engaged in what is happening and are making good decisions for the school. That might mean they determine class sizes are not so important and will put funding into other areas. They will ask teachers to pick up a bigger class size. That is up to the structure of the school.

It seems parents involved with schools where the global budgeting risk is being embraced are the ones who want to engage and have even greater control over their kids' education. That is what we are offering.

As a parent with a kid in Larrakeyah Primary School I have been involved with the committee as the local member. Time constraints permitting otherwise I would be involved up to my neck, but the parents have always been assertive in making sure their kids get the best opportunity.

I would like members to reflect on my story about Mt Liebig. My experience dates back to the late 1990s or early 2000s so we are talking well over 15 years ago. There was a disengaged teacher, probably because he was working in a disengaged community. Unfortunately, in all too many communities, when you talk to the parents the card game or the football game is more

important than making sure the kids are at school. There is no correlation between the parents' desire and the engagement I have been talking about.

You end up with disengaged parents, although that is not always the case. There are many communities with really engaged parents and those kids, by the way, end up doing quite well. Where you have disengaged parents it percolates through to a disengaged school. That is not necessarily a criticism of the teachers themselves. You must get pretty jaded turning up to work every morning trying to deal with parents who do not give a rats backside about the kids, certainly their education, and that is the cultural challenge we have. By that I mean the cultural challenge in the context of an ongoing attitude towards their child's education.

Direct Instruction challenges that cultural paradigm in the sense it says, 'We will engage with these kids and will lock them down. We will say the D word in front of these kids – discipline.' I am not talking about flogging them; I am talking about making sure they understand there are expectations. That is a positive thing to do and a fundamental philosophical change. One of the most important lessons they will learn at school is as they go through life people will have expectations of them. Their family members, society, the community or whatever organisation they are involved in will have expectations and they have a duty, when they make a commitment to a person, to meet those expectations. That is a moral duty they must carry forward after making a promise. That is what I teach my daughters and I suspect most reasonable people teach their kids.

We, unfortunately, live in an environment where passive welfare rules the roost and responsibility and duty do not find their way into the vocabulary of many parents or service deliverers in remote places. The answer is always to spend more money. That will fix it; spend more cash. That was the answer from the Labor government for 10 years. That is not to bash the Labor government; I do not think it was disingenuous. It was genuine to expect something would happen but we have to get to the point where we ask, 'What is the philosophy behind what we are doing and how are we trying to change it?'

Once we accept we can place expectations on people and demand they send their kids to school, and when those kids are in school we have expectations and place demands on them, that will pave the way for them realising that is how the real world works. It is not some mystical place where manna falls from Heaven and everything goes your way. It is tough, it is hard, but my God it can be a wonderful journey. The education you get and the discipline you learn through that

education process creates a pathway forward so you can travel along that journey, and extract from life all the blessings and privileges it brings.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will speak briefly on this statement because I like to be prepared, particularly when talking about something as important as education. I cannot help myself, both as a local member and somebody who is deeply passionate about education. I know everybody in this House is passionate about education, as we should be, given its importance.

I grew up with parents who are teachers. My mum is a teacher, my stepfather is a teacher; they were teachers in the United Kingdom and are teachers in the Northern Territory. In the case of my stepfather, he has been teaching for longer than I have been alive – over three decades.

I am grateful to have grown up going to schools in the Territory and to have been around the schools my parents taught in to see the teachers who not only taught there but have been, in some cases, some of the only cheerleaders young Territorians had in their lives. That is a really important part of recognising the job our teachers do.

A range of things have been outlined in the statement today. My colleagues, the members for Wanguri and Fannie Bay, and the member for Nelson, have articulated some of their concerns and the fact there are things we would like to explore and have more information on.

A 10-year plan into Northern Territory international education and training sounds interesting. I am keen to hear more about that. Of course global school budgets, consultation on the *Education Act* – a range of things in this statement would be worthy of separate statements, and I look forward to more information on all those things.

It was great to have the students from Darwin High School here this morning, the school I attended. I had so many wonderful teachers there who I still see on a regular basis. Mr Peter Monkhouse, Ms Boland – I am sure everyone who went to Darwin High knows Ms Boland. They were fabulous teachers, they still are and they had such an impact on me. I am a grateful recipient of Territory education.

I am privileged to have four wonderful schools in my electorate: Alawa Primary School, Nakara Primary School, Dripstone Middle School and Namarluk, with many young people from my electorate completing their education at Casuarina Senior College, in the member for Johnston's electorate.

These schools are using new technologies to expand their reach and engagement, and they have wonderful connections to their student and parent bodies. Their parent bodies are so engaged in everything they do and so present in the school community it is a beautiful thing to see.

I believe our school communities in the Territory do an incredible job of sharing some of the initiatives they are taking on and growing in our schools.

Teachers do an amazing job, around the clock and around the year, to get the best results possible for students with diverse needs. I often think they do not get enough praise for the job they do because they fulfil many roles for Territory children and young people.

We value quality education. I am proud to stand with my colleagues on this side of the House knowing when in government we invested heavily in the NT's education system.

It is fantastic to hear about more students gaining their NTCE. It was fantastic to be at the Casuarina Senior College presentation night watching the largest cohort of Year 12 boys through the Clontarf program graduate from school. I pass on my respect for the mentors in the Clontarf program. They provide engaging ways of keeping young people in education, and acknowledge the importance of the holistic programs focused on looking at new ways to get young people and their families to value education. They also look at different ways students might be engaged and have the incentive to attend every day.

As we move around our electorates we hear about the impact of the CLP's cuts to education. Teachers across the Territory have been up in arms over the last two-and-a-half years with this government telling them they must do more with less, including less one-on-one time with students. There were 185 teachers and support staff cut from Territory schools; it is a loss for students and the Northern Territory's future. The cut of \$125m from the budget is not an amount to be sniffed at for something that underpins so many issues we debate in this House.

As I move around my local community I hear stories from local teachers. There are many teachers in my electorate and I am struck by their passion and commitment. It is heartbreaking to hear some of the stories shared with me by teachers whose initiatives are being discontinued because they do not have the resources to continue. I hear stories of teachers contemplating their career options, or leaving the Territory on the grounds they are working harder and feeling less valued.

Local schools in my electorate have lost teachers and support staff, as have schools in many electorates. My fear is the students suffer as we lose this talent. We have heard some reflections today about a number of educational experiences, as well as teachers people remember as having an impact on them. I worry that we have already lost teachers with incredible insight, knowledge and experience.

The Minister for Education speaks of the \$23m in funding to Education announced at the start of this year by his predecessor, or successor, whichever way you look at it. The member for Wanguri stated this is not enough to cover the shortfall created by the cuts. However, the backflip was a win for school councils, parents, principals and the union. They took every opportunity available to stand against the odds, even when they were told they were wrong, and share their significant concerns about budgets in the red for a number of schools. They were protesting as recently as December.

Release of the funding saw the Principal of Palmerston Senior College mention initially being hundreds of thousands of dollars short. I am glad this might be finally rectified for some schools. COGSO also raised concerns and stood with parent councils and schools concerned about what they might have to go without to make this work.

Once again, it has gone from transitional funding from a 'consultative government' – it is no wonder education remains a huge issue for Territorians. We have so many challenges it is important to get this right. I feel for the schools that had to go through the end of term four – a time of strategic planning for the year ahead – and the Christmas break with such uncertainty and the impact it must have had on decisions around staffing teachers and support workers.

Let us connect the dots between education and health, including mental health, education and job creation, and between education and our justice system and stay focused. Since the last time we were in this House we have had three Ministers for Education. There have been six Education ministers in two-and-a-half years, so we need to provide schools and the department with the stability needed to focus on the things we all want to achieve.

I look forward to hearing more on Henbury School; I am excited about that announcement. I am especially excited because Henbury School will be located on the Dripline Middle School site in my electorate. It is really positive for the school communities and they will work well together. I attended, with the member for Wanguri, the briefing held for the community. The plans looked

fantastic and we look forward to being kept up to date with the roll-out. I understand the time frame is short.

I am pleased to see students have been consulted on reform of the *Education Act*. I raised this as a panel member of the Australian Council of State School Organisations national conference in Darwin a couple of years ago. Students were vocal about what they wanted to see in education in the Territory.

I want to end with a quote from Albert Einstein about teachers which struck me:

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

I thank the minister for his statement to the House today.

Mr CHANDLER (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Wanguri said it perfectly. I, and everyone in the Chamber, agree that we all want a good education system in the Northern Territory and the very best for our children. I agree with a few things the member for Wanguri said about the statement, a few I do not because there will always be differences in the views of the Labor Party and the Country Liberal Party.

The member for Wanguri said our approach to education is based on ideology not results. When I heard that I thought, 'Wow, I could say the same thing'. It is not about who is right and who is wrong; there is a difference of opinion on how we do things.

This is not based on ideology but on results. In fact, when we talk about Direct Instruction as a vehicle to improve education for children in remote communities, I could never be accused of being stuck in ideology. I had never heard of Direct Instruction before investigating and staying up late most nights in tears trying to work out how to deal with the outcomes we were not achieving in remote communities.

Look at the previous government, even the previous CLP government, to see what was being achieved in remote communities with regard to education. I doubt anyone would be satisfied with the results.

I have heard the member for Barkly talk about his time as a teacher and the struggles he had then. He would have worked and lived through a CLP government. He has been part of a Labor government; we now have a Country Liberals government and we all have our ideas when it comes to education. I guarantee you no one would be satisfied with the results we are getting

today and have had for more than a decade. We are trying to do things differently. It has been a huge agenda change. Anyone who has worked with government departments or government in general will tell you how hard it is to implement change. It is hard enough to implement change in a business or corporation, try doing it in government. It is complicated when you have workplace arrangements, unions and ideologies involved.

If I apologise for anything it will be for the amount of reform I have tried to drive through education in the last two-and-a-half years whilst being at the helm of the Education ship right through – we have spoken about it many times – to the budget changes required when we took over government. I guarantee you not one minister at that time wanted to make some of the decisions we had to. However, with the budgetary position as it was we had no choice. We had to get the budget in order. Did that cause pressure on Education? Did it cause pressure on Police, Fire and Emergency Services? Did it cause pressure on Tourism and other areas across government? Yes, it did!

We had a different idea when it came to education. Why? Perhaps it was based on my few years' experience as a chair working in a school environment, having a wife who worked in a school and many school teachers as friends. I had a view on what appeared to work and what did not. I also had a view that money was potentially spent in the wrong areas of education and therefore not focused on where it should be – in the classroom. I will not apologise for the changes but perhaps for how quickly it has been driven through. I apologise to the people who worked later than I did trying to implement the changes this government wants.

It was all based on the Framing the Future strategy. We have a strategy, the *A share in the future* report on the Indigenous education review. If the government was not interested in improving educational outcomes for students, particularly in the bush, why did we lift the lid on that? Why did we want a review? We wanted a review because I, as minister, and my Cabinet, were not happy with the results, and another generation of kids would not get a decent education. If I am given ministerial responsibility for whatever portfolio, and in my case the privilege of being Education minister, I am damned if I will not try to fix what I can clearly see is wrong. It was wrong because lots of money was being spent on education but kids were not receiving the education they could be.

You cannot blame me for having an ideology if it is about fixing what is wrong with the system. There is no doubt the former Labor government poured money into education but did not change the

program. Labor continued to pour money into the same program expecting to get better results; that is madness. This government has changed the program into something I am confident will improve results for children, particularly those in the bush.

Those late nights and the tears thinking, 'What the hell can I bring to education that has not been brought before. What can we do differently in the Northern Territory to make a difference for these kids?' There is no doubt we have hard-working teachers in the Territory, good resources and good schools. There is no doubt we have some challenges but we are not seeing the results. What do we do differently? What can Pete Chandler bring to education in the Territory others in the past have not? I would be damned if I would not try to make a difference.

Late one night skipping through the Internet I come across Noel Pearson's academies in north Queensland and Direct Instruction and the hairs on the back of my neck – what is left; there are not many – stood up and I thought it was worth looking at. A group went to north Queensland and after spending two or three days visiting schools – I have said it in this House before – going from classroom to classroom seeing children engaged in their education – when I say engaged I mean really engaged.

We had cameramen, sound recorders, journalists and photographers – a whole group of us walking into classroom after classroom. The kids did not even bother to look up in some cases. Some gave a momentary glance around then back and engaged in what they were doing. I thought, 'This is a gee up. I have been set up here; this is too good. This can't be repeated.' I visited classroom after classroom in schools with far less resources than what we have in the Northern Territory but the teachers used a method I had never seen before with a group of very engaged students.

After coming back from north Queensland I was overly excited but had a good night's sleep because I thought I had finally found something that would work in the Northern Territory. That is where it really started – coming back, talking to my Cabinet colleagues, trying to influence them to support me in this journey and trying to get support from the Department of Education. A few saw what I did. Over time, more and more people got to see this could work.

Did we pick the whole thing up, bring it across from Queensland and layer it in the Territory? No, not at all. But we could take a huge slice of what they are doing in north Queensland, bring it to the Territory and ensure our teachers have the right resources and support to deliver this program.

There is no better example than what I saw last week at Ludmilla Primary School, where a bunch of kids had been uplifted from Waruwi and brought to Darwin, in the middle of the night in some cases. They must have been scared out their wits not knowing what would happen to their island. They were just told they had to leave.

How scary would that be for some of those kids? They had no idea what they were going back to or if their home had been destroyed. They just had to get out of there.

Plane after plane brought kids from Waruwi to Darwin. The following day they were taken to Ludmilla Primary School with the teachers from Waruwi and effectively started lesson four, because they had finished lesson three the day before at Waruwi.

When I walked into the classroom at Ludmilla, where the children from Waruwi were, they were all engaged. They were at the front of the classroom close to the teacher, who was teaching lesson four.

I thought, 'These kids have gone through hell. They would be worried about their home, their family and what they would go back to', yet these kids were engaged. I put it down to the program they were being taught – the Direct Instruction model of teaching. I was that gobsmacked these kids had gone through that, yet, a matter of days after the event, were in the classroom being taught, not missing any part of their education. You cannot ask for more from an education program or teachers than that. You cannot ask more from students, and the resilience of those kids was clearly demonstrated that day.

I go back to ideology. You cannot bring ideology into this argument because until I saw what the program was doing in north Queensland I had no idea it existed. Teachers would have known about it. I knew about rote learning from years and years ago, but had not seen that method of instruction.

Speaking one on one with Noel Pearson at a number of meetings I saw the passion in his eyes and understood why he undertook a similar exercise after visiting the United States some years earlier and seeing Direct Instruction used there. The reason he brought it back to Queensland, and why he wanted to bring it to communities in north Queensland, was because he felt the system in Queensland was not providing an education for Indigenous students, particularly in remote communities. It is the same problem we have here.

In that trip we were able to share ideas. One area working well in the Northern Territory – not our

idea, a federal initiative – is Families as First Teachers, preparing kids and their parents for school.

All the evidence in regard to educating a child shows the earlier you start the better the chance to provide an effective education. From a teacher's point of view their job is probably easier because the child is ready for school.

In communities where I have seen the Families as First Teachers program operating, it is remarkable to see young parents sitting down with children, some as young as three or four months old, and engaging with them. When they are two and three years of age they are being prepared through learning games in schools. When those children go to preschool or primary school, they are used to the school and the environment they are in. They are not scared; they have been there. Having them that prepared will help their education. Families as First Teachers is a vital component of the program.

The Direct Instruction model in our primary schools is a vital part of the program and fixes a failed experiment. We are trying to deliver secondary education in the bush, where the larger the school the bigger the opportunity for children to be exposed to a wider curriculum than could be delivered in a remote environment, especially our homelands.

What are the answers? You must give children a wider curriculum and an opportunity to see a bigger picture when it comes to their education. Teachers in remote schools do the best they can, but I cannot imagine what it would be like to manage, on a daily basis, five- and six-year-olds through to 17-year-olds plus the size of the curriculum in a small environment. I take my hat off to the teachers in that environment. If you think, when that child reaches 15 or 16, they will get the same curriculum choice they would at Darwin High School or Nhulunbuy High School you are mistaken.

The only way to do it is prepare them in the primary school years and offer a wider curriculum. We have been working on that and will continue to do so.

There have been some challenges with global budgeting. A lot of that was because the way schools were funded over the years became extremely complicated. We attempted to bring schools back to a baseline funding based on student numbers. There were loadings for special needs and other elements, but we found some schools were operating at a baseline and others, in some cases, as much as 14 to 19 staff above their complement.

Over the years those schools have evolved, and in some cases federal programs were started. However, the federal programs stopped and the government of the day decided to continue the program. Eventually it becomes part of the furniture, but you then have an ongoing funding issue. When we wound things back to a baseline we knew there would be some challenges. I maintain that within 12 months from now, and up to five years from now, principals and school councils will not want to go back to a centrally funded program where they had no control over their school budget.

I was upfront last year when I said there would be some wrinkles – and there have been – but, over time, they have been ironed out and will continue to be. There have been massive reforms in this area, but to say our education philosophy is based on ideology is wrong. It is based on results and ensuring children are exposed to an opportunity throughout their education that can give them the world. No child in the Northern Territory should miss the same opportunities, no matter where they live. Does that pose problems? Yes. The government wants to take those challenges on through correct management of education, global school budgeting, introduction of an international school in Darwin, the education review and the Direct Instruction model we want to introduce into remote schools right through to looking at middle years and a review in that area.

If the government was not interested in education why did it open the box? Why not just shut up and let things continue the way they always had?

Mr Deputy Speaker, that is not good enough and not what we are here for. We are here to improve results and do what we can to provide the best education possible.

Motion agreed to; statement noted.

MOTION

Note Statement – Setting the Agenda for the Year Ahead

Continued from 17 February 2015.

Mr HIGGINS (Sport and Recreation): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement and this government's direction. We are moving ahead, working hard and listening and delivering. This government's agenda for the year ahead is a direction committed to placing community best interests at the centre of all decision-making.

Look at what is happening in my areas of Sport and Recreation, the Environment, and Arts and Museums. We introduced and expanded the Sport Voucher Scheme, which is designed to make things easier for Territory families by giving

financial support for sport and recreational activities for young Territorians. The increase from \$75 to \$200 per child, the expansion to include other recreation and cultural activities and the introduction of the Learn to Swim Voucher are all initiatives of this government. More than 260 clubs, organisations, businesses and individual providers registered to accept the sport voucher are benefitting from the increased funding opportunities provided by the scheme. This enables them to develop new programs, take activities into remote locations and facilitate wider community engagement.

The Learn to Swim Voucher for children not yet at preschool or school has already attracted a record number of enrolments in Learn to Swim programs for toddlers, and has been recognised as one of the best Learn to Swim initiatives in the country. More than 1100 Learn to Swim Vouchers have been issued to Territory families since July 2014 to improve their children's water safety skills. Surely members opposite cannot complain about a scheme which not only encourages kids into sport and recreation, but also helps make them safer by learning to swim. On our agenda the scheme will continue, and we encourage Territory parents to participate in this excellent initiative.

We also increased the facility and capital equipment funding to \$100 000 over two years, and increased peak sport and active recreation funding by 50%. We also increased Grass Roots Development Investment Program funding from \$3000 to \$5000 for individual sporting clubs.

We have brought more first-class sporting events to the Northern Territory, with further negotiations under way. This government signed a four-year agreement with the Parramatta Eels in February last year. The agreement guarantees a pre-season game in Alice Springs and a game for premiership points in Darwin every year through to and including 2017. This agreement also creates broader opportunities for game development, tourism exposure and men's programs.

It is not the only code we have negotiated with for premier events. The government has also signed a two-year agreement with the Melbourne Football Club to play two premiership games a year in the Territory, one in Alice Springs and one in Darwin.

In soccer, an agreement with Adelaide United Football Club sees top-level football being played in Alice Springs and Darwin. We have brought top-level cricket back to the Territory with internationals played in Darwin and Alice Springs, and today a Sheffield Shield game in Alice Springs.

The events do not stop there. In October the 15th Alice Springs Masters Games saw more than

3800 athletes and over 700 volunteers involved. An initiative of the Country Liberals, the games are a vibrant addition to life in Alice Springs and are loved and embraced by the Alice Springs community.

Another initiative of this government is the inaugural Mitchell Street Mile which last year saw more than 400 runners compete in nine different races, including an elite male and female race along Mitchell Street, Darwin. This event attracted more than 3500 spectators and can only get bigger and better in the years ahead.

We took the NT Sports Awards to Katherine for the first time last year. It is part of a plan to give our regional centres the opportunity to be part of these awards. The night was a great success and a big boost for Katherine to host all the Territory's top athletes, supporters and families for the weekend. I remind members tickets went on sale yesterday for the awards on 27 March 2015.

We are making it easier for Territorians to access first-class sporting events and better support for their sport or recreation of choice. We will continue our efforts to expand this work, to form more professional partnerships with national and international sporting bodies and meet Territorians' aspirations for their sport and recreation clubs and organisations. We listen.

I thank the member for Nelson for his persistence and patience in pursuing an off-road park for bikes, all-terrain vehicles and buggies. Such a facility is worthy of further consideration. I have written to the honourable member advising him the facilities director of the Department of Sport and Recreation will be contacting him in the near future to discuss his proposal with him and the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment.

Turning to my environment portfolio, as the Chief Minister pointed out previously this government has a high standard to ensure protection of our environmental values. This government introduced the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority, an independent body. Since its establishment the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority has been busy addressing priority environmental issues and improving the regulatory framework in which it and industry operates and ensures our environment is protected. I wish to congratulate and thank the professionalism and expertise of the NT EPA members for their continued hard work and achievements and their commitment to this independent and transparent charter. The Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority's work will continue to align with the Territory government's Framing the Future environmental objectives.

It would be impossible to mention all the good work of the NT EPA but you can include the container deposit scheme, waste management strategy, onsite waste water treatment plants, continued work in relation to omissions and the NT EPA Compliance Activity Plan.

The container deposit scheme has seen a return rate of 41.9% achieved with a steady increase in return rates overall. The increase in return rates is positive, demonstrates the community is embracing the scheme and highlights the continued need for greater access to more depots in the future. There are nine collection depots across the Northern Territory, including some regional areas, and a new depot in Berrimah has been approved and will be open to the public in due course.

The waste management strategy is part of this government's commitment to better waste management practice in the Northern Territory. This is why we sought advice from the EPA regarding opportunities to improve these practices. I expect that advice to be forwarded to me in the near future.

For onsite waste water treatment plans the EPA has engaged consultants to investigate, identify and report on packaged onsite and community waste water treatment systems currently in use or proposed to be used for developments in the Northern Territory rural and peri-urban environments. This project addresses concerns around the growth and installation of these waste water treatment systems and the cumulative impacts they have on public health and the environment. A number of agencies, including the Health department, Lands, Planning and the Environment and the Power and Water Corporation are contributing to this report.

I have heard there is cynicism in some sectors about the effectiveness of the EPA. Two examples of direct EPA achievements involve McArthur River Mine and Vista Gold. As a result of EPA action MRM is working towards installing three ambient air quality stations to monitor sulphur dioxide levels at Borroloola, Devil Spring and a third site likely to be close to the mine site.

MRM is also developing a program to make information available to local communities when monitoring commences and is to extend over a full Wet and Dry Season cycle. At the same time MRM is also addressing sources of sulphur dioxide at the mine site itself, and has implemented a number of measures in this area.

In consultation with the Department of Mines and Energy, a new waste discharge licence was issued to Vista Gold in December last year. Vista Gold has been reporting to the EPA in accordance

with the requirements of the licence. The EPA has been monitoring discharges and has conducted site inspections and sampling in January.

All results to date indicate Vista Gold is complying with the conditions of the waste discharge licence. The EPA is continuing to monitor Vista Gold's compliances with licence conditions.

This government is also committed to the environmental assessment bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth. Allowing project proponents to undertake a single environmental impact assessment process managed by the NT, and agreed to by the Commonwealth, is a sensible step.

A further sensible step is our continuing negotiations with the Australian government on an approval bilateral agreement. Once finalised, that will mean project proponents will only need to refer their projects to the NT, which will assess and approve the project on behalf of the Australian government. This is another step towards making life and business easier in the NT.

The EPA has a compliance activity program. This plan provides for the delivery of compliance to control pollution across the Territory by the EPA. The purpose of the plan is to protect the environment by ensuring duty holders are compliant with environmental legislation, and gathering intelligence on potentially polluting activities and pollution incidents.

It is an important plan and one which should not be dismissed. It is further evidence of the serious role the EPA has and plays in our community. It is an independent EPA set up by this government and we will continue to support its efforts.

Another equally important area in the range of my ministerial responsibilities is that of Arts and Museums. That famed artist, Pablo Picasso, once said:

The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls

Then there is that common quote:

I don't know much about art, but I know what I like.

Debate suspended.

MOTION

Call for the Chief Minister to Resign

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that this Assembly call on the member for Braitling to resign as Chief Minister.

It is good to have General Business Day where we get three-and-a-half hours each sitting week to put forward good debate in this House, and today represents a multifaceted debate with a lot of opportunity.

Yesterday in this House we saw the most serious of motions, a motion of no confidence in the government. That motion was defeated 13 members to 10 and showed an outcome where 13 members of the government were not courageous enough to stand up to this vindictive, vitriolic and destructive Chief Minister, the member for Braitling, Adam Giles.

They hung on their own skin. They covered together on that side of the House because they had been completely intimidated by the member for Braitling and, I suggest, the member for Fong Lim, as they go together. They are a two-for-the-price-of-one deal in the government. You have not seen anything yet, let me tell you.

This motion gives several opportunities to the Country Liberal Party. One is an opportunity for the nine government members who called on the member for Braitling to resign, who demonstrated true democracy within their political party process; they signed their name to a contract and called on him to resign. There are ten members on this side – eight in opposition and two Independents – who also called on the member for Braitling to resign. If you do a number crunch, 19 members of the House support this motion to remove the member for Braitling, the Chief Minister. We have 19 members who have decided a destructive, vindictive and vitriolic Chief Minister, completely careless with the truth, has no future in the Country Liberal Party, this Legislative Assembly and, consequently, the Northern Territory.

Another layer to this motion is, should those 12 members who supported the Chief Minister yesterday change their mind and realise he is the best thing since sliced bread, they should tell their constituents why because yesterday there was a serious vacuum. The member for Port Darwin, the hardest worker, the front man of the Country Liberals government delivered in very unfortunate circumstances trying to defend the indefensible. The Chief Minister did not contribute to the debate. Here is an opportunity, in another layer, to defend why the member for Braitling, the current Chief Minister, should retain his job.

It is a good motion, a good debate and provides layers of opportunity. I hope the members on the other side who failed to support their Chief Minister in the no confidence motion will rise in support tonight, including the Chief Minister. I want to hear from the Chief Minister. It is an offer for the member for Braitling, the Chief Minister, to stand and deliver. Why is it important we debate

the position of the member for Braitling who was intimidating in refusing to resign, ignored his colleagues, ignored the wishes of the Northern Territory constituency and remained in the position? It is because the truth is out.

The motion of no confidence yesterday unearthed the truth in this parliament. This was stated by a very brave member of this Legislative Assembly, the member for Araluen. The truth is out and the Chief Minister cannot deny it now. He has styled a career in politics on being completely careless with the truth. However, one of his own members, the member for Araluen, put it succinctly for the Territory. It was unfortunate in some ways for the nation, our colleagues and for our neighbours in Asia. It went all over the place; the truth and nothing but the truth came out.

This is why the 19 members of this House who no longer support the member for Braitling need to stand united and complete this deal. As I said, use your imagination. You do not have to cross the floor; there are ways of doing this. With the no confidence motion going with 12 members yesterday, they were clearly completely intimidated and bereft of using any imagination. Now is the time to take it back to your party room, settle it properly and regain the respect of Territorians.

We have lost face across the nation and there have been many comments about the Northern Territory becoming the laughing stock of the nation.

Associated in parallel with this complete calamity created by the member for Braitling, the Chief Minister, is the sacking of Terry Mills twice. A likeable Territorian, a popular Territorian, an elected Chief Minister in the Northern Territory, he was completely intimidated and embarrassed by the member for Braitling and his supporters at the time he was deposed as Chief Minister while on a high-level trade mission to Japan.

We have seen that repeated by the member for Braitling, the Chief Minister, and his vindictive nature to governance, politics and dealing with his own let alone anybody else, with a second knifing whilst in Jakarta. We are seriously damaged by those two high-level issues and they need to be addressed. The Asian nations, particularly Indonesia, would understand and respect it if 19 members from both sides remove the member for Braitling from office and replace him with a new Chief Minister.

The member for Araluen's delivery in this House has gone to a national and international audience. The elements are completely damning. I quote from the CLP member for Araluen, Robyn Lambley:

This is an important motion, because despite what we would like to present to the public we all know the political instability within our government remains unresolved.

The Territory knows that and people who talk to me know that. Many people in the bush have articulated that. Yesterday in this debate, when the truth came out, it was clear this is an ongoing issue for the Territory, the nation, our trading partners and our friends and colleagues in Asia. The honourable thing to do is to take this issue by the horns and deal with it. It needs to be resolved and we need to regain some credibility. We need to show leadership because our current leader is completely inept.

The member for Araluen gave a synopsis of what happened. The truth came out. I quote once again from the member for Araluen, Robyn Lambley:

Adam Giles was voted out of the position of Chief Minister on 2 February 2015 – just 22 days ago. Nine members of his team decided they no longer had faith in his leadership. Nine out of 14 CLP parliamentary wing members voted to have him removed from the position of Chief Minister. ... His colleagues generally felt he had lost touch with average Territorians, he was arrogant and his general dishonesty was eroding any respect we had for him.

That is a true statement. I can understand why the confidence had been completely eroded because it is not just within the Country Liberal Party, it is a conversation being held across the Northern Territory and, unfortunately, now the national and international arenas. We are all suffering because of that. Yesterday members spoke about the calamity that involves us all.

I place on the public record that I have been extremely offended by the behaviour of the member for Braitling over a long time. I am extremely offended by it because I have worked hard to be an elected community member. I have worked hard to support the electorate, both in government and opposition. I take this job seriously. I find it completely inappropriate that someone like the member for Braitling can drag me into the mud when it is his doing, his morals, his values and a lack of his leadership that needs to be contested. This motion delivers that.

Yesterday I saw fallout of the incredible event which unfolded in the most serious motion before this House, the motion of no confidence. That was when the truth was delivered by the member for Araluen and the fallout started. On 24 February 2015 at 1.12 pm Sky News Live in Sydney was running the story, 'The NT opposition

has moved a no confidence motion against Adam Giles’.

The same day, 24 February 2015 at 12 noon ABC Darwin 105.7 was running the story, ‘Robyn Lambley, the Country Liberals member who crunched the numbers’, then the truth came out. On Mix FM just after midday Pete Davies was telling the story of the extraordinary scenes in parliament. Territorians were now becoming aware of how desperate this Chief Minister has become and how the true story was unfolding.

On ABC radio in Sydney at 11.16 pm the story was still running. Friends and family in Sydney had been listening and I am sure were wondering what the hell was going on. Closer to home, on Alice Springs ABC radio, 24 February 2015 at 4.36 pm Barwick said, ‘Robyn Lambley made a lot of comments about Adam Giles’. You bet she did. She told the truth because Territorians needed to finally hear the truth, something the Chief Minister, the member for Braiiling, is incapable of doing.

The print media then started the cycle so Territorians, Australians and international readers – the AAP Newswire started the story, ‘Backbencher calls for Adam Giles to resign’, 24 February 2015. AAP Newswire, 24 February 2015, ‘NT CLP rotten to the core’. The list goes on. The *NT News* jumped onto this story to tell people, when the truth had come out – 24 February 2015 4.45 pm, ‘What they said in NT no confidence vote’. By 4.45 pm yesterday we were the laughing stock of the nation.

After the chaos that had continued for 22 days we became the laughing stock of the nation when people realised the truth was out and there was no reason the member for Braiiling should be able to stand over, bully and intimidate nine members of his political party. The truth was out and the intimidated members need support.

This motion brings to the House the support of other parliamentarians and puts it on the public record. I do not believe the bullying and intimidation tactic came from Giles. It was definitely a master stroke of the member for Fong Lim because the member for Braiiling is not smart enough.

You have two players to deal with. Do not feel intimidated, either go with this motion or tell us why you cannot support it. Either way, constituents need something on the record from each and every member of the government who did not contribute yesterday.

The ABC Internet homepage was straight onto it yesterday. On Tuesday 24 February 2015 by 8.21 pm, ‘Mudslinging reaches new low as NT CLP member Robyn Lambley tells parliament

Adam Giles should quit as Chief Minister’. We have been mentioned on ABC radio, both local and Radio National, and this was Tuesday, 24 February 2015. By 6.40 we have Mark Colvin and Sara Everingham discussing, ‘Sacked NT Education minister calls for Adam Giles to stand down as leader of the CLP’. The news is out and we are being spoken about everywhere.

We woke up this morning, 25 February 2015, and the print media was running hot telling how desperate and deceitful this has been. It is hard to keep it away from the press.

The Australian author Amos Aikman writes, ‘Adam Giles survives but pressure builds’. The story starts to unfold.

In the *Northern Territory News* of 25 February 2015 there are letters from constituents. The letter I noticed was about the damage done to our reputation in Asia with the second sacking of Terry Mills.

ABC radio is back on air running the story in Darwin, but the story that sums it up and defines the essence of this motion appears in *The Australian*. This is comment by Amos Aikman in *The Australian* on 25 February 2015, ‘NT parliament’s state of duress’. I quote:

Farcical scenes in parliament on Tuesday leave the Northern Territory’s democratic system at breaking point.

The tenuous link between the ballot box and the top of government – broken when Chief Minister Adam Giles lost majority support among his parliamentary colleagues but refused to resign earlier this month – was not restored by yesterday’s confidence motion.

Only the leader of government business spoke in defence of the government, underscoring the depth of divisions within the ruling Country Liberal Party. Giles still lacks the demonstrated support of his colleagues. He was not elected Chief Minister by the people.

Sacked former minister Robyn Lambley questioned Giles’s integrity and honesty, labelled his leadership ‘illegitimate’, and called on him to resign or risk electoral wipe-out. Other former CLP and independent MPs echoed similar sentiments.

Giles said nothing in response.

He is now the leader everyone knows is disliked but remains in his post by

exercising duress. This and a raft of vitriolic criticism will dog him and his party to the next election, unless it is resolved.

His colleagues lack the courage to remove him because they fear being forced to an early ballot at which several would probably lose their seats. He seemingly lacks the courage to call a spill motion to either demonstrate his support or allow someone else to take the job.

CLP MPs seem unable to settle their differences for the good of their constituents. They are also unwilling to go to an election at which they would probably be voted out.

Giles cannot seriously expect to prosecute reform without the backing of his colleagues. But he continues to talk about turning the Territory into an economic powerhouse and the 'face' to Australia's Asian customers.

Meanwhile, the public looks aghast.

It is a sad case that the Territory, and the Territory's governance, has been dragged so deep into the murky waters.

There is an opportunity to turn this around. A very brave and courageous member of parliament told the truth yesterday, and I will always remember that occasion because it was an example of democracy.

There is an opportunity to debate this in the House; however, I urge members opposite that if they are still intimidated by the member for Braiting, the Chief Minister, and do not want to do this in the House, then consider going back to your party room and having a serious conversation. My advice is to ask one question of this fellow: is this about the member for Braiting or about representing Territorians? The member for Port Darwin says -he has posters throughout his office – in the interests of the true welfare of the Northern Territory. The question the member for Braiting must come to terms with, and one we all have to come to terms with is: are we in this for our self-serving self-interest, money and power, or are we in this for the true welfare of the Northern Territory? If anyone on that side wants to go through the exercise I would be interested in the answer. The honourable thing to do now, to restore the trust of Territorians, the nation and our colleagues and important trading partners throughout Asia, is for this Chief Minister to resign. The Country Liberal Party can maintain government and elect a new Chief Minister. As a matter of fact, 22 days ago it did. That Chief

Minister nominated a deputy and they told the story to Territorians.

Going back to that plan would be a good start. Whichever way it goes something has to be done. I do not believe Territorians accept the division in the government. We saw it of a CLP in opposition, and it emerged on a grand scale in government with the knifing of the Chief Minister whilst overseas on a high-level trade mission. The calamity went on and on. The member for Braiting can now claim he is administrator of a government which has had two Chief Ministers, three Police ministers, five Deputy Chief Ministers, five Health ministers, six Treasurers, six Education ministers, six Housing ministers, six Business ministers and six Sport ministers. If he wants to claim good governance, that speaks for itself.

There is an opportunity here and in the party room. Whichever way it goes, 19 members of this House agree we need dignity and credibility restored. At the end of the day, we will go back to the Country Liberal Party's five-point plan which it used in the 2012 general election of the Northern Territory, quote:

Only Terry Mills and the Country Liberals have a strong, detailed five-point plan.

Point number five says:

Be accountable. If we don't deliver, throw us out. There will be no more political deals to hide the truth from Territorians. The only deal we'll have is with you, to help make your life better.

That can be applied to the situation you find yourself in now. You have retained government; all 12 of you grouped together yesterday. You need to restore credibility in the government, maintain accountability among Territorians to do what you aspire to and provide good governance. That is why I brought this motion to the House. It is logical after yesterday's no confidence motion because it offers a number of layers. It will be interesting to hear speakers from the other side.

Mr GILES (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not intend to engage in a war of words with the opposition or anyone else about private or personal matters raised yesterday. Much of what has been said in this House over recent days is nothing but scurrilous rumour. I am appalled at the depths to which some members have been prepared to stoop. Frankly, it is a new low and Territorians are right to be annoyed. Anyone with morals should feel ashamed.

What is important to Territorians is that the government is working to make their lives simpler,

safer and easier. That is what they will get from this government. We are taking this opportunity to refocus our efforts on delivering things which make a difference to our schools, our hospitals and the services Territorians use every day.

We are about to start drafting a budget that will achieve all those things and make a difference to people's lives, the way they do business, the way they go about their sport, and the recreational and cultural opportunities they love to enjoy.

I know what Territorians expect me to do, and it is not to indulge in an argument amongst ourselves or across the Chamber. They want me to focus on helping rebuild communities hit by Tropical Cyclone Lam. They want the government to get on with building the new Palmerston hospital and cut violent crime through temporary beat locations. They want us to build the next phase of Tiger Brennan Drive, to make sure the ferry goes from Cullen Bay to the Tiwi Islands and sports programs are offered throughout the Northern Territory. They want us to cut more red tape to make their lives easier. We have already cut 200 pieces of unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy, but there is still more Labor inertia and red and green tape to remove. They want us to cut the costs of sending their children to school through our Back to School payments and keep them fit through our sport vouchers.

Territorians also want us to build a new Henbury School. They want us to attract high-profile sporting events to the Territory so we get access to these sports, and also invest in their community and create a pathway for our children and our sportsmen and women to reach elite levels. These are the things I am focused on and I will not be distracted by the gutter politics in the House over the last two weeks.

I have said many times we have a responsibility to lift ourselves in the eyes of all Australians. The performances I saw yesterday did not illustrate what all Australians and Territorians expect of us. The gutter politics of Labor and those opposite is shameful. Again, I call on everybody to lift the standard. That is what Territorians deserve and, rightfully, expect.

I listened to the atrocious introduction of this motion. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will never win a debating competition by reading out media statements from today and yesterday. There was no orchestrated argument or deliberative effect to justify his case for resignation. There was no display of leadership and he did not present a case. It highlighted disunity, and that is death in politics.

Let us look at some of the achievements of this government. We have already spoken about the

temporary beat locations and the reduction in crime. I mentioned the Tiwi Ferry and the changes to pastoral leases, the investment into homelands for Aboriginal Territorians living in regional remote parts of the Territory in the main, but also urban areas – there is \$5200 per dwelling to support Aboriginal people living on country. There is extra money for the DriveSafe NT Remote program, \$135m to support accelerated land release – the biggest land release program in the Territory's history – childcare subsidies to support mums and dads increasing by 10%, massive reductions in the price of fuel per litre in the Territory and a 50% increase in funding for peak sporting bodies at a cost of \$1.7m per year.

We have reviewed PATS with the outcome of increased subsidies for Territory families travelling interstate for medical reasons, \$4.5m for extra elective surgery places, mandatory alcohol treatment, Sentenced to a Job, increased CCTV roll-out, and I know the member for Blain is quite excited about CCTV coming to the Palmerston boat ramp which was a commitment during the Blain by-election. What we have achieved in two years is outstanding.

Leadership is about providing direction on where we are heading and setting the agenda for the future. It is talking about Framing the Future and the four essential elements involved in developing our economy: economic, social, cultural and environmental. It is about putting them through the prism of developing northern Australia and making sure there are jobs for kids who are at school today, setting the agenda in education to make sure kids have opportunities, increasing attendance and enrolment and education results measured through NAPLAN.

It is about creating the enabling environment businesses can operate in by cutting red tape to make it easier to do business and making sure we have an infrastructure program which supports development in the Northern Territory. It is about setting the path and the plan the government has. That is the direction we are taking in the Northern Territory, and I challenge anyone on the other side to tell me their plan.

We know the only Labor policy is to remove police from bottle shops. The only policy Labor has will increase crime in the Northern Territory. I say to my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, 'We are a good team'. We are a team, like any family, which has challenges, but we get on and look after Territorians.

I encourage Labor members of this Chamber, and others, to get out of the gutter, get your head out of the sand and stand up for Territorians. If you want to be an opposition offer an alternate plan to take the Territory forward. To date you have not

done that. All you have done is carped, whinged, whined and followed the Leader of the Opposition down that dark and murky hole of gutter politics. It is not what people around the world want any more. It is not what Australians want and not what Territorians want or deserve.

While I remain in this position I hold the highest level of respect for everyone in this Chamber, including the member for Nelson. We are setting the agenda moving forward; we have a plan and will continue with it. Our focus is about making Territorians' lives simpler, safer and easier.

Labor focused on mudslinging, painting rumour as fact and doing everything it could to avoid being exposed as having no plan to improve Territorians' lives, but the Country Liberals government has a plan. It is about making Territorians' lives simpler, safer and easier, and we will continue with that mandate.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the carefully scripted words from the Chief Minister today when he was absent yesterday. Surely, after everything that has been said and done in the last few weeks, you cannot lead the government or the CLP anywhere except downwards, backwards and out the door. All your colleagues know this, as does the CLP and the Territory community. How can such a damaged Chief Minister lead the dysfunctional CLP government to address the very significant policy and service delivery issues identified? How can a leader not supported by two-thirds of his colleagues drive an agenda that requires focus, cohesion and leadership?

Sporting teams around the world are still trying to work out how five beats nine. We have never had a scorecard like that with someone coming out on top. How can you credibly engage with the communities and key constituencies whose participation is essential to the agenda of the Northern Territory? How can a disgraced leader with no credibility or support help Territory families and communities as you say you will?

Over the past few weeks we have seen extraordinary events in Territory politics, Australian politics and democracy worldwide. It was extraordinary yesterday when the Chief Minister failed to contribute to the debate and not respond to the unprecedented criticism of his failure by Labor, the Independents and a CLP government backbencher, the member for Araluen.

We introduced a serious no confidence motion on behalf of Territorians who are fed up with the chaos, dysfunction and infighting of the CLP. At first it was interesting when we had a 1 am press conference. No one knew what was going on the

next day except that the Chief Minister, in his own words, got hammered.

Territorians are now just fed up with it. They want you to get on with the job of working for Territorians. Yesterday the member for Araluen contributed to the debate by saying:

This is an important motion, because despite what we would like to present to the public we all know the political instability within our government remains unresolved.

...

Adam Giles was voted out of the position of Chief Minister on 2 February 2015 – just 22 days ago. Nine members of his team decided they no longer had faith in his leadership. Nine out of 14 CLP parliamentary wing members voted to have him removed from the position of Chief Minister. ... His colleagues genuinely felt he had lost touch with average Territorians, he was arrogant and his general dishonesty was eroding any respect we had for him.

International convention is such that once a government leader has lost the majority support of his or her colleagues they resign. We were advised it is unprecedented in Australian political history that a leader not resign under these circumstances. Adam Giles did not resign. Instead, he threatened that he would prefer to bring down our government and take us to an early election, rather than resign ...

This highlights the Chief Minister's arrogance and self-interest. He knifed the elected Chief Minister while he was representing the Territory in Japan. It is completely disrespectful, but he shows more disrespect by refusing to resign after being voted out.

The Territory government is in paralysis. Nine out of 14 members do not want him. It is completely obvious sitting in this Chamber this week. People are not talking to each other, they are just staring. There has been an unprecedented lack of replies to statements.

Our community expects more. Territorians are fed up with the Giles government. On top of the huge cuts to education, health, public service jobs, hikes to our power and water bills, the sale of TIO without a mandate, and the endless disputes with essential frontline staff, we now have this circus with our Chief Minister.

An early election and Adam Giles resigning is the only way to fix this mess. How can a leader whose reputation is in tatters give our children a

better education? How can he strengthen our economy? How could a head of government, whose deep flaws and inexperience were on full display yesterday, promote the Territory, attract visitors or attract business confidence?

In defiance of your parliamentary colleagues you continue to cling to your unviable position as head of government. It is unprecedented to not resign and people are astounded. Deep down you must know, as everyone else does, the biggest loser will be the Territory. For the sake of the Territory, I urge you to go. You said yourself politics is a tough business, but for the good of the people you serve you must stand down.

The challenges which confront the Territory require a leader who has the support of his colleagues. It is clear the CLP and Adam Giles do not have the support of the community. Everyone is talking about it and people cannot wait for an election. They are over it, have had enough. You only have the support of your colleagues so the government can cling to power.

Territorians have lost confidence in Adam Giles and the CLP. At a time when the Territory should be reaping the rewards of a strong economy it is burdened with the CLP leadership, forcing the Territory to struggle.

People are fed up with the dysfunction, chaos and infighting. They thought it was interesting at first but now people are over it. If the Chief Minister had any respect for the Territory he would resign.

Since the CLP came to power on 26 August 2012 we have had a sideshow of reshuffles. We have had two chief ministers plus one self-proclaimed one. We have had three Police ministers, five Deputy Chief Ministers, five Health ministers, six Treasurers, six Education ministers, six Housing ministers, six Business ministers, six Sport ministers and the list goes on.

I heard earlier today that every 60 days we have a change. How does that bring stability? How can the public service support ministers when they are constantly preparing incoming briefs? You must have a permanent moving contract for the fifth floor for office reshuffles. Perhaps one thing Adam Giles can claim as his biggest achievement is the most ministerial reshuffles.

The CLP's chaos and dysfunction continues, with 14 Cabinet reshuffles in two-and-a-half years. The calamity of events over the past few weeks has shown the CLP government cannot run itself, let alone the Northern Territory. The former Deputy Chief Minister, who last year resigned from Cabinet embroiled in a homophobic slur, has had his career revived to keep the Chief Minister

in the job despite referring to his colleagues as 'a nest of vipers'.

More than half your colleagues voted you out but you are so arrogant you refuse to move. Your Deputy Chief Minister, you claim, does not have the capacity, professionalism or tenacity to carry out the top job but was rewarded with the position of Deputy Chief Minister. The Minister for Education kindly stepped aside to keep everything in place. It is a circus, a sideshow joke. How can you govern the Territory if you cannot govern yourself?

Surely you are hearing what we are at the markets, the school drop off and the shopping centre. Territorians want an election ...

Mr TOLLNER: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Can you ensure the member directs her comments through the Chair. I am sure you are not responsible for everything the member is talking about.

Ms FYLES: It is good to see Dave is listening. A few weeks ago the most serious allegations were made. The Chief Minister called into question the integrity of the Territory's criminal justice system. He made some disgraceful allegations yet has provided no evidence. He said there would be a judicial inquiry yet has not released terms of reference. In Question Time today, the responses to our questions gave us the impression you were walking away from it.

I again call on you to release the terms of reference and tell us when the independent inquiry will take place. Until that happens, the Territory will not have confidence in your leadership. You have made serious allegations about our police force – which does a wonderful job – without the support of your government.

Only a few weeks ago you said you would make available to the judicial investor all e-mails, phone records and text messages to find out who knew what and when. Why are you walking away from it? That is what it feels like now.

We have a deeply divided CLP government, a ticking time bomb. Every day you wake up wondering what will happen. You cannot even watch the news in the evening and think it is over because you like to call 1 am press conferences. What were you thinking? It is extraordinary. You cannot run the CLP and are incapable of running our great Territory. Under your government we have seen power and water prices increase dramatically. People are struggling with the cost of living. Our education system has had \$125m ripped out of it. We have had 185 teachers and support staff sacked from our schools. Our main hospital, RDH, is in crisis ...

Members: Not true.

Ms FYLES: Member for Fong Lim, you laughed just as you laughed at the ED nurses who signed a petition calling on you to do something. It is not double bunking; it is triple bunking at the moment. They can barely find beds ...

Mr Tollner: Not true.

Ms FYLES: This government caused bed-block by not opening the medi-hotel. Instead, you used that for an expensive alcohol treatment program we have seen no evidence to justify.

After the past two-and-a-half years the Territory should be at a point, with the INPEX project, where we are paid great dividends. Instead, we have become the laughing stock of the nation, almost the laughing stock of the world. I have relatives in America who could not believe it.

Do not resign. If you are sacked from a job do not resign, that is the Adam Giles way. Nine out of 14 CLP members wanted to oust Adam Giles. No, he arrogantly remained. He made extraordinary claims and has not followed through on delivering any independent inquiries. He walked away from an inquiry into our political donation system. Do not worry; it will catch up with you one day.

Our community expects so much more. People have had enough. You only have to look at social media. Surely in the past few weeks, maybe one evening when you had some quiet time – if you are not organising a 1 am media conference – you have had a peak at the *NT News* social media or perhaps your own pages. People are appalled. It is sad because it is so serious.

You ruined our reputation in Asia when you knifed Terry Mills while he was in Japan. You embarrassingly did it a second time while he was in Jakarta. He did not stay quiet that time. How can you govern? How can you implement such important reform when you have no support? How can you get the hard issues through Cabinet when the game is keeping people in place? How do we know your ministers are capable? We believe they are there to keep you in your job. It is appalling.

I work in a team and we respect each other. That is not evident on your side. One brave member yesterday stood up for democracy and gained a new level of respect from the community. Where are the other members? Yesterday we had the most serious motion this House could debate and you treated it like a joke, or thought if you did not speak it would go away. This will not go away. Your government has failed Territorians. You are self-serving, self-interested and it is all about your agenda.

We need to restore community respect in the parliament. While we have five out of nine ...

Mr Tollner: That is a challenge for you.

Mr Westra van Holthe: Why don't you lift your nets a few feet off the ground and stop bottom crawling?

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tollner interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms FYLES: Perhaps the member for Fong Lim might like to pop down the road to Mitchell Street where his jokes might be appreciated?

This is a serious issue facing our parliament and democracy. Territorians want answers to these questions. They have no faith in the government they elected two-and-a-half years ago. You ask, 'How is it going over that side?' You have no respect for the role of a government minister. I would love to be on that side being involved in education or health budgets, making sure funds are spent where deserved. I would not be smirking and treating it like a game.

It was interesting to hear the Chief Minister's carefully-scripted words about his promise for and focus on the Northern Territory. This will not happen while he is Chief Minister. He called for standards to be lifted. Has he seen the front page of today's paper? That is what he has done to our parliamentary system! He talked about lifting standards, but then went straight into a personal attack.

Chief Minister, you said disunity is death in politics. Perhaps you should listen to that, because it is not a united team on your side. That has become clear over the past few months, certainly yesterday. I feel sorry for some members on the other side who, in their first term in government, filled with so much hope, have had to face this. Last night it was on the news, today the front page of the paper and all over social media. We are the laughing stock of the nation.

The Chief Minister, who was not elected by the people and does not have the support of his colleagues, somehow remains Chief Minister. You must know in your heart, member for Brainting, your leadership is mortally wounded and if you really want to serve the best interests of Territorians as you say – families, children, parents and our communities – you should do the right thing and step down. In the end, the interests of Territorians is all that counts but you do not seem to respect that. We have seen unprecedented events and that will continue.

Who knows what will be next, but until the member for Braiiting resigns as Chief Minister, Territorians will not have faith in this parliament. I urge my colleagues to support this motion.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, the editorial in today's *NT News* urges this parliament to start talking about real things. I agree. Territorians deserve to hear about our achievements, our aims, our goals and our hard work to ensure the Northern Territory is the best place to live, work, raise a family, go to school and run a business. On this side of the House we have been doing that all along. The problem is the story about all the good work being done by this government was drowned out by the noise of internal matters and bile and vitriol that spews forth from the Labor Party.

Yesterday the parliament spoke. A vote was taken and the results made it clear the Chief Minister has the support of not only his parliamentary team but the parliament itself. I believe in the Country Liberals government and believe we are the best team to govern the Northern Territory. If we are here to advance the true welfare of the Northern Territory the alternative, a Labor government, is not an option.

Territorians deserve maturity, wisdom, hard work and good policy from their government. Those attributes will not be found in a Labor government. The wisdom, hard work and good policy will be found in a team which will stand united to further the interests of Territorians. That team is the Country Liberals.

Let us talk about the things that really matter to Territorians. Notwithstanding the events of recent weeks, this government has done an outstanding job in delivering for Territorians. This is demonstrably true and the proof is there. We can demonstrate the many achievements made by this Country Liberals government in just over two-and-a-half years.

The member for Nightcliff said this government is in paralysis. That is not true and I will run through some examples of the work the Northern Territory government has been doing over the past two-and-a-half years in my portfolios just to prove that.

All you have to do is listen to the questions asked from this side of the House over the past two weeks. Ignore the bile and vitriol from the Labor team, let us talk about the topics in Question Time – all things that matter to people of the Northern Territory. It is there; it is demonstrable. For those who want to read the *Hansard*, let them look at the questions and answers. All the issues this side of the House has been talking about in the past two weeks are matters Territorians care about.

Credit should go where credit is due. This government has made considerable achievements under difficult circumstances. I specifically mean the \$5.5bn debt we inherited from Labor.

These achievements have been buried under a landslide of noise and vilification. Let me set the record straight: the Country Liberals government has delivered on most commitments. In fact, in many instances we have achieved more than we committed to in our first term of office and we are only two-and-a-half years through. We made these achievements while taking direct action to pay back the debt generated by years of reckless spending. That debt incurred an interest bill of more than \$420m a year.

That is no mean feat. The Country Liberals government is serious about fiscal management and lowering the debt burden on Territory families now and in the future. Today you heard the Treasurer talk about the economy of the Northern Territory and the latest Moody's report.

The matters raised by the Treasurer are demonstrable proof that the fiscal policy of this Northern Territory Country Liberals government is working. We are getting a lot done, but at the same time we are fixing the mess left by Labor.

My portfolio responsibilities include Primary Industry and Fisheries, Land Resource Management, Essential Services and Public Employment. Over the past two-and-a-half years Territory public servants from these departments have worked hard, and worked hand-in-hand with industry organisations to implement this government's policies, operational directives and changes that will have a direct impact on the quality of life of all Territorians.

For example, we have implemented policy changes and restructures from within the Departments of Primary Industry and Fisheries, and Land Resource Management in order to better support the Northern Territory's food producers. These changes will help us capitalise on increasing food demands, particularly from our Asian neighbours, in order to drive economic growth within our agricultural, horticultural and pastoral and fisheries sectors.

My department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has been restructured to better focus on market driven activities and implement measures to strengthen food industries. The restructure has better aligned the department to deliver on government's economic development priorities, and allow for more effective provision of services to strengthen those industries. Changes include the creation of a food industry development group that contains existing research functions but adds

market, enterprise and major economic development functions.

The Northern Territory's primary industry and fisheries sectors are playing an increasingly important role in providing food security for Territorians, Australians and to the growing consumer market that is Asia.

One of the Territory's major exports is cattle. The Country Liberals government has worked hard to rebuild the live cattle trade with Indonesia, and established new long-term markets for Territory cattle and buffalo in other Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam. Last week I said I recognise our role in government is vital in ensuring the northern cattle industry continues to thrive. It is my intention, as Deputy Chief Minister, to work hard to bring more certainty to the NT cattle industry and our trading partners.

Today we have free trade agreements which have opened opportunities for Australian agricultural exports. Vietnam has been growing rapidly as a new market for northern live cattle over the past two years and is now the NT's second-largest market behind Indonesia, taking 41 391 head of NT cattle in 2014, up from 32 806 head in 2013. Prior to that there was little or no market to speak of.

My Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the Department of Business have close ties with Vietnam and have been working in this market to provide assistance to cattle importers in recent years. My department has provided ongoing technical support to Vietnamese importers of NT livestock by provision of specialist technical advice, assistance and training in ruminant nutrition, feed lot management, animal husbandry, abattoir management and tropical livestock production.

New trade relationships with Vietnam and Cambodia have seen our markets for live cattle increase and Northern Territory government-led trade missions have helped secure these new trading partners and ensure those markets remained strong and viable.

Regular visits to our trading partners deliver the assurance and respect required to ensure long-term and successful partnerships. The Northern Territory is currently the largest supplier of live cattle and buffalo to Southeast Asia and this government is determined to see this continue. Negotiations are under way to expand Australian cattle exports into Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, while China, in particular, stands as a market of significant growth potential.

A significant milestone for the northern beef industry was achieved earlier this month with the

official opening of AACo's meat processing facility at Livingstone. This facility will provide an alternative market for cattle that do not need to meet live export requirements, and it gives an opportunity for diversification of the northern cattle herd over time to supply cattle more suited to prime beef processing.

My Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has provided investment facilitation services to AACo, including extensive herd modelling under various seasonal scenarios. The Department of Transport was instrumental in obtaining a \$2.5m matching transport grant from the Australian government to construct the railway crossing and internal roads. This facility will be a large employer and permanent business in Darwin's rural area.

The Northern Territory government recognised the importance of having such a facility located in the north and moved mountains to make this project happen. Conspicuously absent from the opening of AACo's Livingstone facility were the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Barkly and the federal member for Lingiari, all of whom were invited. Surely a major project that creates 300 jobs for the Territory is worth supporting.

Perhaps those opposite were too ashamed to show their faces after their federal counterparts all but shut down the live export industry several years ago. The Country Liberals government and the federal Coalition are proud to have turned that around.

These things matter to Territorians. These are the things we talk about every day, and it is wonderful to have an opportunity to bring them together and provide an update so members opposite have the information they so sadly ignore. It also gives people of the Northern Territory the information so they have a better understanding of what this government is doing. I am only touching on my portfolio areas. I am sure other members on this side of the House will be speaking soon and will also provide updates on what is happening in their areas of responsibility.

This government is committed to enabling development of the north. This government is determined to increase the opportunities available for landowners, primary producers and those whose businesses depend on land and water. To this end we made legislative change to the *Pastoral Land Act* to allow for development of agricultural and horticultural projects on pastoral leases. These changes will extend the five-year limit for non-pastoral use activities on pastoral land for up to 32 years, plus potential extensions which will allow for a project to mature and provide a return on the initial capital investment.

Pastoral leaseholders now have a unique opportunity to diversify their income streams while also contributing to economic development and food security. As I said, changes introduced last year to the *Pastoral Land Act* now enable pastoralists to diversify land use and develop new income streams without having to change the tenure of their lease. My Department of Land Resource Management has already received a number of applications and inquiries from proposed non-pastoral operations, including tourism, aquaculture, sandalwood forestry and palm oil plantations.

One such opportunity that will bring economic benefits to the Northern Territory is the cultivation of poppies on a pastoral property. Legislation allowing cultivation of poppies in the Northern Territory has been passed by this parliament, and already an application for a licence to cultivate poppies has been received and is being reviewed. That legislation was researched, developed, written, introduced into parliament and passed in record time. From go to whoa it was about six months. This government is willing to move mountains to create more opportunities for the agricultural sector in the Northern Territory, thereby boosting our economy and making this place a better place to live and work. There is much more to this project than the passing of relevant legislation. A lot of work was done over the previous two years to reach this stage. I mentioned six months, which was when the work started in earnest.

In 2013 DPIF facilitated two small-scale poppy research trials in the Katherine and Douglas Daly regions which demonstrated the viability of growing opium poppies in the Territory. Based on the success of the trials, an appropriate regulatory framework was designed and implemented to allow for establishment of a commercial opium poppy cultivation and processing industry. The *Poppy Regulation Act 2014* commenced on 29 May 2014, enabling a new agricultural industry in the Territory, and potentially bringing jobs and economic development opportunities to rural and regional areas. The department is currently assisting a proponent with various matters in relation to conducting a large-scale commercial cultivation trial of poppies in the coming Dry Season.

The establishment of the world's largest prawn farm on Legune Station, valued at almost \$1.5bn also did not happen overnight. This government put in much hard work. The proposed farm, known as Project Sea Dragon, will see the development of up to 10 000 ha, which is expected to produce over 100 000 tonnes of black tiger prawns every year and employ 1600 full-time staff at its operations on the land and in various cities.

My Department of Land Resource Management is undertaking land and water assessment services to determine new agricultural precincts in the Territory as a part of a northern development program. Extensive field base assessment is currently under way on Bathurst Island in order to identify potential areas for agricultural development. The project is part of the government's commitment to identifying up to 10 000 acres of arable land suitable for investment and local development on the Tiwi Islands. Additional work to identify potential new agricultural areas will focus on the southern Katherine region, Ali Curung and Ti Tree. These things matter to Territorians.

The Ord Development Unit continues to work to progress this important project. The cross border legislation study has been completed, which is an important step in understanding how this development would operate across the border to protect the environment and biosecurity, regulate water and maintain roads. Consultation with native title estate groups through the Northern Land Council has also commenced. This is an important step in ascertaining how the Ord development will occur.

Sensible water policy, long-term strategies and legislative reform are essential for the growth of the Northern Territory economy. The government's water policy will provide a framework for water management in the Territory, promote sustainable water resource management and underpin the identification, assessment, development, allocation and management of all water resources in the Territory. Since the Country Liberals came to government a total of 130 water licences have been processed.

The stark difference between the Country Liberals government and those opposite could not be any clearer. Under Labor decisions on the provision of water, including strategic planning, timing and construction of new support infrastructure, had been in the deepest, darkest regions of space in a policy vacuum. Similarly, decisions on the management, allocation and use of water resources were taken without clear, strategic policy guidelines. They winged it because that is all they are capable of.

Seventy-five unprocessed water applications were inherited by the Country Liberals government thanks to Labor. That is a disgrace. You should be ashamed. Those applications were made by legitimate business people seeking surety on access to water in order to grow their businesses. Effectively, the inaction of the former government stifled development of potentially 75 businesses in the Territory. That is the type of government they offer. They were following the rules and in good faith they were seeking a licence. Under the

Country Liberals government there has been a significant change of approach and the Territory and its water resources are open for business.

The Country Liberals government will actively and proudly promote agricultural development through the timely, pragmatic and balanced allocation of available water resources. We recognise that access to good land and water resources is necessary for future growth and development of these industries. This government supports the use of the Northern Territory's water resources to drive economic development. Good science and adaptive management is essential to ensure our resources are used sustainably and water is available to support our natural ecosystems, but also to support our livelihood. Development of a water policy will consider the different legislation and administrative arrangements across government which relate to water use, protection of water quality and the role of water for public health ...

Mr BARRETT: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 77, I request an extension of time for the minister to conclude his comments.

Ms Walker: No.

Motion agreed to.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Blain and pick up on the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy who said, 'No'. The member for Nhulunbuy does not like to hear good news.

I have been on my feet for 20 minutes and have an extra 10. I could probably talk for two or three hours and it would fall on the deaf ears of those opposite, particularly the member for Nhulunbuy because she does not like to hear the good news coming from this government. The member for Nhulunbuy is complicit in the bile and vitriol that is drowning out the good work being done by this government ...

Ms Walker: Spineless.

Madam SPEAKER: Please withdraw that, member for Nhulunbuy.

Ms WALKER: I withdraw, but it is true.

Madam SPEAKER: Withdraw that too.

Ms WALKER: I withdraw.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Once again we see that the Labor opposition is happy to trawl the bottom.

Mr Vowles interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, member for Johnston.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: They throw out personal jibes, insults and name-calling across the Chamber. The behaviour of the member for Nhulunbuy just now brings this parliament into disrepute.

I do not want to talk about them. I want to talk about the good things this government is doing.

Considerations in developing the water policy will include the best model for the efficient and effective regulation of public water supplies and sewerage services, and where there are benefits in the integrated regulation of water extraction, protection of water resources and service provision.

The Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee will also enable community input into water policy development as well as provide the opportunity for focused attention on emerging issues. The Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee provides the opportunity for focused, strategic attention and community input on water policy development and emerging issues affecting our economic development in river catchments throughout the Territory.

Both recreational and commercial fishing is an integral part of the Top End lifestyle and brings many economic benefits to the Territory in the form of tourism, jobs and commerce. Since coming to government the Country Liberals has established a Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, implemented the Recreational Fishing Development Plan, established a recreational fishing data survey program, reached six agreements with traditional owners for ongoing access to waters affected by the Blue Mud Bay decision for commercial and recreational fishers and implemented a comprehensive safety and recreational fishing education program in conjunction with marine safety.

We are also establishing new self-launch boat ramps. We are creating economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in regional areas with regard to fisheries. To achieve this the department delivers a broad range of initiatives, including accredited marine ranger program training in fisheries enforcement and scientific research. This training provides Aboriginal people with real and valuable skills and experience to enable ranger groups to contract their services across a range of other government agencies, universities and organisations. These things matter to Territorians.

A commercial fishing mentor program has delivered training to more than 30 people in commercial fishing skills including gear maintenance, catching, handling and hygiene, and even business skills. While in its infancy, fish have already been sold in local stores in Milingimbi, Ski Beach and on Goulbourn Island. The opportunities through these programs are numerous and include: actively involving Aboriginal Territorians in aquatic resource management; improving the efficiency of marine surveillance, compliance and scientific research; building small business capacity in remote communities; providing locally fresh caught seafood, with health and cultural benefits; and the list goes on.

I recognise the huge responsibility that goes with being Minister for Public Employment as there are over 20 000 Territorians employed in our public service. This government is serious about modernising our public service and a number of measures are in place, or about to be rolled out, that will promote training and staff development, and provide staff with greater flexibility in their working lives.

Under this government there is a major focus on all agencies to increase Indigenous employment to 16% by 2020. This includes a greater focus on access to professional development and support for all Indigenous employees, and an overall increase in the number of Indigenous senior public servants to 10% by 2020.

A dedicated unit has been established to implement the NT Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy for 2015-20. Since the Country Liberals have been in government there have been successful EBA negotiations for teachers, nurses, police officers, dentists, medical officers, marine pilots and Darwin port workers and the finalisation of negotiations for corrective service officers. Finalising these agreements enables our public service to get on with the business of delivering services to Territorians. These things matter to Territorians.

The structural separation of Power and Water Corporation into three government owned corporations continues to drive the change needed in the utilities industry in the Northern Territory. The three new GOCs, the Power and Water Corporation, a power retail corporation called Jacana Energy, and a power generation corporation called Territory Generation are providing a more transparent and competitive utilities industry.

The separation has served to drive innovation and accountability so our utilities industry has the capacity to change and grow with the needs of the Territory. With structural separation as the

foundation and catalyst for change, the Power and Water Corporation is now smarter, leaner and more efficient.

Efficiencies are being driven across the corporation. Power and Water has established a corporately centralised warehouse/store function and an electrical parts supply panel contract. The panel contract includes greater competition into parts supply, and has significantly lowered prices on some items.

These improved procurement processes have already delivered. Over \$0.5m has been saved by an electrical parts supply contract, savings of \$36 000 in freight consolidation, savings of \$20 000 in improved forklift hire processes, and savings of thousands of dollars by simply consolidating freight costs to and from the store's depot.

Red tape has been slashed through the introduction of a one-stop shop for developers. Based at Power and Water's Ben Hammond Complex, this one-stop shop ensures engagement with stakeholders can be managed well and developed processes are streamlined.

A number of operational measures have been undertaken which have served to strengthen the electricity network and provide a more robust system. Recent major infrastructure includes replacing 132 kV circuit breakers at the Hudson Creek switchyard and rebuilding zone substations which are at their end of life. Improvements in metering are seeing a decrease in equipment malfunctions and inconsistencies.

As Darwin continues to grow, securing an ongoing water supply takes a high priority. Again, these things matter to Territorians. Construction of a new elevated 4 ML water tank in Palmerston will supply Zuccoli, Johnston, Bellamack and Palmerston South, allowing increased development in that area.

Works are under way for an Australian first biological water treatment facility at Adelaide River scheduled to be functioning in July this year. A new, continuous chlorination facility for Tennant Creek has been commissioned ensuring drinking water supply is at the same high quality as other towns across the nation. New sewer and waste stabilisation ponds will be established to service growth in the East Arm and Berrimah areas.

The Living Water Smart project is well under way and aims to reduce Darwin's water consumption by a quarter, or ten million litres, over five years. Remote communities are an integral part of the ongoing infrastructure enhancement plan, and include upgrades to Kintore power station and the water filtration system at Robinson River.

These are some of the projects under way in our regional and remote communities to improve electricity, water and sewerage services to Territorians. These things matter to Territorians.

There is construction of a new \$12.8m gas-fired regional power station at Wadeye. There are plans for a regional power station on the Tiwi Islands. There is the new solar panel program, the Solar Energy Transformation Program known as SETuP, which will roll out 9 MW of solar power to over 30 remote Indigenous communities across the Territory.

This government is fostering industry growth by reducing red tape, assisting to increase export to our Asian neighbours, enabling flexibility for land use on pastoral leases and facilitating an increase in availability of land for primary production. These things matter to Territorians.

The Territory's best days are ahead and the Country Liberal government has the plan, vision and political will to make good things happen in developing the Northern Territory. We are getting on with the business of government, despite the noise and bottom-dwelling tactics of those opposite. I will not support this motion.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, normally Territorians would enjoy that speech and support what the minister said but they do not care anymore, at least not at the moment. This is not about what this side says or what wonderful things the government is doing for the Territory. All that has been destroyed because there is disunity, and that is the fault of the CLP government.

The government has to take responsibility for what Territorians see as a disunited government, at present lacking leadership. Territorians are not fools. You can talk about whether industries in the Territory are doing well, whether we have solar farms operating in remote communities and whether we are doing this or that. Territorians are not interested in that any more. They want a stable government, which is not what they are seeing.

They see an unstable government and the responsibility to fix it lies in the hands of every member of the CLP. I do not care who is leader of the CLP; I want to see a leader who will do what was stated on 3 February: the government would be more consultative with Territorians and engage with them before making important and crucial decisions for the future of the Territory.

If you elect a leader who promises to do that you will get my support. Tonight I would like every member of the CLP – except the member for Araluen – to tell Territorians who they support. You have an opportunity to tell Territorians,

regardless of what happened earlier this month and what was said last night. You are a unified team behind a leader. It is your responsibility to pull this government together. Businesses must be shaking their head at the instability of this government, because instability is one of the worse things that can happen to a government.

Regardless of what the CLP thought of my decision to support Paul Henderson several years ago, the one part of the agreement I thought most important was that Paul Henderson should stay as leader for the length of the term. That was so we would have stability, especially for business and for INPEX, which was coming to the Territory at that time. We have now lost that stability.

You can say we are a team but people are not fools; they know what happened at the beginning of this month and what has been said by various members of the CLP against one another. Forget the opposition, forget me, these are self-inflicted wounds you have to heal. You have to be genuine. If people think this is a charade tonight, blaming the Labor Party or others for what happened, you will continue to be seen as disunited. Everyone knows nine people voted for one person and five for another. I have never seen a football team with the lower score win. I do not know how 5:9 can be the winner.

This is your chance tonight to show leadership as a team, and show Territorians you will move ahead so we can have some faith in you as a government. You can tell great stories about what the government is doing. Moody's – look at that, fantastic, our economy is starting to move. Cattle are going to Vietnam – great stuff, but at the moment people do not care. That is not making the front page of the paper, instability in our government is.

You have to sort it out tonight. I would like to hear every person say who they support as Chief Minister. The Chief Minister said, 'We are a good team'. If you are a good team, tell people in the Northern Territory you are part of that team. If the member for Braitling is captain of the team let us hear it from him. If the member for Katherine is leader of the team, let us hear it from him. If the member for Fong Lim wants to throw his hat in the ring, let us hear it from him. We need something from the CLP to give people in the Northern Territory faith in their government so they know that government will govern the Territory until the next election. I would like to hear that from the CLP government tonight.

I do not support the motion because I believe the responsibility is with you, and the people of the Northern Territory deserve an answer tonight. Please, for the sake of Territorians, get your act together, get behind one person as leader, forget

the arrogance I have heard in recent times and consult and work with Territorians when you decide who will lead. I hope you can do that tonight. You have the opportunity; let us move forward from there.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support the current Chief Minister, Adam Giles, and do not imagine that is too much of a surprise to anybody. Yesterday this parliament took a vote. That vote, to anybody who cared to look, was decisive. A majority of people in this parliament supported the government and the Chief Minister.

Whilst I like to have public stoushes with the member for Nelson, he and I get on quite well. Member for Nelson, what more can be done? Everybody in the Chamber had the chance to have their say. We had a spokesperson for the government who clearly did not satisfy the other side. They expected every member on this side of the Chamber to get down in the mud with them. Yesterday and today have been mudslinging exercises.

The Leader of Government Business, on behalf of the government, gave a good speech explaining why confidence should remain in this government. At the end of the debate a vote was taken which showed a majority of support for this government.

As much as the opposition might want to say, 'Disregard what happened yesterday; look at what was in the newspapers two or three weeks ago', yesterday, less than 24 hours ago, a vote was taken and support was shown for the Chief Minister and the government. This parliament expressed its confidence in the government ...

Ms Manison: Why did you not speak yesterday?

Mr TOLLNER: I have explained. I will pick up on the interjection from the member for Wanguri. We made a decision as a government, as a team, that we did not want to get down in the mud with the Labor Party because that was what yesterday was about. It was the Labor Party's great opportunity to continue throwing mud, dirt and bile at the government, and you continue that today as well. I understand the tactic, do not get me wrong. It is about trying to make the government look bad without having to explain what the alternate government stands for. At no time in the last two-and-a-half years has the opportunity been taken by the opposition to say what the alternative government of the Northern Territory would do on the government benches. Not one policy has the opposition been prepared to debate or put up, and nowhere is the opposition prepared to be judged for a single idea on anything.

It reminds me of a few years ago when I was at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra with my children. We saw Phar Lap's heart in a glass box. The size of the heart was impressive – Phar Lap is no longer in need of it. My boys then pointed out a box which appeared to be empty. They said, 'Dad, what's in the empty box?' I said, 'It's not quite empty. If you look in the far corner you will see something.' They said, 'What's that?' I said, 'That's a Labor policy preserved in a glass box in the National Museum'. No one could see it; you needed a microscope ...

Mr Vowles: A point of order, Madam Speaker. Surely ...

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order, sit down.

Mr TOLLNER: Today the Sport minister spoke about the Imparja Cup played last weekend and about the big names of cricket. I was yelling out, 'Where's Kenny? Where's Kenny?' Hardly one cricket side in the last 25 years has not had the famous Kenny Vowles in it, probably captaining it. It seems we are missing something in our sporting lineup these days without Kenny Vowles. Instead we have the member for Johnston and cricket is suffering. The member for Johnston should be playing cricket, we all know that. I have played cricket against him; he is wonderful player. He is pretty near the best I have seen in the Northern Territory.

Pretenders say they are better than Kenny Vowles but I do not believe them. I got him out once. He square cut me, the ball went no more than four feet above the ground and hit a bloke fair in the guts standing on the boundary who managed to hang on to it. I could not believe it was not six runs ...

Mr VOWLES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Although I love what he is talking about, Standing Order 67: digression from subject.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Treasurer, please continue.

Mr TOLLNER: We are talking about a very important subject: whether we like our Chief Minister. Our Chief Minister is not very good at sport. I watched him play rugby union in New Zealand; he was out on the wing and was one of the quicks. He was probably about five yards off the try line with no one in front of him when somebody flicked the ball to the wing. It hit him in the chest, bounced onto the ground and he stood on the ball and fell over. Sport is not his calling.

It is for the member for Johnston and he should have stuck with it. This is no place for the member for Johnston. He should be on the

cricket pitch scoring runs for the Territory. Instead he is here throwing mud for the opposition and it does not fit well on the shoulders of the member for Johnston. He is much better on the cricket field.

Similarly, I would not pick the member for Brainting in my sporting team. I like having him around, he is a mate, but he does his best work in the parliament and that is why he is the Chief Minister.

I look at political idols who inspire me and see the same traits in our Chief Minister. He is a man with vision. He also has the guts and determination to carry through on his vision. That is a rare quality in leaders around the country. They tend to be scared of their own shadows and are not good at making decisions.

However, this Chief Minister has driven this team to make some big decisions and, as a result, we are taking big steps and making big progress as a government. Of course there have been some fall outs; that is what happens when you make tough decisions. When you make tough decisions inevitably you have some tough arguments, and sometimes those arguments spill outside the party room. Should we resile from making tough decisions? Not in my view, and I do not think it is the Chief Minister's view either.

We have been left with a mess. No one wanted to come into government. My good friend the member for Port Darwin and I catch up on a regular basis and we were keen to get into government three years ago. We had wonderful plans about where we could spend money to make life better for Territorians. We came into government and had to shelve most of those plans because, lo and behold, the budget was wrecked. The finances of the Northern Territory are stuffed. We have debt and deficit coming out of our ears.

We are told the Power and Water Corporation is on the verge of bankruptcy. We have a housing crisis never before seen in the Northern Territory to deal with. Crime is out of control and the list goes on and on.

We also found when we came into government there was no real executive of government. There was a big spin machine and hundreds of people working diligently. The only thing the previous government got right was its media marketing and communications. That is where the focus was. People ask me, 'Why weren't you at this function?' Labor members were always at those functions because they were never in their offices working. We are in our offices working and doing our best to clean up the Labor mess.

The track record of this government, so far, has been incredible. It has all occurred – all the big reforms, changes and fixes – under the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the member for Brainting, and my good friend, Adam Giles.

He is the bloke with the guts and determination. Okay, he is not that good at sport, member for Johnston ...

Mr GILES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Clarification under Standing Order 113: relevance. I am happy to make a personal explanation at a later date, but my arms are 2 feet 13 inches long and the ball was 3 feet in front of me. The Treasurer was knocked out in the first five minutes of the game and may not recall everything.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chief Minister. You can make a personal explanation later if you feel the need to.

Mr TOLLNER: I should not have gone there, but he is much better suited to this place than a sporting field. They tell me he likes to ride motorbikes, but I know he falls off a lot.

This Chief Minister has driven the government to make tough decisions and not be scared of that. He has been prepared to bring on a few fights within Cabinet and the party and they have resulted in good decisions. You do not have to look too far – I gave an update in Question Time today about how we are tracking economically. If you listened to the other side you would swear the Northern Territory was going to hell in a hand basket, but that is not the case. Experts around the country, as well as big international organisations which provide commentary on the Northern Territory economy and how this government operates – all of it is positive, from CommSec, Deloitte Access Economics or Moody's.

The only people talking the economy down are those opposite. The only people worried about numbers in this House are those opposite. Yesterday, in the most definitive way, we had a vote of confidence in this government carried by a majority. This silly motion from the Opposition Leader shows how desperate she is. It is no surprise the Opposition Leader wants an election because she knows the wolves are circling and her days in the job are numbered.

Territorians have had enough of the Opposition Leader and the gutter tactics employed in this House. They have spoken loud and clear. You only have to pick up the newspaper and read the diatribe. For the last week-and-a-bit the government has listened to Territorians and made a conscious decision not to get into the gutter with

the Opposition Leader, as tempting as it is. This government will not engage in the only tactics the Opposition Leader knows.

As I explained, going through the National Museum of Australia in Canberra – Labor policies are pretty rare; Labor has nothing to talk about. All they have to talk about is other people and to smear and humiliate them as much as possible. There are two ways to get ahead: you either work diligently and do your best and get ahead, or you pull someone else down. That is the only tactic the Opposition Leader knows.

I 100% support the current Chief Minister, as do a majority in this House.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, where do I start? I will address the comments from the member for Fong Lim on the member for Braitling's sporting ability. His sporting ability could be carried into his role as Chief Minister – that is not good enough. In a sporting analogy he would be substituted off and on the bench for the rest of the game. He was supposed to do that on 2 February but did not. It is unbelievable!

It was good to hear him say why he should remain Chief Minister. It was pretty bizarre. Only five or six members were in the Chamber at the same time as the Chief Minister.

As the member for Nelson said, this is a perfect opportunity for every CLP member to 100% support the member for Braitling. So far one has. Of course the member for Braitling will support himself; we know it is all about him. So far only his best mate, the member for Fong Lim, has given 100% support. I was shocked.

It is bizarre that the member for Braitling has nine colleagues – probably more today – who want him out. To say, 'Disunity is death' means the man is not in touch. This is all we have heard after one of the member for Braitling's colleagues unloaded a bucket of information on the Chief Minister yesterday. I remind people who may not have heard it or only read the media reports:

... I do not have faith in the leadership of Adam Giles. I do not have faith in Adam Giles. Adam Giles was voted out of the position of Chief Minister on 2 February 2015 – just 22 days ago. Nine members of his team decided they no longer had faith in his leadership. Nine out of 14 CLP parliamentary wing members voted to have him removed from the position of Chief Minister. ... he was voted out. His colleagues generally felt he had lost touch with average Territorians, he was arrogant and his general dishonesty was eroding any respect we had for him.

This is the member for Araluen, an elected CLP member of parliament and a former minister until dumped last week. She went on to say:

International convention is such that once a government leader has lost the majority support of his or her colleagues, they resign.

Yes, they resign. I, along with everyone else, thought those comments were extraordinary. I take my hat off to the member for Araluen, a dumped former minister, for what she said. That was brave. She did what she believed was right for the CLP and, more importantly, what she believed was right for her constituents in Araluen.

I will not delve into what bars the member for Braitling frequents, or which CLP members or federal colleagues joined him. We should be better than that in this Chamber. However, I will comment on his lack of integrity and dishonesty, which he has shown many times.

The member for Araluen highlighted it. I refer to parts of her speech yesterday:

Adam Giles is not the legitimate leader of this government. No vote has been taken in the parliamentary wing since 2 February 2015. Willem Westra van Holthe remains the anointed leader based on that vote on 2 February.

It was interesting to hear the member for Katherine speak as Deputy Chief Minister. He did not support the member for Braitling 100%. His speech was quite Chief Minister-like, quite a leadership speech. As the member for Araluen said, and we know, he is anointed leader. Five beats nine any day, and convention says you step away. The member for Braitling has not done that.

The member for Araluen also said yesterday.

I have no faith in a government led by Adam Giles. I have stated publically I believe that Adam Giles has no integrity. I stand by that statement. That alone is enough to mean he should not hold a position of community leadership.

I believe a political party should be bigger than one person and as such I have not sought to depart from the Country Liberal Party.

Yesterday was extraordinary and these comments speak for themselves.

The member for Braitling is failing Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. First three

Indigenous members of the Country Liberal Party resigned because nothing was happening in remote communities, and nothing was being done to help and grow Indigenous people in remote communities.

Yesterday in my contribution to the motion of no confidence I touched on a few issues which I will repeat. Because of his desire to remain Chief Minister this 10th reshuffle, and 14th reshuffle in two-and-a-half years, has again impacted on all Territorians. Sadly, we have had six ministers for Housing and remote housing remains in disarray. Sadly, progress on remote housing, rebuilds and investment in new housing has slowed, and essential housing maintenance in many communities directly affecting the health and safety of residents and families is going backwards.

The member for Stuart, as minister for Community Services, has failed to support the coordination of government services in the bush. Her constituents are now contacting us wanting to get rid of her. They had so much hope in the opportunity given to her but have been terribly disappointed.

After two years the member for Braitling seeks to correct his mistake of not having a specific Indigenous policy portfolio and has assumed control. He has failed to deliver on the contracts for the bush, especially the promise to fix bush roads and develop local businesses and government services and centres in the major bush towns. The member for Braitling said in May last year that the federal government should get out of health, housing and education, but he has failed to show his government can agree on the right priorities and programs to deliver any of these areas fundamental to closing the gap. The recording of the Alice Springs branch meeting shows you have no Aboriginal affairs policy.

The man screams across the Chamber, 'Show us your policies'. We have policies on Indigenous Affairs, we have *A Working Future* and homelands strategic priorities. They are our policies. As the member for Braitling said in that recording, the Labor Party has a stack so high of policies and we are proud of that.

Despite his grandstanding he continues to fail in winning any new substantial Commonwealth funds for health, education and regional economic infrastructure in the bush. He loves to talk it up. They must tap him on the shoulder when he goes to Canberra, pat him on the back and say, 'Good boy little Adam, good boy', then send him home with no new funding. Nothing. It is all fanfare and there is nothing for Territorians. Instead of working to close the gap all the member for Braitling has done is focus on land and resource

grabs. How can you get traditional owners to hand over land with his government's unilateral acquisition of important ground water resources earmarked for Indigenous economic development?

In taking responsibility for Indigenous Affairs the member for Braitling said, 'What is needed in this area is leadership; that is why I have taken it on.' He has consistently failed to show real leadership. He does not know how to build and lead a strong team. He said he will be more consultative with Territorians. On behalf of Territorians and probably some of your members, member for Braitling, people do not believe you.

In October 2014 he was reported saying he would be happy to see land rights legislation change before the next Territory or federal election. I quote, 'It's not about a mandate; it's about allowing people to use their land.'

Ian Viner, a former Coalition minister for Aboriginal Affairs said, 'It has to be clear the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* is not an obstacle to development'. This Coalition elder, one who has seen it all, says the suggested changes you support are simply an argument for a land grab.

The member for Braitling has not consulted or engaged with all traditional owners of Aboriginal land before making important and crucial decisions affecting their land. The member for Braitling has not consulted with them on changes to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act being developed through the COAG task force the member for Braitling pushed to help with his land grab of Aboriginal land.

Why is the member for Braitling not working cooperatively with the land councils and traditional owners to stop the division, heal the wounds and provide certainty for investors and traditional owners to create new economic opportunities on Aboriginal land?

My judgment, and that of Territorians I speak to every day, is the member for Braitling cannot and will not change. He is not capable of the leadership this requires. It is embarrassing that he sacked Terry Mills twice; once in Japan destroying relationships there and, sadly, in Indonesia, destroying our reputation there. He was also part of the Cabinet that got rid of the Arafura Games. The Territory is the gateway to Asia and we need to make sure we look after relationships in Asia. I am sure we will hear more about the former elected Chief Minister, Terry Mills.

When it comes to leadership in primary industries, the story does not get any better. How can the

primary industries and fisheries sector have any confidence in this government, when he says the man in charge of these portfolios, his Deputy Chief Minister, lacks the capacity, capability, tenacity and professionalism to be Chief Minister? If he does not have the capacity, capability, tenacity or professionalism to be Chief Minister, how does he qualify to be in charge of one of our biggest industries?

The Chief Minister said he was disappointed with the minister's handling of the banana freckle outbreak but kept him in the job. It is not because he thinks he can do it, but because that is how he keeps his job as Chief Minister. How can anyone have any confidence in these two men handling this important area?

I speak on behalf of my constituents and Territorians who have expressed their anger and disappointment in this sorry excuse of a government led by the member for Braitling in his brash, arrogant way. He is not governing for the CLP or Territorians, but for himself.

The member for Braitling, according to the member for Araluen, has no integrity and is dishonest. We know it, Territorians know it and nine of your colleagues know it. For once the member for Braitling needs to do the honourable thing: resign. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr KURRUPUWU (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, I speak against this motion and in support of the Chief Minister and the Country Liberal government. For eleven-and-a-half years under the former Labor government nothing changed. No jobs were created in communities. People could not make decisions about their own lives or their families and nothing got better.

When the member for Braitling became Chief Minister he said if any community wanted to help itself and develop its economy and jobs in the community he would work with them and help them do that.

The proof of this can be seen on the Tiwi Islands, where the Tiwi people have seized the opportunity to create a brighter economy and create jobs and wealth. Since coming to government we have invested heavily in my electorate of Arafura, especially on the Tiwi Islands. We have worked with Tiwi people to establish an MOU between Tiwi Plantations Corporation and Japanese company Mitsui. This will allow the harvest of plantations to go ahead, creating jobs on the Tiwi Islands. This ties in nicely with the new port currently under construction on Melville Island, which will allow export of items around the world from the Tiwi Islands.

A new barge landing at Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island means secure shelter storage for deliveries and protection against king tides, flooding and heavy Wet Season rain. A more efficient trade service will also reduce the cost of living for people on the Tiwi Islands.

The Tiwi Islands are a great place for tourists to visit and this government has supported Tiwi Island tourism. In September the Chief Minister and I announced support for a 300 km walking track called the Tiwi Trail. The new Tiwi Trail will give locals the opportunity to become tour guides and, hopefully, will be the springboard for new businesses such as bike hire, cafés and accommodation in the long term. This is one of many things the Giles government is doing to support tourism in remote communities.

This government has started a remote home ownership program allowing people in remote communities to own their own home. The Chief Minister launched a new Neighbourhood Watch program on the Tiwi Islands to keep homes safe and help keep our community as safe as possible.

These are a few of the things we have done to create an economy in remote communities and improve the lives of people on the Tiwi Islands. We have been able to achieve these things, and more, because the Giles government has worked constructively with the Tiwi Land Council. These things would not have happened without it. It makes a huge difference when a land council is willing to work with government for the benefit of the traditional owners it represents. I wish all land councils were as willing as it is.

Similar things are happening in other areas of my electorate, particularly in Maningrida. In Maningrida we have upgraded the infrastructure to support a tourism and accommodation venture, and we are continually looking for a way to support communities to create a viable economy and more jobs for community members.

I will continue to work with the Chief Minister and the Country Liberal government to get the best for people of the Tiwi Islands and West Arnhem. I urge any community willing to work with us to create a brighter future to see us so we can help you do that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we will continue to focus on the Territory and not ourselves.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Barkly for bringing this motion to the House. This is an interesting change to the debate presented to the House yesterday, when Territorians were expecting the government to defend itself. Yesterday's motion was about confidence in the government and we

heard very little from the other side. I suspect we will hear a lot more tonight as, all of a sudden, members want to talk about their policy areas.

Several people have spoken of confidence in the Chief Minister, one of whom was in the nine. This means 19 members of the House have no faith in the current leadership. One of the five of the 14 opposite is the member for Braitling. It is an interesting, serious and sad situation we now find ourselves in. This is about making sure the next 18 months do not continue in the manner the last two-and-a-half years have. To use the words of the member for Nelson, 'Cyclone Giles has swept through the NT government and all of us are left to repair the damage'.

Yesterday the member for Araluen bravely gave reasons why she did not, and cannot, support the member for Braitling as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. As far as she is concerned, the Chief Minister is not the legitimate Chief Minister and should stand down. It was an extraordinary statement. There were quotes such as:

This is an important motion, because despite what we would like to present to the public we all know the political instability within our government remains unresolved.

Further on:

This period in history is a chapter I wish I was never a part of and was never written.

Many of us in this House agree.

The member for Araluen was the only government member willing to talk openly and honestly about the difficulties of working within the government under the member for Braitling. Clearly those on this side of the House feel the same way, as we spoke of many of these things yesterday and how the behaviour and attitude of this Chief Minister reflects on us all. These are not scurrilous rumours, as the Chief Minister put it. The circus three weeks ago that exploded onto the public stage in a 1 am media conference made excruciatingly and publicly obvious the lack of support for the member for Braitling as Chief Minister. That was all the CLP government's doing.

Perhaps the Chief Minister lives by the words of Taylor Swift and is just shaking it off and dancing on his own. To not stand down after what has happened over the last 23 days is astounding. It was disheartening yesterday to see the members opposite sit in silence, with the exception of the member for Araluen and the member for Port Darwin, who was the only one to speak in defence

of the government. We were talking about policy areas.

However, it is good to see more members participate today. I hope we hear much more about what has changed in the last 23 days to make them suddenly so confident in somebody they so recently tried to roll.

Many of us spoke about the manner in which this government continues to push on with a lack of strong policy – an admission from the Chief Minister at that now infamous Alice Springs branch meeting – despite the feedback of Territorians and against the feedback of important non-government business sectors. That is why we are having this important debate. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Repeatedly I have seen a government which refuses to listen and, as a result, makes mistakes which cost us all. This government does not have a shared plan. The Chief Minister might say he does, but the story he tells his own branch members is different when he says, 'We need to have a greater level of policy backbone about the party'.

The Chief Minister, at the same meeting, pointed to a number of major areas where the CLP has no policy yet seems to make everyone else responsible for the impact of his decisions. The Chief Minister is supposed to be providing leadership. He has the opportunity to show that leadership now and make the right decision.

I look across the Chamber and see hard-working, passionate people, some of whom I have known in different capacities for a long time. It does not surprise me those people were in the nine who did not support the member for Braitling as Chief Minister 23 days ago. Some members on the opposite side work hard, and I cannot imagine what it must be like to watch their government time and time again become a joke, both near and far.

Just 23 days ago the Chief Minister said the Chief Minister apparent, the member for Katherine, does not have the capacity, capability, tenacity or professionalism to be Chief Minister. This is not scurrilous rumour but a media conference available for all to see. Less than 24 hours later the member for Braitling wanted us to believe the member for Katherine was the second best of his 13 colleagues. You cannot have it both ways, yet this has become a hallmark of this government.

Yesterday only one member of Cabinet participated in debate in support of the direction of government and the Chief Minister's leadership. The only other member spoke in dissent. That is a clear message to every Territorian of confidence in the Chief Minister and the government's current

direction. The silence did not serve to respect Territorians.

This Chief Minister sees fit to make allegations involving our police force, which every day is just trying to get on with an important job. He refuses to apologise. The Chief Minister talks about raising standards in the Chamber. No kidding. I recommend he starts there.

This Chief Minister is yet to confirm he will rule himself out of the recruitment process for a new Police Commissioner despite a clear conflict of interest. This Chief Minister apparently knew nothing of the sacking of Terry Mills, for a second time, whilst overseas. He was high profile in a well-paid job and, by all accounts, held an important position as an ambassador to Indonesia. He was not given the chance to brief the Chief Minister. This has not gone unnoticed by important international stakeholders and damage has been done.

The Chief Minister raised infrastructure projects and I instantly thought of his comments during the Alice Springs branch meeting, 'There's no policy on local contracting or the Department of Infrastructure', and in regard to policy more generally, 'We are still bumbling around in that regard'.

It took a year to decide not to change Territory Day, but five weeks for a petrol committee and six weeks for consultation on the mental health strategy. Everywhere I go 'lack of consultation' are the words on people's lips. This Chief Minister is out of touch with Territorians. He believes 'Darwin has the lowest cost of living of any Australian capital city. Constituents in our electorates are saying loudly and clearly, particularly after the CLP's power price hikes, that the cost of living remains a major concern.

The Chief Minister said the government listens and consults with people. I repeat what I said yesterday: this is not the experience of Territorians. There is a trust deficit between your government and Territorians, Chief Minister, and saying the government is consultative does not make it so.

I ask those opposite to consider this motion and the seriousness of debate over confidence in the government as a result of its leadership. Can you honestly, and with integrity, sit in silence? Can you honestly say that within three weeks your opinion of the Chief Minister has changed so dramatically? Can you honestly say, after holding a meeting in the office of one of the members opposite to oust the Chief Minister, the instability is over? That was just three weeks ago. Many people do not think so.

The Chief Minister is one of them. At the infamous Alice Springs meeting the Chief Minister said:

At the end of the day who knows if this trouble is over, it could start again tomorrow, it's a little bit like Russian roulette, like having a bit of a gun to the head of all of us because all you need is for someone to say I want to be Minister or I'm going to resign and become an independent.

Territorians deserve better. The Chief Minister's personal life is his business, but a Chief Minister who acts without integrity or honesty when making decisions involving Territorians, and without respect, is disgraceful and it reflects on us all.

I commend this motion to the House.

Mr ELFERINK (Attorney-General and Justice):

Mr Deputy Speaker, I remember the days when Syd Stirling, as Deputy Chief Minister, would talk about the thousands of dollars – at the time it was \$5000 an hour to run this House. It is probably now about \$7000, allowing for inflation and a few things. This debate has cost the taxpayer about \$20 000 to \$25 000. Pause and think about that.

This quote is from the *Northern Territory News*. I have never quoted an entire article, but this is worth reading out:

Yesterday our pollies spent thousands of taxpayer dollars to convene a Parliament in order to drone on and on about how much they dislike one another.

And that seems even more farcical when there are real programs, having wonderful success, fighting for a relatively measly amount of money.

The Palmerston Parenting Programs do amazing work with young mums, helping them navigate parenthood and also allowing them to access education and other opportunities.

We've seen first-hand how these sorts of programs are helping people. Mums like Tshintia Tucker, who has used the course as a stepping stone towards a job as a nursing assistant, tell us it's a godsend. This is what our government should be focused on. These are small things, and in the grand scheme, they may make only a small amount of difference.

But at least it's a tangible difference – a little step towards a greater good that so many in public life have lost sight of.

In this case, we're talking about giving young mums a second chance. We're talking about giving the children of young mums the best chance.

And that, we reckon, is far more important than any of the egotistical rubbish we heard in Parliament yesterday. After seven hours – and some fairly grubby debate – our government still stands. For how long, who knows?

An early election was a tempting option to try to redress this sort of rubbish, but there's no guarantee it would do any good.

Our challenge for politicians, instead: start talking about young mums. Start talking about these sorts of programs that do so much good. Just start talking about real things.

I then heard the member for Nightcliff say, 'They want you to get on with the job of working for Territorians'. She also said, 'We need to lift the integrity of this parliament'. To that end, we again find ourselves spending hours and hours talking about ourselves.

Yesterday in rebuttal of the motion before this House I ran precisely the same argument. That argument was, in part, reproduced in the *Northern Territory News* today. I urge all members of this House to stay focused on that.

The member for Nelson, who often acts as the conscience of this House, made some comments I agree with. He said to members on this side of the House, 'Figure it out. Find out who your leader is and move on. Give certainty to the people of the Northern Territory.'

The member for Fong Lim was also correct in that there was a vote. It was not a parliamentary wing vote but one taken in relation to the integrity of this government and this House, and a majority passed that vote. We should be talking about things that matter to the people of the Northern Territory, things the average punter is concerned about. That is the why I focused on that yesterday and will continue to focus on it today.

The Deputy Chief Minister spoke at length about the many important things in his portfolio areas. I have a number of things in my portfolio areas which are vitally important to the people of the Northern Territory which I look forward to rolling out. I will continue describing important reforms which occupy the minds of Territorians – probably not a large number when it comes to the Attorney-Generalship – which I am trying to roll out in the judicial domain. I will stick with that because it is what the true welfare of the Territory is about.

Palmerston Regional Hospital is on track and will be delivered to the people of Palmerston and the rural area. I will probably consider a new name for it shortly, because I am mindful of the expectation people of Palmerston and the rural area have regarding the hospital. To simply call it Palmerston hospital would, by definition, exclude others.

However, if you are seeking treatment for a child who has just broken their leg falling off a bike you will not care what it is called. Nevertheless, we will have Palmerston hospital operational by mid-2018. That is the target we have set and will meet.

I wish to discuss my Mental Health Services portfolio in greater detail than I did previously, which was a fleeting reference. I take it very seriously because it is affected by a number of other important things in our community. The connection between alcohol and other drugs and mental health is undeniable; the overlaps in those areas are important and need to be attended to. That being the case, I seek to make changes to three primary areas.

The first is increased access to primary services in remote and regional areas, which will be done with two subheadings. One will have a focus on youth and the other, closely linked to mental health issues, relates to suicide. As I said yesterday, I hope to make some announcements in relation to an integrated suicide policy in the not so distant future. Nevertheless, that policy has to be circulated and go through the Cabinet process. At the risk of pre-empting a Cabinet decision, it is a policy I find important for the people of the Northern Territory. I am certain I can convince my Cabinet colleagues of its legitimacy.

The second component which causes me concern is the gap between outpatient services in places like the Tamarind Centre and inpatient services in Cowdy Ward. If you suffer from depression you can go to somewhere like the Tamarind Centre. Other government organisations throughout the Northern Territory provide similar services, where you can get help from a psychologist or psychiatrist. That is not to diminish the work they do because their work is sound and valid. A person who goes into that type of outpatient service will be seen and will receive treatment and medication if required. The challenge is there is not a great deal beyond that.

The other services which have done reasonably well in mental health in the Northern Territory are Ward 1 at Alice Springs and the Cowdy Ward in Darwin. They both deal with the other end of mental health issues. Many of the people who present in that environment have profound issues at that time. They will present with a psychotic

episode which reflects extreme behaviour. Anybody who has ever witnessed a schizophrenic in the throes of their mental illness will understand how debilitating schizophrenia is as a mental illness. Doubtlessly, it is a shocking thing to see and a taxing thing to deal with for family and friends of people having those episodes.

The problem I have with the services in the Northern Territory – I made these observations when in opposition – is the gap between the Tamarind Centre service and the Cowdy Ward service is substantial. I have described it, perhaps a little cruelly, as the distance between Casablanca and Cairo with few oases in between. I am aware there are some supported accommodation-type services such as the Papaya centre, which provides a very valuable service. I have visited a number of these services in the Darwin area to examine them. They are the oases but many sand dunes lie between them. It is time we looked into those areas.

There are number of things we can do for outreach services from the hospital. There are also things we can do for supported accommodation. Another suggestion made to me by a senior clinician was crisis respite, and there is a great deal of validity in that. None of these – perhaps supported accommodation – should present a massive tax on the public purse. Nevertheless, with a bit of money we could go a long way.

The other component of particular interest to me is the intersection between the criminal justice system and mental health. When a person in the Northern Territory presents with a mental health problem, it is more likely they will first come in contact with the criminal justice system than the health system. A person who presents with behavioural issues arising out of a mental health disorder will often come to the attention of police before the health services. A person then tracked in that process may go through the whole criminal justice system without any real attention paid to their presentation as, potentially, a mental health patient.

When I was overseas recently on a study tour I went to Phoenix, Arizona and saw some unique programs being run, particularly ConnectionsAZ, which impressed me enormously. It is how police can redirect people into mental health services without having to take them into custody beyond driving them to a place where mental health services are available. Of course, Phoenix is a city of one million people and the surrounding districts have about four million. Reproducing ConnectionsAZ may not be possible in the Northern Territory but we can have a form of it. I have already spoken to my CEO in Health suggesting we send a clinician over to look at it. I

will also encourage the minister for Police to send a police officer over because a number of other things wash across the area of child protection, mental health services and police investigations that are worth looking at. I will be speaking to my acting CEO of Child Protection to see how we can find ways to use some of the examples from Phoenix. It does not mean we have to reproduce it, but we can use it as a guide because it is better than anything we have.

Those are the things Territorians are concerned about, not the self-indulgent pastime of politicians banging their chops in parliament.

Today I also refer briefly to the sex offender register which will become Daniel's Law in memory of Daniel Morecombe. I doubt I need to describe to anybody in this Chamber who Daniel Morecombe was, and the impact his death had on not only his family but the surrounding community.

The reason we decided to call it Daniel's Law was the hideous germ who killed Daniel also committed a crime of an unspeakable nature in the Northern Territory. It was a great tragedy this man was ever released back into the community, but it is what it is.

We will create a sex offender register in the Northern Territory but we may not be able to get immediate access to CrimTrac. We may have to download information independently off it, but we will create a sex offender register website this year come hell or high water. We will be looking to the other jurisdictions to create an agreement where we can find this information on the system and have it displayed in the Northern Territory so parents have another tool in their toolbox to protect their children.

Another thing we are working on is national recognition of DVOs. The domestic violence order exists in most jurisdictions. It has different names, such as apprehended violence order, but there is no national recognition. The Prime Minister made some comments about this recently and urged the states to get together. Before the Prime Minister made his comments we in the Northern Territory were already on the case.

At LCCSC, SCAG before that, Tasmania was about to withdraw from the process of seeking cross-border legislation. I told LCCSC at the time I would encourage Tasmania not to withdraw from the process and we would help Tasmania create uniform legislation we could bring before the next LCCSC. I can inform the House we will now go to the next LCCSC meeting with legislation that may be enacted across the jurisdictions so we can recognise, as far as possible, domestic violence orders across this country. That will be a great step forward and something I hope will give

comfort to the Prime Minister, who has expressed some opinions in relation to this.

I could speak for hours on what I would like to do in the future, but will not because I do not have time. I remind honourable members of the comments from the member for Nelson about the government getting itself together. I agree. In fact, the government agrees to the point where not a parliamentary wing meeting, but a parliament with the majority of its members, endorsed continuation of the Chief Minister in his current role and endorsed the government continuing to govern on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory.

I hear members opposite call for an expression of freedom and liberty, but that would not create the unity the member for Nelson called for. It would continue to aggravate the disunity members opposite so strongly crave. That will not occur.

We will govern for the true welfare of the people of the Northern Territory. Adam Giles will be the Chief Minister from now until the next election, and he will take us to the next election where we will have, by that time, demonstrated to the people of the Northern Territory we are a firm government committed to the future.

I am confident we can do that. I am sure members opposite would like us to fall apart in front of them for their own ends. Frankly, I do not care what they want. I want a government that governs well for the people of the Northern Territory and that will always be a CLP government.

Ms LEE (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I support the motion from the member for Barkly, Mr McCarthy. Regardless of how I vote tonight we all know the government will win this, like it always does because the numbers are on the table. Let us not forget this motion is about the member for Braitling and the Assembly calling for him to resign as Chief Minister.

We know two weeks ago he did not have the numbers, but because a few members held the government to ransom – that is the issue.

I understand you all trying to keep the CLP slogan going. Anybody in a party would do the same. I would rather be an Independent because I want to stand for what I believe in. I will not be reading from a piece of paper someone else wrote for me; I want to speak from the heart. I want to represent the best interests of my people because that is the reason we are elected in the first place. That is democracy. There is no democracy in what is happening and no heart. If people want to talk about morals that is fine, but this man stabbed the former Chief Minister in the back. He said bad

things about us all behind our backs, he does not mind playing dirty games, he does not mind muckraking and now he wants to talk about morals.

When I came into this House I was innocent, I was young and I did not know about muckraking. Politics was not my game. I was not in this House to stab my colleagues in the back. My former job was to heal people in the community, to get them well, look after the kids and not have them taken away from their parents.

I will always have my morals; that is what I value in life. Where I come from people understand and I will always stand by that. I will never take a man's word when I know he is two-faced. He cannot look me in the eyes and tell me his speech was sincere, that he is greater than that. He is not any greater than anything in this House. He is not bigger than the walls put together by the former CLP and Labor members before us.

We are all equal, but at the end of the day your morals, values and your integrity are what keep you. The reason I left the CLP is because of morals. I have a different view of life. I want to see the poor lifted into a middle class. I want to see the rich give to the poor. I do not want to see the war anymore, it does not interest me.

My people's suffering is one of my greatest concerns and something I can fight for. Every minister spoke about their portfolios and what great jobs they are doing. The opposition is telling you how awful that is. I will call it how I see it, how the public see it and how Indigenous people see it. That is my job; that is who I represent. I am not here to please anybody else.

The Chief Minister needs to do the right thing for the Northern Territory and go. Yes, you can keep him until the next election but you are not going anywhere. You can act like you have your party together but you do not. It is written on your face and in your body language.

It is obvious you think I am stupid enough to believe everything you say, but any ordinary person or somebody who just graduated from high school would probably tell you the same thing if they were interested in politics right now, which a lot of kids are, especially law students. Sadly we find ourselves in this House talking about morals, integrity and loyalty. What loyalty? We are stabbing each other in the back. I am talking about Indigenous people stabbing Indigenous people in the back because we all want to be better. It is all about money. Do not get me wrong. Greed leads people to different places, but is it all worth it in the end? What are we doing for our people, the Territory and the next generation?

You can talk about schools, health clinics and roads – there is still no road on the Central Arnhem Road yet there is a big mine there. Look at the Roper Highway. The roads are only maintained from where the bitumen stops to the mine. After that, all the way into Ngukurr and Numbulwar, they are hardly maintained. What does that tell you? This government is not looking after the best interests of Aboriginal people, that is for sure. I am the local member and I drive down that highway. I always get a flat tyre on that highway. They are always screaming for more to be done on that road. Why are you not listening to the people on the ground? Yet, you are doing the best job with roads.

Stop putting on an act and saying all these pretty words. You have your seat in town and the bush does not matter. You can say your pretty words, that you are doing the right thing for them. I am the local member. I see it and I will call it like it is. The bush has always been left behind, that is the problem. People were better off with Labor than the CLP, that is the truth. If you go out there they will tell you the same thing.

There are two members in this House who, by next year, can hopefully change hundreds of people's mind, but that might never happen because they will never want to see this place again. That is unless they are visiting another member of parliament. You will be in opposition then because you will never get the bush seats back. This is how obvious it is on the ground now.

That man is toxic. Have you even seen a snake slithering through grass? That is what he is. He is poisonous. The best thing about being a new member is watching everything and getting to know everybody. Yes, I keep my head down but my ears are open. I get to see and learn who you are and decide who I can trust and who I cannot from that. My decisions are made on who will help my people and who will not.

There are a few good people on the other side, I will not deny that. Robyn Lambley is the most courageous woman I have ever met on that side. She has the stomach, heart and the guts to do what most of you men think you do every day in your lives. She stood there alone while the rest of you – the eight who signed that piece of paper – watched her crumble down. I went to Casuarina today – she is respected for what she did; she stood up for what she believed in. People want real people who are honest and courageous. I am not a town member, I am from the bush.

I have respect for what she has done; it takes a lot of guts for a female to stand up to a man.

The Attorney-General talks about domestic violence. While the majority of Aboriginal women

from Indigenous communities have experienced domestic violence, we also experienced abuse on that side of the House. When we were in did anybody care? It was all brushed under the carpet.

This man abused the member for Daly's son. Everybody jumped up then. Why would nobody listen to us then? Because we are Indigenous and it did not matter. Where are your morals? That is a fact. Everybody was happy to go to the media and run down the member for Namatjira and me. I do not take that personally anymore; that is the game of politics and I understand it. One thing this House has taught me is to have a tough skin. I will not sit down, I will not lie down and I will say it as it is because I need to see change. That change has to come from every individual in this House.

We are all equal. When we die we are buried in the same size box. We bleed the same colour, but we have different religions and different skin colours. The way we raise our children is totally different to yours. Our language and how we live is totally different to anybody else. That is who we are. I know my morals, my responsibilities and my people better than anybody.

I already knew that man could not be trusted before they said it. That is up to you guys. You can sleep on this, but history will write itself anyway. The people will judge you by that. The members for Arafura and Stuart better work hard to keep their seats. You talk about the issues, but it is not pretty on the ground. People will only tell you what they want you to hear.

You forget what we did during the election, who you were before then or who you showed us you were. I gave my people, trusting the member for Stuart would do the right thing for them. I did not know her then, but I supported her and gave her a chance. It turned out to be the worst decision I have made in my political career. I sincerely hope the people of Arnhem especially, but also the people of Stuart in the Jawoyn region, forgive me for that. They will decide where they stand next.

I give credit to a female who can stand up to a man and call it like it is. That is courageous. That is like the *Braveheart* movie and the stuff you see on television.

As the member for Nelson said, it is up to the members in this House, especially that side, to decide on this Bonnie and Clyde, Rudd show. It is not Bonnie and Clyde, it is Adam and Tollner – nobody else matters on that side – and whoever says yes to them. That is the truth. They are ruthless. The public has already discovered that. Yes, the public wants stability. They cannot find it

now because they know the morals and integrity of this government.

The bush definitely does not trust faceless little boys. I am proud to come from a very strong cultural heritage – Arnhem Land and Central Australia especially. Our culture is more important to us than anything. We have the Westminster system here, but we have our law which we must respect and obey. I will always carry that with me. It is not something I can change in this House like policy, a bill or legislation. It is something we live by all our life. It is what our great, great grandchildren will live by and it has never changed. It is passed on from one to another. That is our history, our knowledge and it is everything to us. It is the land, the sea, the fresh water coming out of the ground and the oxygen we breathe.

You wonder why our people are so against mining. Yes, they want development but they do not want policies and legislation. They do not want that stuff forced on them. They are getting smarter; they have master's degrees and diplomas too. They go to universities. We have learnt to walk in two worlds because we have to for our survival. We have nothing left but to fight for our heritage – our future basically. We have been fighting ever since. There were always a few back then who would do tribes in; they would betray their own people.

One thing you need to remember is they know who that person is. That is something you cannot take back. They have to live with that for the rest of their lives. If you were a cultural person you would know that regardless of religion. Religion does not come into that; cultural is a totally different thing. My grandmother was a deacon and I do not confuse the two, but my father was a cultural man and my mother a cultural woman. I understand where I stand with them and I understand where I stand with my grandmother when I walk into her house. It is the same thing in this House.

Sometimes you have to ask yourself, 'Is it worth it for my children's sake' -- your name, you are willing to carry the burden for the rest of your life? Do you want to make a difference?

Will we come together? Will we close this gap? I cannot see that happening any time soon, but I hope the government might make that happen one day. Next year there will be a showdown and I will be happy to sit back with my popcorn and coke and watch the dominoes fall when it comes to the election, and it will not be pretty. You should pay attention to the people, to what they are really saying instead of sitting here looking pretty, making yourself so busy you forget the people out there. One thing you remember on

your way up is the little people who see you. They are the same people who see you when you go down.

Adam Giles leaked information and undermined then knifed the elected Chief Minister, Terry Mills. You claim you know nothing about Foundation 51, but you know much more than you care to admit. You are a bully who has no problem abusing your female colleagues and how embarrassing is that.

I commend this motion to the House. I would like to see the little boy walk out of here one day.

Ms LAWRIE (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am conscious of time and want to ensure as many members as possible can contribute to this debate; we have 35 minutes left so I will not take my full time allotment.

I have heard many contributions this evening. I understand the government will bang the drum of, 'There is nothing to see here. We are getting on with government.' That is continuing to treat Territorians as fools and shows arrogance and contempt. That is part of the point of the motion. When your leader has those characteristics they become imbued in the direction of government and you end up where you have: deeply divided, completely unstable and continuing to reap the rewards of what you have sown.

The contribution from the member for Araluen told us, in more detail, what she had already publicly said: the member for Brainting lacked integrity, honesty and respect. If we want to go to who the real Chief Minister is, just read the transcript of the secret Alice Springs branch tapes. It is extraordinary. How anyone would not stand down after that was exposed, for the sake of their own party and their government, beggars belief. That is the nature of this leader; it is all about him.

People in the community constantly approach me to say, 'Delia, this government has been through so many different iterations and so many changes it is impossible to know what it stands for, who to deal with and you cannot properly get on with business'.

People have business ideas; they bring them to government and the minister changes. People in the public service trying to deliver policy intent or drive policy into outcomes are constantly rewriting briefings for incoming ministers. It is unprecedented, in only two-and-a-half years, to have two Chief Ministers, three Police ministers, six Deputy Chief Ministers, five Health ministers, six Treasurers, six Education ministers, six Housing ministers, six Business ministers and six Sport ministers.

This instability causes paralysis in government and that is why people are clamouring for a change. You do not get real change when you pretend the leopard is changing its spots, when the Chief Minister pretends he is looking forward but there is nothing to see. There is everything to see. There are some very deep-seated flaws in the way he deals with Territorians.

The arrogant, crash and crash-through nature of this Chief Minister means Territorians suffer the real impact. It is arrogance displayed in debate on whether power bills are having an impact on Territorians, when of course they are. People are struggling. Families despair about how to deal with household stress. Businesses are finding it harder to pass on the cost to a consumer who no longer has the disposable income.

Yes, the economic data is strong; the gross state product is good. Thank you INPEX and Total for the \$34bn financial investment decision you made in the Ichthys project. You do not hear the Treasurer trumpeting the state final demand figures because the money washing through the domestic economy is tight. For a Business minister to pretend that may not be the case sends a signal you are following your leader and showing arrogance and denial. That has a real impact on Territory businesses.

The raft of ministers who hold the social services portfolios, from family and children's services to Health and Education, also live in the bubble of denial which is the modus operandi of the member for Brainting. You have adopted it as your own. 'Nothing to see here, nothing wrong, we are doing great things', when in fact the opposite is true.

If you want a snippet of the real Chief Minister when it comes to denial you need look no further than the transcript of the Alice Springs branch meeting when, of all subjects, it beggars belief that Adam Giles said:

There are a lot of people who work in sobering up shelters and all of these things that respond to alcohol, that respond to dealing with cases of domestic violence and all of those people are not needed here and they haven't been needed in Alice Springs as much for more than 12 months.

That beggars belief.

That is an individual living in a bubble of denial and not connected with our community, which is an important point. The lack of connection with the community – getting out on the ground and listening to people and having empathy is crucial to leadership. That is a flaw; it does not exist.

Empathy and compassion do not exist and have never been displayed by this Chief Minister. That is why we suggest the Chamber supports this motion. You want to cling to power and government and have shown you will at all costs. Even though nine said to the Chief Minister, 'You're not consulting Territorians, we don't think you're heading in the right direction so the member for Katherine will be Chief Minister', the threat to bring the government down kept you supporting him.

What about the impact on Territorians? That is what this debate is about. Cling to government, as you are desperate to do, and the electorate will judge you as different speakers have suggested this evening. Help Territorians by changing the Chief Minister so this arrogant, crash mentality, bubble of denial cloak you shield yourselves in is shed. Then hopefully, for however long you cling to power, things will improve for Territorians.

We saw snippets of this when the Chief Minister was on leave and the Acting Chief Minister, with the member for Araluen, put \$23m back into education. They used the opportunity, while the Chief Minister and Treasurer were out of town, to invest some of the money which had been ripped out of education.

Key moves when the Chief Minister was out of town showed us who had been ripping apart frontline services. We now have one of the two back in that all-important Treasury portfolio. We wonder if there will be a judicial inquiry – the Chief Minister made very serious allegations about police at a media conference meltdown, then repeated them at the Alice Springs branch. He said:

... I have good evidence that this has involved an orchestrated political coup to get rid of me ...

He was referring to Northern Territory police and two of his parliamentary team. That is extraordinary. It is an attack on the integrity of Northern Territory police, has been roundly criticised and he has failed to unreservedly apologise. The Chief Minister has promised a judicial inquiry but is slipping away from that. Territorians have corporate knowledge, having watched then Police minister now Chief Minister, consistently say one thing and do another on a range of topics. In relation to TIO, 'There is no big plan for sale', but after the Casuarina by-election it was quickly sold. It was described as a change of ownership rather than a sale.

There are serious allegations surrounding the relationship between the Chief Minister and Foundation 51. E-mails between Graeme Lewis and the Chief Minister were leaked which said he

wanted to keep Foundation 51 operating. Graeme Lewis was running draft media releases on Foundation 51 past the member for Braitling. Then, when the numbers were shaky recently, he promised a political donations inquiry then backflipped on it. Territorians are not fools and you cannot keep treating them as such. If this was just about politics and Labor's best chance of winning the election, whatever you do please keep the member for Braitling as Chief Minister. Whatever you do, do not remove him.

This is not about politics, this is about the decisions he makes as Chief Minister and the impact those decisions have on Territorians. Too much damage has been done in his tenure as Chief Minister. We do not want to see damage continue across our community and critical areas of government service delivery because of his arrogance, lack of compassion, lack of empathy, his crash and crash through modus operandi and the lie at all costs that people see through. We have had enough of that and Territorians deserve better.

Our job is to hold government to account, but part of our job is damage control and to keep pressure on the government to prevent it from doing too much damage across the community. It is heartbreaking to travel across the remote areas of the Northern Territory and have people tell me what has happened with the lack of new housing, no repairs and maintenance, and roads not maintained, fixed or upgraded. People tell me they were promised a whole raft of things with contracts signed and nothing has happened, people have lost their job on repairs and maintenance work crews on houses in towns, and teacher aides and support staff in schools have lost their jobs. It is tragic to see how far backwards life in our remote communities has gone under the leadership of this Chief Minister. They said they had faith in Terry Mills and still cannot understand why he went or why he is not Chief Minister.

To wrap up and give other members a chance to contribute, this began with the knifing of Terry Mills. That is why there are irreconcilable differences within the CLP and why one of your own yesterday said this instability is unresolved because of that action. Everyone in the CLP would be aware the member for Braitling was counting the numbers and twisting the knife to get the top job from Terry Mills. At the time he pretended he did not, but you know he did. We saw it happen again with the retribution – the second knifing of Terry Mills in Jakarta. It all began with that disgraceful knifing of a Chief Minister and the inability of the new Chief Minister to be honest about it.

People are not fools. Territorians do not appreciate being treated with the contempt this government shows. They have in their clear line of sight and focus the person responsible for the culture of this government: the member for Braitling. By all means hang on to him if you want a drubbing at the next election. Politically, that is a great outcome for Labor. In the meantime, for the sake of Territorians and to limit the damage this man, cyclone Giles, is raking through the Territory, get him to resign.

Mr STYLES (Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I heard what the member for Nelson had to say about people wanting stability in government and to get on with the business of good government and I agree. That is exactly what we, on this side, are trying to do: get on with good government.

We did not engage in the behaviour this House was subjected to by members opposite yesterday. I stand 100% behind my CLP colleagues. We are doing what the people of the Northern Territory want us to: get on and govern. I stand behind Adam Giles as Chief Minister 100%.

The member for Arnhem said there is no democracy in what is happening. I remind the member for Arnhem there was a vote yesterday and a majority in the parliament supported Adam Giles as Chief Minister. The member for Nightcliff challenged us to support the Chief Minister. I challenge those opposite to swear their loyalty to the Leader of the Opposition.

You all pretend to be holier than thou, but some of the newer members of the Labor Party might ask the Leader of the Opposition what happened when Mr Henderson and others knifed Clare Martin in the back. You might like to ask the member for Karama what happened at the Casuarina Club on the Sunday afternoon. Far be it for me to say what happened, ask her. You want to be holier than thou yet your side is worse than us.

I welcome the member for Nelson's constructive comments, and the decent manner in which he conducted himself throughout perhaps the lowest level of behaviour I have witnessed. People of the Northern Territory have had a gutful of the muckraking and poisonous vitriol which flows from that side of the House.

Look at your side and see what you have done in the past. I have been around the CLP for 30 years and have never witnessed such ugly stuff coming from those opposite.

We are getting on with it. We had 18 hours and three minutes of issues to deal with then we got on with it. The following day we were doing

exactly what government should – good governance for the Northern Territory.

Those opposite will say things are terrible and the sky is about to fall in. They have been saying that for the last two-and-a-half years. The sun came up this morning, went down and it will come up again tomorrow. The opposition will tell you the Territory is about to be defunct. Territorians have every reason to be confident this government will fix the mess it inherited from Labor and get back on the right track.

The Leader of the Opposition was the worst Treasurer the Northern Territory had. What did we get from Labor? We have a \$5.5bn projected debt. There is a 95%-plus level of debt to income ratio and that is where they want to take us. What is the other big thing we have? A prison. We did not get a hospital, we got a prison. The criminals and others locked up from time to time get a fantastic hotel but we did not get a hospital.

As a member of the CLP I am proud of its achievements in the Northern Territory. I have just given you what Labor – the debt; they are great at spending money. They are not much good at creating wealth or generating good economic activity.

Let us look at some of the things the previous Country Liberal government did: gas pipelines, self-government, Kings Canyon, Katherine Gorge visitor centre, Litchfield, Douglas Daly, Gregory National Park, Keep River National Park, Charles Darwin National Park, the museum, the old gold battery in Tennant Creek, tourist information centres, Marrara Sporting Complex, Channel Island Power Station, Stage 3 ...

Members interjecting.

Mr STYLES: ... the Territory Wildlife Park, Alice Springs ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, pause please. Opposition members, I draw your attention to Standing Order 51. We know it all too well. I ask that you adhere to it. Minister, you have the call.

Mr STYLES: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker ... major highway developments, recreational fishing, the Araluen Arts Centre and the list goes on and on. There is gas development, the Alice Springs to Darwin railway - those opposite opposed the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. Thanks a lot. If you look at the economic development of the Northern Territory and what we need to take this Territory forward, and we now have courtesy of the previous CLP government – I am proud of our achievements over the last two-and-a-half years. We have gone

so far, and I will get to them if I have sufficient time.

Let us look at the state of the Northern Territory economy. Those opposite will say it is all doom and gloom and the sky is falling in, but there are some fantastic stories to tell. If we have failed anywhere it is to let people of the Northern Territory know exactly what we have done to benefit them, their future, jobs for their kids and the bright future we have as Territorians.

In 2013-14 economic growth in the Northern Territory strengthened by 6.5%. This was driven by increased public sector investment activity, growth in household consumption and increase in net exports. The Department of Treasury and Finance forecasts the NT economy will grow by 6% in 2014-15.

The prawn farm at Legune Station is a classic example. There was \$100m invested in an abattoir by AACo. If you asked AACo if they wanted to build an abattoir here three years ago, when the then Labor federal government brought in the live cattle ban, they would think you were nuts. They now have confidence in the Territory because we have economic managers to manage the economy, unlike those opposite and unlike the former Treasurer, the member for Karama.

The Department of Treasury and Finance forecast economic growth to average about 4.3% over the five-year period to 2017-18. Deloitte Access Economics forecast, in September 2014, the NT's annual economic growth to average about 4.9% from 2013-14 to 2017-18. The latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows state final demand in the Northern Territory, a measure of demand for goods and services within NT borders, increased by 3.7%.

People know they can get a job here, they know people are investing here and water bottling plants are about to be built in the rural area at a cost of \$8.5m. The investment coming in demonstrates the private sector is confident the Northern Territory is going places, as opposed to going backwards with my favourite saying, the pyramids of debt created by the Australian Labor Party.

NT state final demand growth was the highest year-on-year growth of all jurisdictions – a fantastic result. Nationally, domestic final demand increased by 1.2% in the same period. An examination of the key components of the NT state final demand in the year to September 2014 shows consumption and expenditure increased by 2.4%, driven by a 2% increase in household consumption and a 3.5% increase in government consumption. Investment in expenditure increased by 8.7% to \$13.2bn driven by a 7.9% increase in private investment.

That is a vote of confidence from the private sector in what is happening in the Territory, and how the Territory is being governed. The great thing about the Territory led by the Chief Minister is he has a vision ...

Ms Fyles: Which one?

Mr STYLES: I pick up on the interjection – they do not seem to understand. I am surprised that supposedly educated people do not understand who the Chief Minister is. For those who cannot read or count, the Chief Minister is Adam Giles, the member for Braiiling. That is for those who are not smart enough to work it out.

The merchandise trade balance – export minus imports – for the same period increased from a \$1.8bn surplus to a \$3.3bn surplus. Key exports were LNG, manganese and iron ore and concentrates, lead and zinc, while key imports included feedstock, gas for the LNG production, refined petroleum and bunker oil.

The NT Labor market remains strong and buoyant as the unemployment rate in January 2005 was unchanged at 3.7% compared to December 2014. This was the lowest of all jurisdictions and below the national rate of 6.3%. This is good news for Territory families, especially if people have children graduating from university and school, as jobs are available.

I was at the university today – there are good news stories – to recognise Shell Prelude, which has invested \$400 000, along with the Northern Territory government matching that figure, to fund an employment and training program. There are 20 students and I was impressed with the way they work together. They have been there for four weeks and the people running the program are really impressed with these young people. I spoke to one young man, a drifter for the last 10 years, who approached Group Training NT and was given the last spot. He said the last four weeks had changed his life.

This is what the Giles government is doing – helping Territorians and those who struggle. That man now has a future. When I spoke to him – this warms your heart – instead of muckraking he said, 'This has changed my life. I can start to think about settling down, finding a partner, having a family and buying a home.' This apprenticeship, as a mature-age student, will enable him to do that. In four weeks he has gone from someone who struggled each day to now having a future. We did this in Katherine recently, so when I hear those opposite say we are doing nothing for the bush – 11 people went through a similar program in Katherine last year, eight of whom still have full-time employment. That is a fantastic result.

The boilermaker program in 2013 was similar, earned high praise and went on to win the Training Initiative Award at the 2014 Northern Territory Training Awards – a fantastic outcome. The program delivered in 2014 is modelled on innovative initiatives. The students in Katherine recently completed an automotive and engineering program which resulted in them gaining full-time employment.

The Department of Business, Charles Darwin University, Shell Prelude and GTNT, which developed this training package, have done a fantastic job in giving 20 apprentice diesel mechanics support and training through the first year of their apprenticeship. They were all very happy.

I have information on some of the young people: there were 19 males and one lady, who used to be a hairdresser but had a change of heart and took on an apprenticeship. That is what the Giles government is doing.

The member for Port Darwin wished he had hours to talk about the positive things happening in the Northern Territory government, led by the member for Braiiling, Adam Giles, our Chief Minister.

I will keep talking about some of the fantastic stories. The NT labour participation rate increased marginally to 73% in January 2015, the highest of all jurisdictions and well above the national average of 64.7%. This is good news for Territorians. In January 2015, NT resident employment was 131 800, an increase of 0.6% over the previous month. Employment grew by 2.9% in the year to January 2015 and is forecast to grow by 3.8% in 2014-15.

Consumer prices in Darwin increased by 0.2% in the December quarter 2014 compared to the previous quarter. Nationally consumer prices also increased over the same period by 0.2%. In 2014, consumer prices in Darwin increased by 2.9%. Nationally, the increase over the same period was 2.5%. Retail turnover in the Northern Territory increased marginally in December 2014 by 0.3% from the previous months to \$258m. National retail turnover increased by 0.2% in the same period; that is 50% more here. In annual terms, NT retail trade turnover increased by 2% and the national retail turnover increased by 3.3%.

In the housing sector, home loan affordability in the Northern Territory increased by 2.9% to 36.8%. This is the home loan affordability indicator in the September quarter of 2014 compared to the previous quarter.

There are other key business indicators. The December 2014 Sensis Business Index was released on 22 January 2015. The index is a

quarterly survey tracking business confidence in small and medium enterprises. Results are based on responses of small to medium enterprises surveyed and reported as a net balance, which represents total positive responses minus total negative responses. Survey interviews for the December 2014 report were conducted between 29 October 2014 and 21 November 2014. The Northern Territory recorded the highest overall confidence with a net balance of plus 46% ...

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! As it is nearly 9 pm and the close of the opposition's General Business Day, is the minister finished and can we put the motion then call a vote.

Madam SPEAKER: No. The minister has five minutes to go. There is no point of order.

Mr STYLES: Territory business confidence was 19 percentage points higher than the national average net balance of plus 27%. These positive economic figures demonstrate the Territory is in very good hands.

I have numerous positive stories to tell ...

Members interjecting.

Mr STYLES: I pick up on interjections. Sadly, those opposite seem to think positive news is a joke and do not like it.

There are members on this side who have complete confidence in the Chief Minister. I believe he is doing a fine job. Sadly, it is not a good news story for the opposition because we will be kicking goals. The Territory has a bright future and is the place to be if you want to get ahead with a life for your kids and your family.

Mrs PRICE (Local Government and Community Services): Madam Speaker, I do not support this because I support Adam Giles as the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Mr CHANDLER (Police, Fire and Emergency Services): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be part of the Country Liberals team under Chief Minister Adam Giles, who has implemented so much positive change during our time in government. The Labor Party would have you think we are a dysfunctional government. I put it to you that we are the most effective dysfunctional government the Territory has ever seen.

Madam Speaker, I move that the motion be put.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 9

Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Ms Lawrie
Ms Lee
Mr McCarthy
Ms Manison
Ms Moss
Mr Vowles
Ms Walker

Noes 13

Mr Barrett
Mr Chandler
Mr Conlan
Mr Elferink
Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Giles
Mr Higgins
Mr Kurrupuwu
Mrs Price
Ms Purick
Mr Styles
Mr Tollner
Mr Westra van Holthe

Motion negatived.

MOTION

Note Statement – Setting the Agenda for the Year Ahead

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr HIGGINS (Sport and Recreation): Madam Speaker, there is the common quote:

I don't know much about art, but I know what I like.

However you feel about the arts, culture and museums it is an important area in our community, if not for our souls then certainly the quality of our lives.

Last week the Chief Minister outlined the wonderful initiative of Festivals NT and the Department of Arts and Museums working in partnership to develop Territory Day events for 2015. The department is also focused on creating opportunities for people to create, participate and showcase arts and culture, and develop and provide access to collection and cultural facilities.

Through the Northern Territory Arts Grants Program the government supports growth and development of the arts and cultural sectors, and community access and participation in arts and culture for the economic, social and cultural benefit of the NT. In 2014-15 funding of about \$3.5m is provided to 21 non-profit art organisations to deliver arts programs and services across all regions from the Darwin Entertainment Centre to Indigenous visual arts and craft peak bodies such as the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists in Darwin; Desart in Alice Springs; and Barkly Regional Arts in Tennant Creek.

In 2014-15 strategic investments in regional infrastructure include the Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre in Katherine, which receives funding of \$500 000 per annum 2012-13

to 2014-15 to deliver arts programs, exhibitions, performances, festivals and events for the Katherine region.

In 2014-15 the Territory government will invest \$1.1m in strategic arts and cultural events and initiatives, including the National Indigenous Music Awards delivered by MusicNT, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair and the Desert Mob MarketPlace, which celebrates the national significance of Indigenous arts in the Northern Territory and provides employment and develops new art markets and audiences for Indigenous musicians and visual arts and crafts practitioners. Through the grants program this government is supporting the arts and helping local Territory artists realise their artistic goals, and will continue to do so.

There are also grants through Screen Territory which are designed to stimulate industry and professional development and screen production in the Northern Territory.

In partnership with Screen Australia, Screen Territory runs two initiatives for practitioners. The Low Means Low workshop and IGLOW lab provide practitioners with the knowledge, skills, mentoring and framework for conceiving and writing a low-budget feature film. The introduction of factual filmmaking and the REALISATOR lab provide practitioners with up-to-date and relevant commissioning information from broadcasters.

Other important areas under Arts and Museums are the Northern Territory Library and NT Archives Service. The library collects, grows and energises the knowledge of the Northern Territory for current and future generations. It has produced some wonderful displays and maintains an online database called Territory ANZACs containing personal stories of the Territory's own soldiers, and providing funding and professional support for a network of public libraries throughout the Territory.

NT Archives Service is also a great service which, among its many projects, will this year offer research seminars that will draw on and showcase the rich documentary and cultural heritage of the NT from archives collected on World War I. These two magnificent services and resources will continue to be supplied and nurtured by the government.

I do not need to rave on about the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory or the Araluen Cultural Precinct. Both these fantastic operations offer first-class exhibitions, arts and cultural events and continue to attract new visitors and audiences. They are well loved by Territorians, and rightly so. Both have plans for new events

and new exhibitions, with exciting and important projects coming our way this year.

I support the Chief Minister, not just because he is our elected boss, but has the direction of this government under his leadership. A lot of work is occurring and a lot of positive progress is being made.

I believe Territorians have a lot to contribute and we are listening. We are making it easy to access first-class sporting, arts and cultural events, and easier to access generous grants programs. Our environmental assessment framework ensures proposals which may impact on the environment are appropriately assessed, impacts on the environment are avoided and mitigated to the extent possible in the design phase, and we are encouraging a greener approach from business. We have priorities, direction and are delivering and getting on with the job.

Debate suspended.

TABLED PAPERS

Travel Reports of the Members for Greatorex and Fannie Bay

Madam SPEAKER: I table two travel reports from the members for Greatorex and Fannie Bay pursuant to paragraph 4.12 of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HIGGINS (Sport and Recreation): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mrs PRICE (Stuart): Madam Speaker, during last night's adjournment speech, the member for Barkly read into *Hansard* an e-mail regarding my decision to place Litchfield Council under management. I am confused, as most likely everyone else is, because only a few weeks ago the member for Barkly was calling for that to happen.

I will address the member's questions now. First question: Why was the council put under administration and the mayor suspended? At council meetings a number of items were being laid on the table rather than considered by the council. The mayor was unable to do his job as he was issued a trespass notice and was unable to attend the council offices. There were allegations of bullying, constant negative media, and the reputation of Litchfield Council and local government was severely damaged. The council had reached a crisis point where the mayor was told it would be unlawful for him to attend council meetings. The mayor was properly elected by the whole electorate of the council area. Preventing

the mayor's participation – not in keeping with what the electorate had voted for – had prevented the mayor from performing his required duties under the *Local Government Act*.

The decision to suspend was not taken lightly. My department had provided assistance to the mayor and elected members, including mediation, but none of the interventions were successful. It was clear after all attempts at assistance by LGANT and the department had been exhausted there would be no easy solution to the impasse.

Council members could not specify how their actions were assisting the community, nor how the impasse could be resolved while respecting the wishes of the electorate.

Second question: no allegations have been made against the four elected members representing the four Litchfield Council wards so why have they been suspended? The council, as a whole, was dysfunctional. Under the scheme of the *Local Government Act*, the option available to a minister in circumstances where serious deficiencies have been identified in the conduct of a council's affairs is to place the council under official management. There is no option to suspend some council members and not others. The whole council takes responsibility for council affairs collectively. The act provides that when a council is placed under official management all members of the council are suspended.

Third question: why does the appointed administrator have the dual role of investigation and administration? Why are these not two distinct roles? There is no need to have two different people take on the role of official manager and investigator. In fact, there are benefits of having the same person across all the issues council faces and the legislation specifically provides for this. The appointed manager is aware of the distinct roles.

Fourth question: why was an independent administrator not appointed to assist the elected councillors to continue their business on behalf of the people who voted for them and to represent their interests? The appointed official manager is highly experienced in local government matters. As far as his managerial role is concerned, he will report directly to me as the minister. The legislation requires that all council members must be suspended at the time the official manager is appointed. It is not the role of the official manager to support council members. His role is to get the council functioning properly and allow decision-making to continue.

The council exists for the benefit of the residents of Litchfield not the council members. Now is the time budgets need to be set and the process of

managing the council's finances and other matters should not be compromised by the inability of council members to resolve their issues. The basic requirements of a local government code of conduct include that all council members must act in the best interests of the municipality. It was clear the dysfunction was not in the best interests of the people of Litchfield.

Fifth question: why was the local government disciplinary committee, a group set up for this role, not allowed to consider all the available evidence and investigate complaints? A complaint was made by council members and the CEO to the disciplinary committee. The disciplinary committee process was not fettered in any way. The disciplinary committee received complaints and followed everything required of it under the legislation to consider the complaints before it. The committee came to its own conclusions on the evidence provided and dismissed the complaint. There is an appeal process under the legislation if parties to a matter are dissatisfied. The finding of the committee does not prevent any further complaint from being lodged. The bottom line is if a complaint is made to the disciplinary committee it must be accompanied with sufficient evidence to support it.

Sixth question: \$12m was stripped from the council to build a national championships swimming pool and \$2m taken from the Freds Pass committee board. The previous government intended to build a swimming pool at Litchfield but a site was never agreed on. It seems there was never a final agreement about many things to do with the pool. In relation to Freds Pass, that was also under the watch of the previous government. I am informed a project was commenced but could not be completed. In circumstances where the money cannot be expended on the intended purpose it must be returned. My information is the funding was for operational purposes and a variety of infrastructure upgrades and was to be managed by the board of trustees. A total of \$495 000 was paid from my department and has not been acquitted to date.

Seventh question: local people are concerned about any government plans to change the boundaries of Litchfield municipality. This is not the time to be weakening the voice of residents' elected representatives.

Suspension of council members had nothing to do with boundary considerations. The suspension was only in consideration of the people of Litchfield so their council dysfunction did not interfere with the making of important decisions and the delivery of services. The manager will report back to me regarding the dysfunction of the council and make recommendations. I do not know what those recommendations will be. A

copy of the report by the manager and his recommendations will be provided to the suspended members, and they will be given a proper opportunity to respond and make their own comments on issues and recommendations. When I receive these submissions I will decide whether the council members should be reinstated or there should be a general election.

Final question: on behalf of the concerned residents of the Litchfield Council area we call on the Minister for Local Government and Community Services to come clean on what is happening – they are his favourite words – and answer the questions and show more support for the four elected local government representatives cast aside as a consequence of her actions.

Excuse me! It is my role to ensure the people of Litchfield are being properly served by their council. In this case, it was apparent the council members were not able to work appropriately with the mayor and vice versa. I will make no further comment on that at this point. The report of the official manager and investigator will be helpful in this regard.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear: the elected members are there to serve the best interests of the council.

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness I speak about a beloved constituent who recently passed away. Mrs Radhidevi Damayanti Conde, known affectionately to most as Devi or Dham, passed away suddenly on 13 January far too early in her life.

Devi was the beloved wife of Barry for 34½ years, and the cherished mother and best friend of Samantha. She was a beloved sister to Rama, Ananda, Leela, Venu, Radha, Savi and Nalini.

Devi was a passionate and dedicated member of the Darwin Baptist Church community, and in the Wanguri electorate Devi was loved as a member of our community. She was known and adored by so many people around Darwin.

I am fast finding one of the privileges of being a member of parliament is the opportunity to meet people you may otherwise never cross paths with. You have the good fortune to meet amazing people who have quite an impact on you. Devi stole my heart the moment I met her. I adored the lady. I met her while doorknocking in Leanyer on a stifling hot build-up day during the Wanguri by-election in February 2013. I was with Chris Grace, who is now my electorate officer, and had finished doorknocking my side of the street and noticed Chris was missing. I looked around, called out and started to wonder if he had taken

off to another street. I heard some loud voices from inside a house and realised one was Chris so I went straight to the door to see how things were going. After hearing Chris and the other person speaking loudly my first instinct was things were not going too well and I had better rescue him.

How wrong I was. I knocked on the door and met Devi for the first time. She welcomed me into her house for a cold drink and to talk politics. Once we got chatting I could see why the conversation was so loud. Chris and I had the good fortune to meet one of our larger-than-life constituents who had passion, intelligence, a wonderful sense of humour and who was a straight talker. That was our Devi. We quickly discovered what a warm heart she had, as well as a deep love for her family and her faith. We fell in love with her. I loved speaking to her when I saw her at the shops or my office.

The second time I doorknocked her I found out what a great cook she was. I sat down for a drink of water and was given my choice of lemon meringue pie or pumpkin pie. I did not taste one of her famous curries, which I was hoping would be in store next time I knocked on her door.

As well as her wonderful sense of humour and warm heart, it was Devi's great mind for reading politics and people I really appreciated as well. Her analysis of what was happening in the world of politics was always spot on. She was frank in her views and her predictions were generally pretty accurate. She was a wonderful support to me and my team of Chris and Jenny, and we greatly appreciated it. I loved the times I had with her and wish I had more.

The last time I saw her was at my Christmas drinks. I am so grateful I had those last few moments with her and those smiles. I really adored her.

After her passing it was very clear how far and wide Devi's friendship spread throughout the community and the love many people had for her. There was a big turnout at her funeral and her beloved husband Barry, and her daughter Samantha, delivered the eulogy. I would like to put on the record some of their words celebrating Devi's life:

Devi was a wonderful woman who truly thrived and blossomed in Darwin. I am privileged to have her as my mother, and dad to have her as his wife.

Devi's loves are God, her family, cooking and hospitality to friends, gardening and tending to her orchids and Sam's dog Phoebe, although Pastor Mal cheekily

wonders whether Phoebe might be priority 101. We'll give you some of Devi's highlights since she came to Darwin 34 years ago.

Devi's story for us starts when she answered an advert for a Christian lady to rent a room in a round house (with a swimming pool in the centre!). The landlady asked Devi, 'Are you a Christian?' and elaborates, 'Are you born again?' To which Devi asks, 'What's this born again business?' Anyway, Devi's new landlady takes her along to church the next Sunday, 10 June 1979 at New Life Centre, Darwin. Devi hears the good news of Jesus Christ the saviour for the first time preached by Aboriginal evangelist Peter Morgan. Since that time Devi has been an advocate for being born again to experience the newness of life in Christ. 1979 was a watershed year.

Devi and I were involved with the church youth group. I thought Devi was quite a dish. So once I found out that she loved fresh bread I courted her with many loaves of bread. We went on an outreach trip to southwest Western Australia and got to know each other better. This led to being engaged on 14 February and being married on 28 June 1980.

Although Devi worked at many jobs in Darwin, she was a chef/cook at Nungalinya College, did night fill just before marriage and at Nungalinya College she worked with Debbie Graham, nee Listing. She worked in a crèche with Debbie's sister, Leah Kats, nee Listing. When the crèche closed down a neighbour made the alterations so that Devi and Leah could keep on minding the neighbour's daughter at our home.

One of the great peaks of Devi's life was becoming a mother when Samantha was born on 5 January 1988. Devi was always by Samantha's side going to preschool, helping out at school, visiting her in high school and keeping in constant touch when Samantha went to Curtin University in Perth.

Because of Devi's connection with Indonesia and Medan, she ministered through hospitality to young ministers from Kupang. This led to us travelling to Kupang for a pastor's daughter's wedding. Unbeknown to us, the visiting preacher from Flores spoke on the same bible passage that we spoke on – Ephesians 2:10. That could only be God! Devi was so

proud when Samantha, only six years old, sung an item at the wedding.

A highlight was when Devi and Barry led a mission trip on a two-week preaching tour of Soe and Kupang in 1997. When we returned to Darwin Devi spent time encouraging a pastor in Darwin from her birth town of Medan until the time came when he was being sent back to Indonesia. God performed a feat which allowed the pastor and his wife, Salomo and Suasana Bangun to stay in Darwin, and over 15 years later the Philadelphia Indonesia Uniting Church is still flourishing, a tribute to Devi's encouraging spirit and us working as a team.

In 2001 we had the privilege of travelling to India and visiting Devi's father in a village near Vellore in south India. Devi had the honour of praying with her father for a closer walk with the Lord.

In 2012 Devi and Samantha travelled to Hawaii to celebrate Mahiban and Suji Thomas' son Nihal on the occasion of his wedding to Sarah. Devi just loved the wedding and Hawaii and talked about taking us back to Hawaii as a family.

Our last trip as a family was in 2013 for the wedding of Radha and Saro's daughter Arathi to Sylvain in a castle above Nice in the French Riviera. We even stayed in the castle for three nights – such beautiful memories.

Devi was chosen by Mahiban to set up a new chapter of the Friends of Vellore (Christian Medical College) in Darwin in 2013. Devi was recommended to work as a volunteer consumer consultant in the team with Pat O'Brien, Michelle Peters and Sylvia Treacy to work towards accreditation of the Darwin Private Hospital. It is significant that their work led to the accreditation of Darwin Private Hospital before the end of 2014.

John 10:10 summarised Devi's life – she was living the life Jesus purchased for her to the full. Some of us start off with a fervent love for Jesus. Devi entered Glory pursuing after God who was pursuing her.

Thank you, Barry and Sam, for sharing those words of her life and sharing the eulogy so we could place memories of Devi on the record.

We have lost a wonderful Territorian and, in the words of Barry and Samantha, a beautiful, loving, kind and generous woman full of hospitality.

Devi, we will miss you. We thank you for all the love and generosity you gave during your life, and our sincerest and deepest condolences to Barry, Samantha and all those who were fortunate to have Devi in their lives. We have lost a wonderful person.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, tonight I pay tribute to one of the Territory's finest gentlemen, a well-travelled man and friend to many, Mr Bill Daw Sr. Sadly, Bill passed away in Katherine on 6 February this year.

Bill was a great man and a pioneer of the Northern Territory cattle industry. He was born in Mount Barker in 1935. In 1938, at the age of three, Bill and his family travelled on the SS *Morella* from Melbourne to Darwin. Bill's father, George, had been seconded to Darwin as a carpenter to work on an army aerodrome and was also responsible for building the administration block at Bagot Reserve. This move was short lived. After the bombing of Darwin, Bill's father decided it was too dangerous in the Territory and moved the family back down south.

At that time Bill befriended a man named Tom Sullivan and became interested in horses, as Tom had racehorses on his property. At age 12, Bill went to work for Tom droving cattle in South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. That was at the age of 12, when it was not fashionable or necessary to have completed all years in school. You were still able to get a job and make a difference.

It was Tom who bought Bill his first set of R.M. Williams boots and hat. After many trips and at the age of 14 Bill was left in Camooweal, just across the Territory border in Queensland, in charge of Tom's horses and six men. Not bad for a 14-year old being in charge of all the horses and six men.

He then met a bloke called Fred Marton, who owned Florina Station on the Daly River. Fred would later become Bill's mentor. Fred offered Bill a position at Florina Station and during this time Bill learnt bush skills, survival skills, cattle sense and how to ride any horse that came into the yard.

Bill also became friends with many of the local Indigenous people and was quick to learn their culture. He was quickly considered an expert hunter and spearman who knew all of the stories of the region passed down by his Indigenous friends. Bill was given the name *Jumpinjina*, which means brother.

In 1958 Bill met his wife, Linda Woods, at Edithvale station on the banks of the Edith River where Linda lived with her parents and 11 siblings.

Bill and Linda were married in July 1962 at the old Church of England in Katherine. After the birth of their first child Warren in 1963, Bill was asked to run the stock camp at Pigeon Hole Station on Victoria River Downs Station.

He was one of the first cattlemen in the Northern Territory to use helicopters to muster cattle. Bill then went to work for the Hooker Pastoral Company, where he was given the position of manager at Carlton station in the Kimberley. He later also took up a position at Rosewood station.

In 1980, when Florina Station went up for sale, Bill and Linda used their hard-earned savings, along with some help from the bank, to make the property their own. Bill went into the business of wild bulls, which he sold to the American hamburger market and also Katherine meatworks.

In 1982 Bill was offered a price for Florina Station he could not refuse and ended up selling the property, but the decision would always haunt him. I remember speaking to Bill when he was in Katherine Hospital not long before he passed away. We talked about Florina Station and his regrets in selling; it was a place he really loved.

Bill and Linda then travelled around Australia before purchasing a house in Katherine. In 1988 Bill and Linda went to Warburton community in the desert between Uluru and Kalbarrie where they set up a roadhouse, motel and shop. They stayed there until 1996, before moving north and taking up a position at Binjari community about 15 km west of Katherine. Bill and Linda set up a successful shop and worked there until 2004. After Binjari Bill finally retired and spent much time with his beloved family.

Bill is survived by his wife Linda, his four children, 13 grandchildren, seven adopted grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Bill's son William, who I count among my personal friends, said he was a father, mentor, best friend and good mate. His best mate of 56 years, Dave Watts, said he was the man to ride the river with. Together they rode the Katherine River, the Daly River, the Flora River and all the rivers in between.

Dave remembers Bill as the best bull thrower he has ever seen, and the man he would back against anyone. Dave says one of Bill's most important legacies was his treatment of Aboriginal people who worked for him, treating them with kindness and respect, and in return he received unwavering loyalty.

With this in mind, I ask Territorians to tip their hats tonight and pay tribute to this true Territorian, Bill Daw senior. He was a long-time Territorian, a long-time Katherine resident, a long-time constituent and a friend to many people in

Katherine. If you ever wanted to catch up Bill all you had to do on a Friday afternoon was pop down to the golfie and you would find him out the back having a beer.

Bill was a man of great compassion who understood the bush and was strongly opinionated. I remember having a number of discussions with Bill where he would fairly and squarely tell me exactly what he thought about what was happening in all manner of things, including politics. I was privileged to speak with Bill on a number of topics and take his advice on the issues we covered.

May Bill's memory live on. I pass my condolences to his family, his children and the generations below. He was a good man and will be missed. The Katherine community is poorer for having lost Bill. That said, the Northern Territory is enriched by having had Bill live here for so many years and contribute in the way he did. May he rest in peace.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Madam Speaker, tonight I speak about the commercial passenger vehicle reform the CLP is conducting at the moment. The CLP is not listening to the industry. There have been three ministers in three months and it seems destined to repeat the failures of the past on ideological grounds. A consultation process over the Christmas period – a small window for debate on such significant reform – is not a genuine process. The then Transport minister claimed in his media release:

Interim results show there is overwhelming support from both industry and passengers to remove the existing cap ...

I put on the record some of the comments from the NT Taxi Council and the drivers' submission to the review:

The Taxi Council supports regulation of the taxi industry and identifies that the Northern Territory government has a role to play in ensuring adequate resourcing to provide effective oversight and regulation.

The council supports the objectives to provide a quality service and initiatives to improve service levels.

The council would like to be consulted on the final recommendations of this review and an implementation timetable.

On removing the current cap on taxi numbers in Darwin and Alice Springs, a position that is not supported by the Taxi Council, the submission says:

Any steps taken by the government to alter the current cap arrangements for taxi licences should not be undertaken before other recommendations are implemented, particularly those concerning safety. There are potential fatigue management issues outlined in this response, and we believe that government has a duty of care to ensure that drivers do not pose a risk to themselves and others by driving longer hours than is safe.

The NT Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Review paper is also silent on whether an industry impact assessment has been undertaken or compensation considered for taxi operators for any detrimental financial impacts associated with deregulation and lifting of the taxi cap. By comparison, in 1998 the Northern Territory government provided \$27.3m in compensation.

Lessee operators have invested significant amounts into their businesses and face hardship if the government allows an unlimited number of taxis on the road. Fleet operators in particular have outlaid considerable amounts to buy their businesses as going concerns. They now have ongoing commitments, and were not prepared for this radical change, which has the potential to ruin them. An industry impact assessment must be the first priority before proceeding with the recommendations of the review.

In a letter to the then Transport minister the Taxi Council raised concerns:

Dear Minister

The Taxi Council has considered the NT Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Review and provides a comprehensive submission in response, attached here for your reference.

The council supports initiatives to develop and improve the industry, including bettering service standards; however, ensuring the viability of the industry into the future should underpin any reform.

The council is strongly of the view that lifting the taxi cap will have a significantly detrimental impact on the industry, and points to previous experiences of the impacts of deregulation in the Northern Territory, interstate and overseas as evidence of this view. The council does not support removing the cap on taxi licences.

The council is concerned about the simplicity of the review, in particular, that it reinforces the perception that increasing the number of taxis will improve access and service. This is not one of a shortage of taxis, but a shortage of drivers. Presently, the Northern Territory has the lowest taxi fares in Australia and the highest cost of living. This is an untenable situation for attracting drivers to the industry and fostering industry investment.

Our submission clearly articulates the broader issues in the industry that require attention. The council's submission identifies a range of priority actions, particularly those concerned with safety, as well as improving access to taxi plates, driver incomes, infrastructure needs and measures to cut red tape. The council strongly recommends they be addressed before any change to taxi numbers.

The reform measures outlined in the review documents should not be undertaken in isolation of industry input. To this end, the council recommends an industry consultative reference group be established.

We also recommend that an industry impact assessment be conducted to identify any detrimental effects the reform measures may have on existing operators and drivers, and determine what level of compensation should be paid to operators, in particular fleet operators, who have outlaid significant amounts to purchase and conduct their businesses.

I will read some comments from a driver's submission:

As a driver of some 20 years' experience and an owner/operator of eight years, and having discussed the pending review by the NTG of the CPV industry, I am appalled at the recommendations that have so far been put forward. For the current month, I am earning an average of \$22 per hour which for a driver equates to \$11 per hour. Bearing in mind my experience and a significant amount of private clients.

...

The taxi industry found that competition by taxi owners and operators to find drivers led to a lowering of standards. Prior to deregulation the majority of complaints related to the length of time it took for taxis to arrive for fares. Following deregulation the overwhelming majority of complaints

related to driver standards, safety and driver incomes.

...

In short, lifting the cap will introduce people that are ill-equipped, ill-trained and therefore incompetent to operate/drive taxis (as is there are not enough of them out there already). It will drive the incomes of drivers and operators below the poverty level.

I want to talk about the important issue of transport safety on our buses and taxis. The then minister, the second minister in three months, said he would not seek more funding for extra public safety transit officers. Then the Chief Minister claimed the NT public transport system is the safest in the nation. Chief Minister, when was the last time you caught a bus or spoke to anyone driving our buses or taxis?

The CLP is ignoring one of the major contributing factors: alcohol-fuelled violence. The CLP has turned on the tap after scrapping the Banned Drinker Register. People are following the grog to Darwin, public drunkenness is out of control and our bus drivers on the front line and our taxi drivers are being attacked, assaulted or threatened for doing their job.

We have had *NT News* articles titled, 'Driven to despair', 'Bus bash shame', 'Violent streak – crims target night cabbies', 'Suburbs' rock tossers create no go ghettos', 'Bus driver bashing outrage', 'Hit trying to protect passengers', 'Drivers considering taking taxis off the road', and 'Taxis the target of rock tossers'. These are all *NT News* headlines and something needs to be done. Approximately 70% of incidents on our buses occur away from public interchanges.

Assaults are up 20% since the CLP came to power. Our community is suffering and our public transport system is affected by the violence and rivers of grog. What is the CLP doing to tackle crime? What about the broken promise on extra police. This government has failed to detail the timing for delivery of all recommendations of the safety audit promised during the Casuarina by-election.

We must do everything we can to keep our bus drivers and taxi drivers safe. We must protect them while they are doing their job.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, today the opposition asked the minister for Police about the state of several inquiries. The minister made sure he did not answer the question by saying if he did it could affect the outcome. We were wondering what is happening to the judicial inquiry.

On 6 February the Chief Minister said in a media release:

There is agreement in Government that we do need to have a closer look at the Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme.

This should cover its administration, policies and procedures, as well as the Health Department and Police investigations into allegations of fraud by travel agents.

I am particularly concerned that Government's initial advice in terms of the scale of the alleged fraud is not tallying with current events.

Government received briefings from the outset that there appeared to be widespread misuse of the scheme involving potentially millions of dollars.

As a Government, we want to ensure that any mis-use is pursued properly and I know the inquiry I have proposed is the best way to do that.

An inquiry is always the best way of clearing the air in regard to rumours being circulated about politicians and maintaining public confidence.

We are in the process of appointing an inquiry head, which I hope will be a retired member of the judiciary from interstate.

I am consulting with my colleagues and seeking legal advice on the terms of reference.

I will also seek to discuss this with the Opposition Whip, Michael Gunner, and with the Independent Member for Nelson, Gerry Wood.

I hope to be able to say more on these matters mid next week.

I do not recall the Chief Minister saying anything further. Could the government update us on that inquiry? I know other inquiries are under way, but we need this one to make sure nothing untoward has occurred between politicians, police and whoever. There is an opportunity to clear the air on some of the matters raised in the media by various people, including the Chief Minister, who apologised for one of his statements.

This judicial inquiry needs to go further than just the Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme, and could deal with other issues surrounding the matter. Could the Chief Minister update

parliament on that inquiry? I cannot speak for the Opposition Whip, but no one has spoken to me about details of the inquiry. It would be good to hear from the Chief Minister.

I still feel some members of government do not understand how people feel. I suggest all government members say who they support so we get a clear indication of whether the Chief Minister has the full support of his team, as he calls it. Some people ridiculed that idea when they spoke in debate tonight. I feel they are at a different level than the people and are not in touch with how people feel. They had an opportunity tonight to mend some fences and show they were willing to eat a bit of humble pie and give people the impression, if nothing else, they have decided working for Territorians is more important than for themselves. I did not gain that impression tonight, which is disappointing.

Only time will tell, but it will be difficult for me to hear one of the nine – I call them the nine – say they completely support the Chief Minister. Until I am convinced they had a Damascus moment about who should be leader I will find it difficult to believe we have a united government. It is obvious one member definitely does not support the Chief Minister, but I would like to know where the others who voted against the Chief Minister stand now.

People are confused and find it difficult to believe this is happening in the Northern Territory, where we have had stable government on both sides for many years. They find this a bit hard to take. This is not Territorian. We have had our ups and downs with change of leaders, but have not seen anything as crazy as what is happening at the moment.

The CLP had its chance tonight to tell people where it is heading and who it supports as Chief Minister. We could have moved on from there knowing where loyalties lie. People say we voted as a block against the no confidence motion yesterday. Yes, but we only heard two people speak. About four spoke tonight and some of those already supported the Chief Minister.

There was an opportunity to clear the air tonight. Unfortunately, that has not happened and it will leave a cloud of uncertainty over the future of this government.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.