

Madam Speaker Aagaard took the Chair at 10 am.

**STATEMENT BY SPEAKER
Retirement of Member for Araluen**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, following the announcement of the member for Araluen's retirement in a couple of weeks, I advise that, as is customary, we will have valedictory adjournment speeches tonight, which will take precedence over other adjournment speeches.

Member for Araluen, I take this opportunity to wish you all the best, and that your health and future is wonderful for you.

Members: Hear, hear!

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise you of the presence in the gallery of Year 7 Kormilda College students accompanied by Mrs Roseanna Di Cesare and Mr Michael Grant. On behalf of honourable members, I extend to you a very warm welcome.

**PENALTIES AMENDMENT (JUSTICE AND
TREASURY LEGISLATION) BILL
(Serial 124)**

Bill presented and read a first time.

Ms LAWRIE (Justice and Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The Penalties Amendment (Justice and Treasury Legislation) Bill 2010 continues the process of converting penalties in all NT legislation from dollar amounts to penalty units. The *Justice Legislation Amendment (Penalties) Act 2010* converted most other Department of Justice penalties. That act commenced on 1 July 2010.

The purpose of this bill is to amend penalty provisions in the remainder of the acts administered by the Department of Justice, and most of the acts administered by NT Treasury. The *Justice Legislation Amendment (Penalties) Act 2010* provided for penalty increases that were no more than 15% at the time the bill was introduced. This bill maintains that principle; however, the conversion factors have changed slightly owing to the fact that a penalty unit is now worth \$133 compared to \$130 at the time of the introduction of the earlier bill. The result is that when converting dollar amounts to penalty units, in some cases the number of penalty units is lower than it would be had the value of \$130 been used. As outlined in my speech to the House on

25 February 2010, the government has chosen a conservative approach to penalty increases, ensuring a limit of 15%. The 15% increase represents a rounded down equivalent of the CPI increase in value for the penalty unit from 2001, when it was set at \$110, to \$130 set in 2009.

The rules for applying the 15% increase and subsequent conversion to penalty units are the same as for the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Penalties) Act*. For penalties of a significant size, the process is:

- current monetary penalty is increased by 15%;
- this amount is converted to the nearest whole number of penalty units. The outcome is then rounded down to the nearest five penalty units.

Where rounding down to the nearest five penalty units would result in an actual decrease in the penalty, the following principles were applied:

- first, the penalty was rounded down to the nearest whole penalty unit that was closest to, but not more than, the 15% increase value. For example, the current penalty of \$2000 increased by 15% (\$2300) becomes 17 penalty units (\$2261);
- second, where the rounding to the nearest whole number would result in an actual decrease in penalty, the penalty was rounded to the closest 0.5 of a penalty unit. For example, the current penalty of \$300 increased by 15% (\$345) becomes 2.5 penalty units (\$332.50) (see amended section 39(3)(b) of the *Dangerous Goods Act* and;
- third, where the penalty rounded to the nearest 0.5 of a penalty unit would result in an actual decrease in penalty, the penalty was rounded to the nearest one-tenth of a penalty unit, but greater than 0.5 of a penalty unit. For example, the current penalty of \$400 increased by 15% (\$460) becomes 3.4 of a penalty unit (\$452.20) (see section 4 of the *Auctioneers Act*).

In relation to the amendment of penalties in Northern Territory Treasury acts, it has been decided not to amend acts that are either to be repealed or to be amended in some other way. The *Debits Tax Act*, *Energy Resource Consumption Levy Act*, *Energy Resource Consumption Levy (Waiver of Levy) Act*, the *Financial Institutions Duty Act* and the *Field*

Subsidies Act are not to be amended by this bill because it is intended they will be repealed.

The *Territory Insurance Office Act* will not be amended by this bill because another bill is intended to deal with the penalties in that act. Similarly, the *Liquor Act*, a Justice act, is not included because that act is undergoing review.

This bill provides for the conversion of the remaining 20 Department of Justice and 10 NT Treasury acts and regulations. The balance of remaining NT acts is expected to be reviewed by mid-2011.

I note this approach in bringing in penalty units does not solve all penalty related problems. For example, it does not fix differentials across a statute book concerning like offences. Differences in specific offences will be individually reviewed.

Madam Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members and I table a copy of the explanatory statement.

Debate adjourned.

The CLERK: Northern Territory Government Response to the Second Report of the Council of Territory Cooperation – resumption of debate on the motion that the Assembly take note of the report and statement ...

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: I think it is the youth justice.

Ms LAWRIE: There seems to be some confusion because we were expecting Order of the Day No 1 relating to the Youth Justice Amendment Bill to be brought on.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, that is right.

Mr Conlan: Good on you, Bungles, excelling at your job again.

Dr Burns: You don't even know how it works, do you?

Mr Conlan: The Leader of Government Business, doing a great job.

YOUTH JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 120)

Continued from 10 August 2010.

Ms CARNEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, I had thought to paraphrase and/or quote much of the minister's speech, but there is a certain

pointlessness to that. I can say the very interesting problems identified which have caused this amendment, on my reading and on the advice of others, have been adequately addressed by this bill and the addition of further amendments today.

I know people do not find law especially interesting and, like the parliament at times, it is not. However, this has been a terribly interesting case and the ramifications were considerable. I am very grateful very clever people have spent their time and energy working on this, and I thank them.

One of my concerns was the previous decisions made in the Youth Justice Court may not have been valid and there may have been a lawyer prepared to chance his or her arm to go to the Supreme Court and undo previous sentences. I raised that in the briefing and it became clear to me they would not or should not. I am satisfied on the basis of advice I have received from advisors and knowing the individuals who have also assisted in this - as I say, very clever people - and, on that basis, my colleagues and I consent. We certainly would not oppose this change.

I could be critical of the way the legislation was drafted, but that would be really disingenuous of me because we all missed it and it took lawyers four years to pick it up. These things happen, so I will not even be able to say this is an 'oops' bill - a favourite expression I have used over the years. I am happy to concede it was not that.

Thank you to one and all. I hope this solves the problem and young people in the Territory get a fair deal, as they are entitled to do, from our courts, and that our justice system gets the balance right between imposing penalties and sentences, but also expressing compassion. So, thank you one and all.

Ms LAWRIE (Justice and Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, when the *Youth Justice Act* was debated I spoke in support of that legislation as the then Minister for Family and Children's Services. I may now be speaking as the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General but I will reiterate what I said on that day. Unfortunately, children and young people sometimes commit crimes and we must hold them accountable for their actions while putting in place the support and intervention to make sure they do not do it again.

The Youth Justice Bill provides a good balance between personal accountability and support. These amendments restore this balance, which was disrupted by a recent decision of the Supreme Court. I thank the opposition for their understanding and their support of this matter.

We obviously had to move as swiftly as we could to ensure we restored the balance and the intent of the *Youth Justice Act*, which was essentially to allow youth matters to be heard in the Youth Justice Court, rather than all of the matters being dealt with in the Supreme Court. It arose because, on 25 June of this year, the Full Court of the Northern Territory Supreme Court handed down its decision in the matter of *Howie* against Youth Justice Court and others, referred to as *Howie*.

What did this decision do exactly? In a nutshell, the Supreme Court ruled that the Youth Justice Court did not have the jurisdiction to hear certain matters. Prior to this decision, if a young person was charged with a serious indictable offence, there were three options:

1. if the offence was of the lower end of the scale of offending, a good example is the charge of a burglary at night where a young person may have gone into someone's yard and taken a drink from their fridge on the veranda, the Youth Justice Court would deal with the offence;
2. if the offence was considered to be serious, the Youth Justice Court could decide to send the matter to the Supreme Court before a jury trial; or
3. a young person themselves could elect to have their matter dealt with by jury trial in the Supreme Court.

The Youth Justice Court, in handing out penalties, is limited to a maximum gaol sentence of two years. The Supreme Court has no such limit and the penalty for each offence is determined in the same way for young people as it is for adults. As a result of the decision of the court, these three options were no longer available and all serious indictable matters must be dealt with by jury trial in the Supreme Court.

What is a serious indictable offence? A serious indictable offence is generally one where the maximum penalty is greater than 10 years. It includes assault; causing serious harm; aggravated recklessly endangering life; sexual intercourse with a child under 16; robbery; burglary at night time; and a number of drug offences. This decision meant there was no longer any discretion.

There are cases which involve a serious indictable offence that are on the lower end of the scale of offending, and the Youth Justice Court needs to have the discretion to decide how to deal with such offences. As I have already indicated, a good example of offending on the lower end of the

scale is the charge of burglary at night, where a young person may have gone into someone's yard and taken a drink from their fridge on the veranda. This sort of offending is a perfect and simplistic example of offending which a magistrate should be able to consider, to look at the facts and decide they have the appropriate powers to deal with the matter, that they can determine an appropriate sentence within their powers.

It is entirely appropriate for the Youth Justice Court to deal with youth offences and to be able to decide what is so serious as to warrant a Supreme Court jury trial. This amendment will ensure that the original intention of the *Youth Justice Act* is upheld and youth offences are generally heard within the jurisdiction of the youth court, unless they are so serious as to warrant a Supreme Court trial by jury.

It is generally accepted that it is not appropriate for all young people charged with such offences to be subjected to a jury trial in the Supreme Court, and that it is appropriate for a Youth Justice Court to be able to consider the offending and make a decision about such things.

The amendment will also be retrospective to ensure the validity of previous judgments. The decision in *Howie* specifically contemplated government taking such action. This approach is supported by the magistrates, the Department of Health and Families, the Department of Justice, the DPP, the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission, and NAAJA. It is supported by the prosecutors and the defence lawyers.

My department does not have administrative responsibility for the *Youth Justice Act*, however, the lawyers within the Department of Justice do have expertise in matters concerning the courts and decisions of the court. I asked the Department of Justice to take the lead and work with the Department of Health and Families to rectify the problem created by the Supreme Court decision. So, we have before us some legislative amendments to cure this issue; we will restore the balance.

Serious crimes by young people will have serious consequences but we have restored the flexibility so the magistrates in the Youth Justice Court can choose to deal with a matter within their court, or can choose to send a young person to the Supreme Court.

Let us not forget these amendments also retain the right of the young people themselves to elect to have their matter dealt with in the Supreme Court. We have taken assertive action; we have acted swiftly to fix this problem. The amendments before us today go to the issue of ensuring the young people themselves can elect

to have their matter dealt with in the Supreme Court, and those amendments will be dealt with in the committee stage amendments.

I put on the record my thanks to the member for Araluen for availing herself of the briefing, for very reasonably going through the issues, for not creating a political football of something which is a sensitive issue – the offending of young people in our society is an incredibly sensitive issue. Having the Supreme Court invalidate the intent of legislation is significant and had to be dealt with in a significant way by this government; we moved swiftly and did that in a fair and balanced way.

I sincerely thank the member for Araluen for showing integrity and understanding in the way the opposition has handled this matter to date. Her leadership of the opposition will be significantly missed as she retires from this parliament.

I also thank the member for Nelson who took an active interest in this matter; who also received a thorough briefing and who, I am advised by my officers at that briefing, had a significant number of questions to ask and took his parliamentary role very seriously.

Madam Speaker, as a government, we try to avoid at all costs bringing matters to this parliament on urgency. This is a matter we have dealt with on urgency but it took the cooperation of the opposition and the Independent member for Nelson to be able to deliver this matter and deal with it swiftly on urgency. As the Attorney-General, I sincerely thank them for their support.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on this bill and on some peripheral issues.

This is a sensitive matter which has been dealt with. It was a flaw identified in the original legislative instrument and, as the member for Araluen quite rightly pointed out, it was something which was missed by this House and missed by the criminal justice system for a period of several years. Nevertheless, it was a matter which needed to be attended to in a thorough and comprehensive fashion but, moreover, in a rational fashion, and that is what has occurred. I am supportive of this bill.

I take this opportunity to point out to members this is the last legislative instrument the member for Araluen will have carriage of in this House. I confess I was somewhat disappointed that it was on a matter of such delicacy because I would have loved to have seen a last flurry of her formidable skills. I have often watched her in this House and have been of a mind, when she had

finished with someone on the other side of the House, particularly a minister, that I had watched the member for Araluen essentially disembowel someone with a toothpick.

The professionalism the member for Araluen has brought to the role of shadow Attorney-General has been consistent and has resonated throughout this bill. Whilst I do not want to turn this speech into a valediction for the member for Araluen, I do want to, in this last bill she has carried through the House, take the opportunity to thank her for her professionalism and thank her for the enormous integrity she has brought to the portfolio. Whoever takes over the portfolio in the future on the opposition's behalf will be struggling to meet a benchmark set at a very high standard indeed.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I am not intending to say much on this bill. I received a very good briefing which explained the situation that needed to be rectified.

As the member for Port Darwin alluded to, when it comes to legal matters the member for Araluen leaves us for dead. When she debates these issues you know it is coming from someone who is committed to making the lives of Territorians better and who has the skills to devour legal matters. I remember her saying she loved this sort of legislation and I know she has the skills to analyse what is sometimes very difficult legislation for lay people like me. I know you had someone on this side of parliament who had the ability to test the government, especially on legal issues. Many of us do not have the skills to do that. I believe that is appreciated by both sides of parliament.

On this type of issue, her background enabled her to speak with far more depth and knowledge than I had and, I imagine, many in this House. That is one reason the House will be poorer because we need those skills in this House, and the member for Araluen certainly brought them to this place.

I support the changes; I understand their importance. We are dealing with a fairly sensitive issue when it comes to youth matters of justice. I received a note about the amendments today and they make sense as well.

Madam Speaker, I support both the bill and the amendments which are going through today.

Mr VATSKALIS (Child Protection): Madam Speaker, I am going to be brief as the Attorney-General has outlined the nitty-gritty of the bill.

I am very pleased the member for Araluen can have the final speech on something very important and very close to her heart: rehabilitating young people, not punishing young people. We have all been young; we have all made mistakes, some people more than others, some people bigger than others. It is pleasing to see her last speech is on something to benefit young people.

I feel privileged that the member for Araluen was my shadow. We have had many clashes in parliament, however I always believed the member for Araluen was a strong believer in child issues, and the minister can only be as good as his counterpart. Every time the member for Araluen said something I took notice; I had to go to the office and check legislation, and ask my advisors was she right and, if so, why are we not doing it?

I strongly believe the member for Araluen is one of the gifted members of this House and I am sorry she is leaving. I understand sometimes we have to make decisions. We were the class of 2001 and not many of us are left in this House. I believe by you leaving this House will be poorer. I hope your replacement will be as good as you, however, I doubt that. You have the talent, you have the will, and you have strength in your beliefs. I have been privileged to have you as my counterpart. I am sorry you are going but I will be in touch with you, especially when I want to discuss issues regarding children.

Thank you for your contribution not only to this bill, thank you for your contribution throughout this parliament. Thank you for giving me a hard time sometimes; it taught me much. I am looking forward to working with you in the future at a different level.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Madam CHAIR: Honourable members, the committee has before it the Youth Justice Amendment Bill 2010 (Serial 120), together with Schedule of Amendments No 46 circulated by the Minister for Child Protection, Mr Vatskalis.

Clauses 1 and 2, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr VATSKALIS: Madam Chair, I move amendment 46.1 standing in my name. This amendment amends clause 3 of the Youth Justice Amendment Bill 2010. The reason for the amendment is to make it abundantly clear a reference in the *Youth Justice Act* to the Youth Justice Court conducting a preliminary

examination means a magistrate delivers the charge by way of preliminary examination. The new definition of 'court' inserted in section 5 of the *Youth Justice Act* by this bill makes it clear that, if the context requires, when the word 'court' is used it includes a magistrate conducting a preliminary examination. The amendment extends the clarification, where the context requires, to the place in the act where the words 'Youth Justice Court' are used.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 6:

Mr VATSKALIS (by leave): Madam Chair, I move amendments 46.2 and 46.3 together. These amendments amend clause 6 of the bill. The reason for the amendments is to make it totally clear, regardless of whether a youth consents to summary jurisdiction for indictable offence, or elects summary jurisdiction in the course of preliminary examination, it is ultimately up to the court to decide whether it is appropriate to exercise summary jurisdiction. In other words, the decision of the court in this regard overrides the wishes of the youth.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 and 8, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 9:

Mr VATSKALIS: Madam Chair, I move amendment 46.4 standing in my name. This amends clause 9 of the bill. The amendment corrects a drafting error. Proposed section 224(5) includes a definition of 'declared charge' and 'exercise of jurisdiction'. The definition of 'exercise of jurisdiction' mistakenly refers to 'prescribed charge' rather than 'declared charge'. This amendment corrects that error.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill, by leave, taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill to be reported with amendments.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mr VATSKALIS (Child Protection): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

MOTION

Note Paper - Council of Territory Cooperation – Government Response to Second Report

Continued from 18 August 2010.

Dr BURNS (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I believe I had an extension of time.

Madam SPEAKER: You have seven minutes.

Dr BURNS: I have seven minutes. I was in the process of wrapping up previously. I am not sure exactly where I was in that process, but I will continue to sum up and then allow other speakers to speak on this very important report.

If I could comment before I get into the wrap up, regarding what happened before with a slight error in the announcement of the next item of business to be debated. The member for Greatorax, seizing on that, was trying to say that somehow there was some stuff-up in the Government Business. There has been no error in the listing of Government Business on this Notice Paper. The order of business is obvious and we are adhering to that.

I say to the member for Greatorax: learn how to read the Notice Paper that comes around. Moreover, it is indicative of the attitude of the member for Greatorax. He seems to bear some deep-seated grudge against me. I do not reflect that towards him; I do not feel any malice towards him. I do not know what his problem is and what is eating away inside him, but his problem can remain his problem and I bear no malice towards him. In fact, I feel sorry for him that he is eaten up so much by this inexplicable anger that rages on inside him. However, that is his problem. I digress, Madam Speaker.

This is a positive report, this is a positive process for the Northern Territory, and the Council of Territory Cooperation, a year on, is producing real results and achieving what it set out to do: to bring more transparency to the processes of government, and to allow a flow of information through the members of the CTC and the processes of the CTC.

I know it has been the subject of criticism. It was right at the beginning when the agreement was reached with the Independent member for Nelson, who remains fiercely independent.

I believe the whole process has moved on, and as I said yesterday, opposition members who are on the CTC are making very constructive contributions to it and seeing the value of having access to public servants, direct access in terms of the hearings and the flow of information, and being able to ask questions directly. Also, to visit many locations around the Territory and engage with communities, and that is what it is all about.

I responded, as I have to each and every one of the recommendations of the CTC. I know the response of government is probably not going to please the member for Nelson, none of them are going to please the member for Nelson or members opposite, but there is a significant number of recommendations that government has agreed too. That is positive. There will be issues that we agree to disagree on. As a minister in the government, in the processes of executive government there are many things we have to consider and many counterbalancing priorities and processes we have to weigh up and we have to come to conclusions. Some of them are very difficult conclusions and processes and policies, but I can assure this House, they are for the betterment of the Northern Territory.

Many of the recommendations centred on SIHIP. I have acknowledged on the floor of this House, yes, there have been problems with SIHIP, particularly from its inception. Those problems were identified by the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory. As the minister responsible, and receiving the report from the Auditor-General, I have endeavoured to address those issues to keep the department focused, which they are, on building in those processes around the ongoing program; particularly around the governance of the program, the review of the work, the costs, the roll-out of the program, to ensure this program, SIHIP, achieves what it set out to achieve, which is a benefit to the Northern Territory.

I have also flagged that I am prepared to look at further changes to SIHIP as it evolves, particularly around getting local organisations which have the capacity and the ability to carry out works, particularly refurbishment works, around SIHIP. These are the next logical steps. As I said yesterday, there are some locations where this work is going on, namely Nguiu and Groote Eylandt, and those will provide models for other locations across the Territory and other organisations across the Territory to become similarly involved.

Madam Speaker, I commend the report. I will be listening very attentively to what is said by all members as they contribute. I commend the report to this parliament.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I thank the government for providing a response to the second report of the Council of Territory Cooperation. I am still very much a believer that this council can do some good as a bipartisan council. Government policies, which have been announced by government and are being managed by government, need constant scrutiny because there are many statements made about how wonderful how some policies are, but in fact that is not necessarily the case. I see that as still being an important role for this council. In this report you will see the council has looked at other matters besides the standard SIHIP program, local government reform and *A Working Future*.

It has looked at a number of matters involving Power and Water and the Department of Justice which shows the power this council has to self refer is an important part of opening up the processes of government. It has had a quiet period recently, which was not to do with not wanting to do any work, but to do with not becoming involved in the federal election. People in communities will have mobile polling booths; there will be members of parliament running around doing what they do at this time of an election year; so, it was sensible not to burden members with matters of the CTC. After these sittings it is hoped we will again visit a number of communities and return to some communities, which we promised we would do, to see how things have been since we were there.

I will go through the report as I see it. There were 14 recommendations. My understanding from reading here, there were seven agreed to, we have 50%. There were six noted, so we might give that as somewhere between passed and not passed, and there is one the government has disagreed to, which is not surprising.

Recommendations 1 and 2 refer to the problems with off-specification gas and problems with the power at Weddell Power Station being shut down suddenly last year. The government has agreed to both of those matters and there have been reports written since then. I have read those reports and I may refer to them later as there is another issue which has been attached to this report which needs some comment.

The third recommendation is that the Minister for Essential Services and the Treasurer attend a CTC meeting to determine their involvement and level of knowledge of what transpired. The issue of whether ministers should attend CTC meetings has been debated and debated, and it will probably continue to be debated. I am on record saying we should not force a minister to come to CTC meetings. I would prefer it to be voluntary because we are trying to keep politics out of the CTC. If every time there was an issue we asked

the minister to attend we would move away from our function, which is to find out how the departments are managing the policies the government has put forward, what the issues are on the ground, and work through the nitty-gritty of the policies.

The case referred to is what involvement and knowledge the Minister for Essential Services and the Treasurer had in relation to the off-specification gas that was supplied. That is an interesting issue because it opens up debate in relation to the Estimates Committee. The Treasurer is right when she says there was plenty of opportunity to discuss this at the Estimates Committee. That is reasonable; I have said time and time again, if the minister cannot attend a CTC meeting then we should be ensuring we use parliament because that is the process we have of asking questions of those ministers and the Estimates Committee. The opportunity to ask the Treasurer, as the shareholding minister of Power and Water, was there for members at the Estimates Committee.

The issue to be clarified is what is the role of the Minister for Essential Services? Whilst I can argue we could question the Treasurer at estimates, the strange thing is we cannot question the Minister for Essential Services. It is an area which needs debate and discussion, and I am not going to say I have the answer for it here.

If you open up the budget papers you will see the minister's portfolios - you will see one which says Minister for Essential Services. I realise there is no budget line item, however it leaves you, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, wondering why have the title at all. If the argument is the Minister for Essential Services does not hold any budget responsibility then scrap that title and put the onus on Power and Water and say Power and Water is a government owned organisation and we question Power and Water in relation to matters of power and water. The strange thing is when the media want to talk about whether the substation at Casuarina blew up and what is going to happen, they will ring the Minister for Essential Services.

The area which needs to be clarified is who runs Power and Water? Is it the Minister for Essential Services, or is it Andrew Macrides as the CEO of Power and Water and the board? Should we be questioning the board at estimates - we had the acting chair of the board attend Estimates Committee.

Whilst I understand it would be good to have ministers volunteer to come to a CTC meeting - and I see no reason why, if they felt there were issues they could answer, they could not come - we still have the opportunity to ask the Treasurer

during parliament about those matters and also during the estimates. The unknown factor is what is the Minister for Essential Services? If it is not questionable why is it in the budget papers as a portfolio? When the media asks what is happening with the substation at Casuarina, should the minister say: 'Not my role; it is the role of the board; or the role of the CEO of Power and Water'?

That is an area which needs debate, not here today but in a broader context, to see how this all fits into the running of Power and Water.

The minister has noted recommendation 4. It is to do with crime statistics and what appeared to be an inconsistency between the statistics that came from Northern Territory Police Force and the Department of Justice. There were a number of reasons why those inconsistencies appeared to be there. The CTC said: 'For a better understanding of these statistics, it would be better if you could either bring these statistics together so they are consistent or, if you cannot do that, at least give an explanation why there is a difference'. The government has said:

In relation to reporting Domestic Violence related assault offences, Northern Territory Police and the Department of Justice agreed that in the future these statistics will only be released by the Department of Justice, thus eliminating the risk of any confusion.

I am not sure if that is the answer we were after; we still want to see what the other department has. It gives you a feeling only one department will be releasing statistics. The police will still be collecting statistics, I presume. I am not sure if that is saying the only official statistics will be from the Department of Justice. We were trying to say, if we are going to receive them and they are still going to be in a different format, at least give us some notations as to the reason why they do not match up. That is what we were about, so there could not be a misunderstanding when people were debating statistics. That is not quite what we were after and may need some clarification from the minister.

Recommendation 5 was to do with something raised during the CTC hearings about whether the period of time in which crime statistics were analysed was too small, especially where quarterly statistics are used for a small town, for example, Nhulunbuy. There could be two offences one quarter and four offences in the second quarter, and because of the small numbers there is a 100% increase in crime in Nhulunbuy. Sometimes, by having relatively small break-ups of the statistics, percentage-wise, you

can have a very high increase which does not reflect the reality of the situation.

It was a question about how the statistics are developed so you have a more accurate understanding, especially where you have small figures, of the changes in criminal behaviour. The government's response was:

Northern Territory Police and the Department of Justice are considering options to reduce the frequency at which these statistics are published, and to extend their scope of content. It is anticipated that a joint proposal will be presented for consideration of the respective ministers in July 2010.

Perhaps the minister in his response can report to us whether the joint proposal has been considered and approved.

Recommendation 6 says:

The Council recommends that the Northern Territory and Australian governments re-establish government offices in growth towns to prevent overloading shires and non government organisations.

It says here:

... the NTG will work in conjunction with the Commonwealth and local governments to plan the staged roll-out of government business centres in Territory Growth Towns ...

We will need to keep an eye on that to see if it happens because these recommendations are followed up by a response. One of the CTC's roles is to ensure that response happens; otherwise it is just a line on a piece of paper.

It is important to keep in mind there is another document, which is the Coordinator-General for Remote Services Report No 2. The Coordinator-General also agrees with this recommendation. In his report he mentions service delivery and talks about a case for government establishing a real presence in the bush. He is also critical of the number of government services which have been put on local government; in other words, using local government to be the agency for other government bureaucracies. It is important we take that burden off local government and allow them to do the job they are supposed to do, and put the burden back on the government to provide those services.

It is like my argument about whether you are going to take national broadband out to growth

towns. Some of them are only going to get 'sort of' national broadband. They will receive some service by satellite, it will not be the same services we have elsewhere. We are sending the message out to those communities that we are not going to give you quite the service as other communities. It is the same here. Are we going to give the same government services in those communities, so we are fair dinkum about growth towns? We are saying: 'Yes, we think you should receive the same services as in Katherine or Alice Springs, or Darwin'. The government has to show it is going to put its money where its mouth is and that it will actually happen. The CTC's role will be to continually monitor the changes and see what is happening, and I believe Bob Beadman, the Coordinator-General, will be looking at that as well.

Recommendation 7 talks about reducing the number of advisory boards and reference groups, which is a big issue in those communities. There has to be some rationale. You have communities of around 500 people - I do not know how many boards and advisory groups they have but it must just about drown people in bureaucratic processes, and you wonder whether people have a life. When the CTC visits communities it is very conscious it is an area we have to keep an eye on.

I am sure Bob Beadman mentions the same thing in either his first or second report, that we are developing a lifestyle of bureaucracy for many people; they have to go to a meeting here and a meeting there, and there will be someone coming out to visit them, and there will be someone else who wants them to come to town and have a joint meeting on something. You would not be surprised if people thought the only real job being promoted in some of these communities is meetings, and that is the only real job people have. It may not be so bad if people were paid for some of those meetings the government wants them to attend, but in many cases I am sure they are not paid and have to give up work.

It would be good if we could have meetings in the evening. Meetings, generally speaking, in my community, are held in the evening. There may be some planning meetings held during the day, because the people working on those meetings have to process all the work that has been done, but it is an area we need to be aware of.

If we can reduce the number of boards, and it may be the shire boards which become the focal point for much of the discussion, whether it is housing or health or whatever - they become the central body to do that. The advantage of doing that is to try to bring some ownership back into those communities - I seem to have gone backwards there, but anyway. I thought my time

was short, Madam Speaker, but I now feel like I am talking in a *Doctor Who* movie. I thank you for the extra time.

Madam SPEAKER: At the beginning you were supposed to be given 30 minutes but were given 20 minutes. I asked the Deputy Clerk to fix that.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, and thank you to the member for Port Darwin.

It is important that we, as the CTC, ask the questions: how many boards do you have in this community? Do you need that number of boards? Can we rationalise it? One of the disadvantages of local government reform, and I have heard it from people out there, they have lost the ownership of their own community - there are boards here and boards there. When they had a local government council, for better or worse, it may not have been the greatest - people have said they were dysfunctional; they were not all dysfunctional and I get annoyed when I hear all local government councils were dysfunctional. Yes, there were some bad councils, but what they lost was ownership when they changed over, and we need to replace that somehow. If that can be done by giving people back some real say in their own communities, that would be a positive thing. How it is done is open for discussion and open for debate, but it is important.

One of our local priests from St Mary's who had been to Santa Teresa recently said he felt people were despondent. He felt people were despondent because they do not feel like they own the place anymore; that the ownership has been taken away. It is now a MacDonnell Shire place. It is run by bureaucracies in Alice Springs, for instance, like SIHIP. Even the CDEP program is run by a company from Alice Springs.

Maybe all those things are building up in people and they are saying: 'We feel like we are losing ownership'. We need to be aware that that could be a very big negative, especially in regard to the local government reform.

Recommendation 8:

... recommends that the Australian government reviews HOIL to ensure the housing standard meets existing agreed national standards for Indigenous community housing.

The response was, the department:

... will write to Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) seeking their confirmation that funds from the HOIL program are to be utilised to construct dwellings that meet

existing agreed national standards for Indigenous community housing.

I am interested to know if they have written to the IBA, and if they have, has the IBA come back with the report?

The issue of people having private houses in communities has gone off the boil. It is an issue which needs to be kept alive. It is not everyone's cup of tea and I know there are issues with people becoming used to the concept. It is not, in many cases, a concept which people who have lived in a communal society relate to easily, but it should be there as an alternative to public housing. We cannot say to people that their houses will be courtesy of the government for the rest of their lives. People should have the right to say: 'I would like to buy my own house and live in my own house'. We should not regard people as different because they live out bush. They should have the same opportunities.

This recommendation was ensuring people did not jump in and say: 'Wow, do we have a house for you'. For instance, on the back page of the *NT News* today you will see an advertisement: 'Fee for housing, \$130 000', I think, for a four bedroom, '\$110 000 for a three bedroom'. I am fairly sure they are containers that come in a flat-pack from China or Korea. Their suitability on a seaside, in a cyclone area, their suitability to stand up to wear and tear from a large number of people who might use the house would be dubious.

At Nguiu we saw a couple of houses we called the Chinese houses; they were houses which were imported. I am not an expert on housing, but I know you do not put an internal door on the external side of the house which is affected by the weather.

People have the right to buy whatever house they want. There is no doubt about that. You should not take that right away from anyone, but the house should still come up to a code, a cyclone code, if it is in a cyclone area. People should be educated enough, especially if people have never done this before, to have the knowledge when they are buying a house to make sure they look out for these issues: whether the cupboards are made of chipboard as we know in the tropics that is disastrous; are the external doors external doors and not internal doors? Is the company which puts it up going to treat the ground for termites, especially if it is a wooden house imported from China? Are there any materials in the house which could cause health problems? We know what happened with some of the containers which were used in the intervention.

The CTC is not saying people cannot build a house of their own desire; it is to ensure when they make that decision people are given the knowledge to make the right decision freely. That is an area the minister might come back to because the recommendation said the government was writing to the federal government and I am interested to know if there was a response.

In recommendation 9, the CTC said:

... the Northern Territory government permit shires to develop an organisation structure without requiring approval from the government.

The government might have missed the point. There is no doubt you would have to, via the act, gain permission for the CEO. The issue related to the Tiwi Islands local government. They wanted to reduce some of their administration costs and they did not want a particular person and were told they had to have them. If I was on a council I would tell the department to go take a jump. Local government is a legitimate tier of government which has its own powers, even though it comes under ...

Mr Elferink: I feel a motion coming on.

Mr WOOD: Yes, thank you, member for Port Darwin, this is an important debate to have, and it is good to have this debate.

Local government is a government in its own right. It comes under the powers of the Northern Territory government. It is similar to how we come under the powers of the Commonwealth government. Be that as it may, it must be given the ability to operate freely. Naturally, there has to be some controls over it, and there are, but as to the hiring and firing of general staff, I would have thought that was a matter for them.

We sometimes forget in this system that in the end it is up to the people to decide. If you really believe in a democratic form of government, if the people do not like what is happening in their council, they can vote their council out. Do not get too stickybeak; it is important in areas where there may be fraud, where there may be some corruption that the government becomes involved, but the people also have a say.

When the government was introducing this amalgamation plan there were educational pamphlets on the notice board at Ti Tree and other places out bush about the importance of the amalgamation of local government. If you are going to promote local government, you are promoting a democratic process that allows people to have a say, through the ballot box,

about how they think their council has been running their shire. Let us not forget that.

The government has missed the point of this recommendation. This was about ensuring places like the Tiwi local government had the right to say: 'We do not want two accountants; we only need one. Just because the department thinks we should have two, who is going to pay for them?' We know local governments are struggling to find enough money to run, so they were cutting costs by reducing the amount of administration.

Some of these shires have bigger administration costs than the rates they collect. It would be natural for some of these shires to say: 'We need to get leaner and meaner in our administration'. Local government departments should not tell them they cannot do it; leave that up to the council.

In recommendation 10, the CTC recommends:

... that refurbishment of housing include all work to return houses to functional houses that allow for healthy living, including the ability to keep houses clean.

The comment we received said:

Agreed.

I do not believe the comment which has come back is agreeing with us.

If you visit the SIHIP website you will find the objectives of the program. There is a nice glossy fact sheet which says:

One of the things about the SIHIP program is bringing houses that will produce healthier [communities].

While the refurbishments are only three quarters of what they should be, you will not achieve one of the goals of SIHIP; which is to have healthier communities. I am not going to discuss every nook and cranny in this issue, however, I will take the Santa Teresa houses once again.

You will not produce a community of healthy people if you have sandy verandas which are the main conduit between the shower and toilet and the main living room. You will simply drag dirt. They will come out of the shower with wet feet, into the house - dirty feet, dirty house. It does not make sense to me.

I say to the government, I understand there are difficulties with budget. I understand this is a big program, but they need to ask: 'Did we think this through properly? Did we understand the places

we are dealing with?' I know we did scoping and they may have done 10 houses, but was there someone in Canberra who knew what needed to be done to provide the amount of money to fulfil their own objectives? This is the Commonwealth and Territory government's objective: that we provide healthier communities.

It will be laughable for any politician to go to Santa Teresa, see a completed refurbished house with a dirt veranda and a chipped floor, and say: 'I produced a house that will produce a healthy community'. You could not say that. The answer to recommendation 10 is the recorded message you get on the telephone, not the message I would expect. I say to whoever will be the next federal minister for Aboriginal Affairs or Housing to take up the invitation the CTC ...

Dr BURNS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move the member be given an extension of time, pursuant to Standing Order 77.

Motion agreed to.

Mr WOOD: Thank you, minister. The CTC wrote to Hon Jenny Macklin, who has portfolio in this area, asking to speak to her. I understand there has been an election in the way of that, but we did not even receive an acknowledgement. Whoever that person is, the CTC, if it has to go to Canberra to talk to the minister, so be it; if it has to meet the minister at a house in Santa Teresa or anywhere else, happy to do that too. It is about gaining an understanding of the issues so you can make some practical solutions; philosophy is great, but philosophy just backed by philosophical thoughts is pointless. It needs to have a concrete foundation as to why you are doing something. We have to encourage the next minister to have a look at this and revisit the refurbishments.

Our minister has mentioned the government is looking at changes, and that is good. Perhaps the refurbishments may not be part of SIHIP, or at least not part of the alliance program. It may be they can be done by the communities through their housing association, their local governments - although I would prefer local governments to have their own core functions running before they take on too many other things - or it might be a small Aboriginal company.

We met the outstations corporation - and I never get its name correct - in Alice Springs, which does some of that work already ...

A member: Ingkerreke.

Mr WOOD: Yes, Ingkerreke. One day I will get the spelling in a manner which I can read ...

Mr Elferink: Three 'z's and a 'q'.

Mr WOOD: That is right. There is scope for taking it away from the alliances and looking at that. A bit like the subdivisions, which should have been taken over by Lands and Planning, and they do those things on those communities. There is certainly room there for more discussion.

I have to ensure I have not skipped anything. Recommendation 11:

The CTC recommends that both governments publicly acknowledge their shortcomings in implementing SIHIP.

That is like expressing your grief and sorrow at the program and is a broad-reaching discussion. The comments you have made are good, however, there are areas that need urgent attention, and one is leasing.

Read the report of the Coordinator-General. He writes some interesting stuff. He writes about the Commonwealth Bank and how the lease at Bathurst Island is probably hardly worth the paper it is written on when it comes to developing businesses. He raised the issue I raised yesterday regarding the five-year intervention leases. He says something has to happen urgently. You are refurbishing houses at \$75 000 each, and these houses will be turned over to the Aboriginal Land Trust; you will not have any ownership. There is an urgent need to look at leasing and move along with it. You are not going to have more houses built if you cannot have leases. You are not going to have the infrastructure you need because you need to have leasing for all of the infrastructure. There have to be easements for power lines, easements for water, easements for sewerage; power plants have to have leases over them.

There is an enormous amount of work that has to be done, and leasing is the foundation for SIHIP to continue, otherwise it will stop because you have no right to put any more houses on the land. That is one shortcoming which needs to be changed very quickly because time will beat us if we are not careful.

The Coordinator-General has raised a number of issues about township leasing, and it is an area the CTC will have to have to look at more closely.

Recommendation 12 says:

... governments establish independent building supervision and certification as part of SIHIP works.

The query I have is that, in the comments it says:

A number of quality assurance measures are built into the alliance contracting

methodology, design process and construction and handover processes.

I ask: where did it go wrong with Earth Connect Alliance? We went there, and I am not saying all the houses were bad, but there were issues with the block quality. It did not mean the house was going to fall down.

The blocks were not to standard because they had differences in size. I received the photos I requested. I found the houses that were to be demolished at Groote Eylandt were not houses, they were the foundations. Who checked those foundations? They were crooked. The ones I have pictures of – I have pictures of steel in concrete, and they are not at 90 degrees. I do not have to be a carpenter; I remind myself of geometry: 90 degrees is 90 degrees, and these were not at 90°. How did they get that wrong?

If there were quality assurances can I be guaranteed that the quality assurance in the other two alliances is there? In theory, we should not need to have someone checking it, because this alliance program was to have enough companies within it with the expertise to ensure it did not happen. Now we have to spend more money on making sure we have an independent assessor. It is sad because it adds another layer of bureaucracy and costs. In theory, there is a built-in quality assurance and it does not seem to work. So what we have to do is:

Both alliances already engage an independent third party to provide engineering reviews, certification of compliance and interim approval as part of their operations.

It also says:

To supplement the quality monitoring for the program, a new independent, quality assurance team is in the process of being established to inspect and assess new houses and refurbishments delivered under SIHIP.

What happened to the plain, old building inspector? He goes around the rural area making sure a house is correct. We have overcomplicated something which we would think was standard.

We build a house; we have a building inspector do the normal things. Well, let us employ a building inspector. He will charge you for the house he looks at and make sure it is correct - like he does in the city. We have a complicated system that did not need to be complicated, because we already know how to check houses: we have building inspectors. That

is where our money goes, instead of going to keep it simple, because we already know the structures are in place.

Mr Elferink interjecting.

Mr WOOD: Yes, there are issues, I realise, about which areas are covered by the Building Code, but you could have said these houses would be checked by a building inspector to the code required normally.

Recommendation 13 is:

The CTC recommends that the Northern Territory government provide a report detailing monies paid to Earth Connect and work undertaken up to the termination of its contract.

There is a very interesting comment here, it is only noted:

Accounts are being finalised with Earth Connect Alliance, however there will be no monies paid to Earth Connect as a result of ending this alliance.

I am not sure that is the case, and I am interested to see what happens. I understand there has been disputation about this matter. I hope when this matter finishes, we do see the books. Do not forget that this is an open book policy of the alliances: we see what has been paid and if this money has come out of the bucket of money that should be building houses.

When the Earth Connect contract was terminated, the CTC was told: 'There will be a smooth transition with Territory Alliance'. I want to know if there has been a smooth transition. Was there a continuation of the program as it was meant to be, or what have been the delays? How far behind are we in building houses on Groote Eylandt? My feeling is that we are way behind. We may be going well in some other communities but on Groote Eylandt there needs to be a report as to whether there was a smooth changeover and, if not, where are we exactly in relation to all the houses on Groote Eylandt? It would be good to have a report on that.

I will go to the additional comments. I know the member for Port Darwin will be arguing about the first issue of whether the government was pressured into seeking delivery of OSEG because of the liquidated damages. I will move onto the second item. I have had the reports and I am sure we had the reports at that time. The issue here is whether it was Power and Water which initiated discussions.

The Power and Water report says:

In January 2009 advised of a further delay ...

That is ENI, the company which supplied the gas, and this report says:

It was at this point that ENI flagged a proposal to supply gas.

They are saying that is not the case and the report seems to lend to that.

The last comment, and I have not been able to get any information, I have asked the Secretariat to find it for me this morning and it has not arrived yet, was the matter of the statement:

... insufficient capacity to detect liquids in the systems.

I want to see if that was someone else's quote from the transcripts. I do not have that before me, so I cannot argue whether that is what we said or what one of the companies said. I am not sure about its accuracy.

Madam Speaker, I support the recommendations. There is plenty of work to come out of them. I do not agree with everything but thank you for the response.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, there are several mechanical problems I have with the government's response in relation to this particular council. I want to talk about the mechanical issues rather than the actual issues raised by themselves.

I have a problem with the mechanism which creates this committee. The circumstances surrounding the creation of this committee are reflective of an arrangement between the member for Nelson and the Northern Territory Australian Labor Party, namely the Northern Territory government, to secure their continued position in government without having been brought to a general election.

Without revisiting old ground, that arrangement is predicated on a deal which was struck between the member for Nelson and the government, without that deal being scrutinised by this House until such time as it was delivered as a *fait accompli*. My concern has always been, and has been from the outset and is now reflected in this report as well as the reply, that the committee, as the member for Nelson envisaged it to be as stated, how he wanted it to be, is not it.

It is a parliamentary committee. I described it in various terms in different ways but essentially a Public Accounts Committee on speed.

This committee which we are part of, the Council of Territory Cooperation nominally, is a committee which has a public accounts function almost exclusively. Whilst it has a broader mandate, there is nothing within the standing orders and within the practices of the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy which could not extend the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee to capture all of the principles which are reflected in the structure of this committee. The greatest flaw in this process is there is no place to go between a parliamentary committee and a chamber of the parliament. There is no space which might be occupied that tries to straddle that. I suspect, with the best wishes and intentions of the member for Nelson, he has tried to achieve an organ of this House which does straddle those two dominions.

The problem I have is it is simply impracticable to do so. The kernel of the problem lies within the system we have of responsible government. The greatest flaw this committee suffers from, in terms of rendering it a mere committee of the parliament, is it does not have the capacity to operate as a chamber or house of review. The response from government in relation to this issue is quite accurate. Questions may well be asked of the ministers in this House through the Notice Paper, through the Estimates Committee process, but that is not the possibility inside this committee.

So problematic is this issue for the member for Nelson, he has realised, either by deliberate contemplation or slow realisation over time, this is the issue which confronts his committee. Consequently, the government's response, predictably, is this does not reflect the agreement which was struck some 12 months ago between the member for Nelson and the government. One can only presume the member for Nelson – and, in fact, more than presume, I can ascribe one particular comment to him, the recommendation of this House, that the member for Nelson has come to the conclusion that without the compellability of a minister to come before the committee, we can find out what the policy was, we can find out problems with the implementation of the policy, we can even discover the directives ministers may have chosen to make in relation to how policy is rolled out.

What we cannot discover, and what any house of review must have the capacity to discover, is what was in the minister's mind at the time a particular decision was made. And not say, so I, the Country Liberals, member for Port Darwin, who happens to be a member of the committee, so says the whole committee.

The Labor Party members have signed up to this recommendation because they realise the circumstances of this committee are diminished

substantially by an incapacity to hold the government of the day accountable for their actions. This is the philosophical difference between a committee and a house of review. A house of review can ask questions directly of a minister and demand to know why the minister took a certain position on a particular issue. A committee may only ever see the consequences of that decision-making process.

Being unable to bring a minister before the committee essentially knobbles it. The only committee which can do so effectively, and in very limited circumstances, is the Estimates Committee. It is truncated by the incapacity of the ministers to be questioned to exhaustion, and it is truncated by the fact the Estimates Committee can only essentially talk about budget issues.

This committee seeks to cast a wider net, but sadly does not even reach the limited capacity of the Estimates Committee to review the intent and thinking of ministers. Consequently, that is all it is. It is not a council of cooperation. It is a committee of this House which has all of the inherent limits of the committee system. The member for Nelson has realised this. Why else would he seek to break the arrangement he has made with the Northern Territory government – no, I correct that - he would seek to break the personal agreement he has with the Chief Minister, particularly in the Northern Territory, in relation to making ministers accountable.

If this committee is to achieve the outcomes it says its aims are, and the member for Nelson says its aims are, ministers within the contemplation of our system of responsible government must become accountable to this committee. And, in effect, if this committee is to achieve that which the member for Nelson says it should achieve, what its goals are, it essentially must establish itself as a house of review attached to this parliament, an upper house if you like, because you cannot occupy the space between.

The Estimates Committee comes close but it has its limitations because if it was as broad as the intent of this committee is meant to be it would be the house of review. It is as simple as that.

Whilst the member for Nelson and the Labor members may not have thought about the implications of suggesting the Chief Minister change the arrangements of his deal, the implications cannot otherwise be drawn as the implications have been drawn by what I say here today. This is a just a simple exercise in rational thinking based on the way our system of government operates. I am deeply disappointed the Chief Minister has chosen the naivety of the member for Nelson to enable him to think he was gaining something - but he was not gaining

anything other than something a parliamentary committee is. An Estimates Committee, a Public Accounts Committee, could achieve these things if they were given the right parameters.

Therefore, I place on the record my deep disquiet about how this committee operates, and what it seeks to achieve. It is to cost the taxpayer \$600 000 this year to run this committee, and I am dissatisfied that it is achieving the outcomes the member for Nelson, albeit nobly but naively, hoped it would achieve at the outset.

I find the committee extremely informative. I found the committee useful to find flaws in government operation. I find the committee useful in finding out what the policy settings of governments are achieving. But it cannot, does not, and should hold ministers to account at the level where policy is made and determined. That is the grave flaw which exists in this committee.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned that this situation will continue. I will be considering, into the future, what the role of the Country Liberals will be in relation to this committee ...

Dr BURNS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Just to clarify, did the member for Port Darwin say \$600 000 in expenses for this committee? I may have misheard him.

Mr ELFERINK: I think it is the budget for this year? Is that right? Yes. Is there are problem with that?

Dr Burns: No, I was just asking.

Mr ELFERINK: No, you were looking for a cheap political point.

Madam Speaker, I am going to pick up on that point of order. I am going somewhere and the Leader of Government Business feels particularly uncomfortable because he has realised the exposure this particular response from government has found. He has already started to do what politicians do so well - he is looking for an angle. He is looking for a way to start to drive a wedge and, in some way, demonstrate I am wrong. It is already starting.

All I am doing so far is outlining an effective and reasonable critique of the shortcomings of this committee, including the expense to the public purse; that is, how much bang for your buck are you getting? Automatically, the government's response is to find a way where they can start attacking me for being critical. This is the problem; that this is more about government, its angles, and how it can work them than it is about true representative democracy in the Northern Territory. However, I digress.

Madam Speaker, as I said, I have grave reservations about what this committee is achieving. As I was about to say, I will certainly be talking to the Leader of the Opposition about all the issues I have raised, and what we should do in relation to the committee in the future.

I also want to turn quickly to one component of the response from government in relation to off-specification early gas. Government's response is simply to deny the observations the committee has made. They do not agree. They said: 'You are all wrong'. I am confident the committee members are not wrong. What would happen if government did agree with the findings of the committee, so say all of us, their own Labor Party members on the committee included, they would, of course, find themselves in the position where they would also be censuring themselves for their failure to effectively run the supply of early off-specification gas to the power supply or the power network in our community. It is the supply of this off-specification early gas which caused the major blackouts, and may well have damaged the new gensets at Weddell. I am curious, from the minister's response, about how everyone is getting a slice of the damaged generator - it sounds like a legal action is pending.

The decisions to take that off-specification early gas on board must have been made by the minister. It is for that reason ...

Ms Lawrie: Not true!

Mr ELFERINK: Not true, says the Treasurer. Well, that is interesting. So, the very organisation of which she is the owner ...

Ms Lawrie: You do not listen. You have had briefings.

Mr ELFERINK: Well, you do own it, and I do understand it, and that is the problem. If that is all you can offer, then stand up and explain, slowly and carefully, what your role was as a responsible minister. But, of course, you are only the owner; you are not the minister who runs it. You have split the ownership and the running between two ministers, so the poor old House here has to determine, and is uncertain as to which question should go where and to what minister; and the minister who owns the Power and Water Corporation slides into critical mode and says it is all not true.

I can tell you, if I owned an asset the size of the Power and Water Corporation, albeit on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory, I would be paying attention to what was going on in it and, moreover, I would be getting advised as to what was going on with it, which is clearly what has not

been happening if the minister's assertion that it is not true ...

Ms Lawrie: You should hear what they say about you! It is embarrassing.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ELFERINK: If the minister's assertion that it is not true was, indeed, correct, but ...

Ms Lawrie: You do not understand the roles.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, Deputy Chief Minister!

Mr ELFERINK: ... of course, Madam Speaker, the minister will be advised as to the determinations and the decisions that are made by the Power and Water Corporation.

Ms Lawrie: Advised?

Mr ELFERINK: Advised. Now we are playing distinctions games. And the minister will then play, or she will tell this House, a totally neutral role: 'Oh, the Power and Water Corporation advised me they were doing such and such and I remained inert and silent. I own the thing, but I said nothing about that'.

The Minister for Essential Services, the one who operates the show, would also have been advised, and what, did he remain silent? Did he not ask any questions whatsoever, seek any further advice, ask about risk and all those types of things? Clearly not. I believe it is disingenuous in the extreme for the minister who owns the organisation to suggest she does not ask any questions about it and is some passive observer. Nonsense!

This mistake they made with the off-specification early gas may yet cost the taxpayer tens of millions of dollars. The penalty has already been paid by the people of the northern suburbs whose lights went out because of it. I reiterate my congratulations to whomever it was who had to turn the gas supply off in an effort to try to defend the Weddell Power Station from being damaged; they may or may not have been successful.

This report also touches on SIHIP and the astonishing debacle that has become. I heard the minister with carriage of it now, the member for Johnston, say yesterday: 'Yes, there were a few problems with it initially'. A few problems? Goodness gracious me, a few problems! No, it was a massive cluster mistake. I cannot begin to imagine that would be described as a few problems, and it will cost the taxpayer of both the country and the jurisdiction of the Northern

Territory hundreds of millions of dollars in extra payments.

The original minister's handling - the member for Daly - was disgraceful. If I have any instinct about this particular matter, perhaps he did take the same approach to his ministry of SIHIP as he does with the ministry for essential services, namely: 'Oh, they have let them do whatever they like; they just advised me what was going on'. 'A monumental stuff up' is an expression not strong enough to describe how SIHIP was rolled-out. When the federal government stepped into this program it was the Northern Territory's second intervention. It was so bad, so awful and so disorganised and the Northern Territory government will pay much more than the original \$100m which was put into the scheme, by virtue of the fact they now have to borrow the money to cover the infrastructure component of the second 'I' in SIHIP.

Madam Speaker, as far as I am concerned, this government stands condemned. This is the result of a government which has totally lost control, but more importantly, this committee is not capable of asking the ministers themselves the important questions which are raised in relation to how useful this committee is to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I will be fairly brief in my contribution to the debate on this. I seem to remember when the second report of the CTC was tabled I had a good read through it and in my response to that report was far less scathing of it than I was of the first report.

The second report of the CTC carried far more weight, far more conviction, than the first report. Therefore I was happy, and really quite supportive, of the second report of the CTC. However, I seem to recall that when I responded to the government's response to the first report, I think I called it wishy-washy. I am in a position today where what I have to say with regards to the government's response to the second report of the CTC will be pretty much the same tenor.

I am not going to cover in-depth all the recommendations which have been responded to by government. The member for Nelson has ably done that and there is a great deal the member for Port Darwin has said in the House today which I wholeheartedly agree with. What I will say is, first, I do want to express my disappointment in the government's attitude towards ministers attending before the Council of Territory Cooperation. One of the underlying principles of setting up the CTC, and I do not have the terms of reference in front of me or the agreement between the member for Nelson and the Chief Minister, but it was to have

input into the direction of government policy. What we are finding now - well I should just go back one step.

To have some influence over the direction of government policy we need to get to the top and have some influence over those people who, in government, should be making decisions about the direction of policy on government. Not having access to ministers seriously diminishes the Council of Territory Cooperation's capacity and ability to have input into policy. What we are now finding is we have access to public servants, and very senior public servants, and that is terrific, but they cannot speak for the ministers; they can only explain and elicit the current policy. We cannot have an influence over the policy, which by the time we are talking to public servants, is already set.

I am disappointed the member for Nelson does not see this as a deal-killer. He has come out strongly and said he wants to have a more cooperative approach to government, which is fine. However, not having ministers appear before the CTC certainly flies in the face of that very principle. One of the reasons enunciated by the government for not having ministers before the CTC is there are other avenues by which we, as members of the opposition, and Independent members as well, can have access to ministers, that is, through the parliament, through Question Time, through Questions on Notice, but unfortunately we do not get, in many cases, the answers to the questions we ask.

If we were to rely solely on Question Time as a way of extracting information from the government about important issues of the day, we would be completely blind; we would not know what this government is doing because they simply do not answer, in many cases, with any depth or meaning, questions asked of them.

I recall also the member for Nelson spoke - I think it was in response to the government's response on the first report of the CTC, and I will stand corrected if it was a different debate - he said one of the purposes of the CTC was education and edification so we could find out much about the Territory, and I enjoy that aspect of it. I have learnt far more about the Northern Territory through the CTC over the period of some 12 months than I suspect I would have had I not been a member of the CTC. For my personal gain, and I guess ultimately for the gain of my constituents and the people for whom I work in the Northern Territory, there are some benefits, but certainly not all the benefits I would expect to flow from the CTC are being met, which is extremely disappointing.

I turn to some of the recommendations and the government's response to those recommendations. Recommendation 9 was:

The CTC recommends that the Northern Territory government permit shires to develop an organisation structure without requiring approval from the government.

As already outlined, this recommendation arose as a result of a visit to the Tiwi Islands where the Tiwi Shire, and other people in the Tiwi region, expressed a great deal of concern about the fact the department of Local Government was railroading them into setting an organisational structure they were not comfortable with. It was not only the fact they were uncomfortable with it; they were looking at ways to keep their own budget in check in an environment where the shires are all finding it very tough with their financial situation.

It makes sense for a particular shire to want to set its own parameters, set its own guidelines around the staffing arrangements it has, and it should be free to do that. What we found was that the government interfered and mandated certain positions within that organisation. I read here in the government's response to that recommendation that they agree with it - probably one of the most disingenuous statements I have heard or read for a long time. They agree with a position now that the CTC has brought it to their attention, yet they had not been practicing that up until the time this report came out, or until they responded to this report. That is very disingenuous - unless there has been a policy shift within the department. I guess we will not know because we will not be able to get the Minister for Local Government before the CTC to talk about policy issues.

I turn to recommendation 11 where it talks about the CTC. This is in relation to SIHIP. There is not a heck of a lot I want to add to what the member for Port Darwin said on SIHIP; he covered it quite comprehensively and eloquently. But, recommendation 11 does say:

The CTC recommends that both governments publicly acknowledge their shortcomings in implementing SIHIP.

I note the government's position says: 'Noted', which, of course is just blowing the CTC off; saying: 'We cannot really say we disagree with you'. It is a pretty wishy-washy response.

I suspect the only people who will be able to acknowledge shortcomings in SIHIP will be the opposition, maybe the CTC, maybe the Abbott government - or opposition, depending on the result of the election on Saturday. Senator Nigel

Scullion has been a great champion of the SIHIP cause in bringing the shortcomings of both the Northern Territory and the federal governments into the public arena.

I am not surprised I see that wishy-washy response from the Northern Territory government to a recommendation. They need to come out and be honest. Instead of hiding behind rhetoric, they should come out and say: 'We mucked up. We mucked up but we are going to fix it'. That would be, I suspect, what the electorate would much rather hear than the spin we hear from the other side of the House - regularly and constantly.

I share the member for Port Darwin's concerns about the operation of the CTC and how efficient it is. I am on the public record previously talking about the cost of this committee. I am all for spending money as long as there is some bang for the buck - the term the member for Port Darwin used before - but we need to see some results. I am not seeing a heck of a lot of result come out of this. If the government, in its response to this report, had said: 'Agree with all of the recommendations. Yes, we are going to do this, that, and the other', then I would be looking at this in a different light. However, they have not done that. The only recommendations they have agreed to are the ones which are politically palatable.

I have some concerns about the operation of this committee, and I will also have to look at my position on the committee. I will also be speaking to the Leader of the Opposition on this. The committee takes up a fair amount of time and I am very happy to contribute that time to the committee as long as we are going to get some results out of it. That is where my problem lies; in that I do not see terribly many results come out of the Council of Territory Cooperation. With that, Madam Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

Dr BURNS (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I will endeavour to cover the major points raised by members today. There were some detailed issues raised by the member for Nelson I would like to have further information on. I suppose it just depends on whether I go over the time allotted and finish after lunch. I can speak for the 10 minutes or so that are remaining, and come back after lunch with the 10 minutes or so that remain.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, are you indicating you would prefer to speak after lunch, because we can?

Dr BURNS: I would prefer to speak after lunch, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: All right. I will suspend for the luncheon break.

Debate suspended.

MOTION

Note Paper - Council of Territory Cooperation - Government Response to Second Report

Continued from earlier this day.

Dr BURNS (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I thank all members for their contribution to this important debate on the CTC report.

There was a theme between both the Independent and the opposition, although there were some differences, in the processes of the CTC. The member for Port Darwin questioned what he called the 'mechanical issues' and problems with the 'mechanical issues' of the CTC; the circumstances surrounding its creation. He said the deal - I believe he means the agreement which was reached between government and the member for Nelson - was not scrutinised by the House. He said it was very much like a PAC. I have the word 'ersatz' PAC. I believe that is what he was trying to say: basically it was a PAC in another role.

It has achieved quite a number of its aims. One of the aims of the agreement reached between the member for Nelson and the government was to remove some of the adversarial components which characterise politics in the Northern Territory. I know this has been of great concern to the member for Nelson for some time. The way in which the CTC has developed, and some of the statements made by members of the CTC - particularly the member for Katherine who said he had some doubts that he wanted ongoing membership. He also acknowledged he had received a great deal of information and experience through his involvement with CTC and the extent to which the CTC has moved along a path, has engaged with senior public servants, and has been able to ascertain many facts and much information and has been briefed by very senior public servants, certainly adds to its weight within the system.

The opposition members complain they do not have access to ministers through the CTC process. The member for Nelson rightly said that if ministers were to appear politics would overtake the workings of the CTC; and I agree with that. The opposition has more than enough avenues to question members through the estimates process, and we are reviewing the estimates process, and in the House, particularly in Question Time. I agree with the member for Nelson in that regard.

I also find it a little ironic that the member for Port Darwin talks about deals and whether this House is able to scrutinise deals when, not 12 months ago, the Leader of the Opposition, I believe - not in an open and accountable way - was making offers to the member for Macdonnell and also the member for Nelson around what would happen if he was to gain government, if they were to support him and become members of a CLP Cabinet. He was making offers and deals that were not open to public scrutiny. The arrangement and agreement which has been reached with the member for Nelson is published; it is in the public arena. It is open and accountable, and everyone can see what it is about. Everyone can criticise it, but not so with the negotiations held by the Leader of the Opposition not 12 months ago. I ask the member for Port Darwin to consider that.

Turning to some of the issues raised by the member for Nelson - and I am trying to respond to the issues which were raised. I will get my report and turn to the recommendations. The member for Nelson highlighted the fact that quite a number of recommendations within the CTC report have been agreed to by government. There have been a number which have been noted, and, as I said previously, we have agreed to disagree on some issues. That is very positive and is showing the CTC is having an effect; that government is heeding the recommendations and reports of the CTC and attempting to implement what we can. That is a positive thing.

The member for Nelson raised - as did members of the opposition, including the member for Port Darwin - the issue of the process in estimates of being able to question the Minister for Essential Services. This is an issue, as I said yesterday, which is under discussion within the Standing Orders Committee. Both sides, as well as the Independent, are considering this issue and how we might move forward to bring some further clarity into the situation. That is something government is willing to consider in the estimates process.

Turning specifically to some recommendations made by the CTC which the member for Nelson questioned, he talked about recommendation 5. I picked up about the crime statistics, particularly in regional areas where small numbers, and fluctuations within those numbers, can lead to anomalies where interpretation is difficult. I said in this place yesterday that that is a problem within the Territory, whether it is health statistics, crime statistics, or a whole range of statistics. That is why we need statisticians to advise us. Generally, the solution is to have five-year rolling averages to really flatten out those fluctuations between years where the numbers within particular cells are small.

Regarding the issue he raised, specifically in recommendation 5 that the minimum reporting times be reviewed, I turn to the response. The comment was:

Northern Territory Police and the Department of Justice are considering options to reduce the frequency at which these statistics are published and to extend their scope of content. It is anticipated that a joint proposal will be presented for consideration of the respective ministers in July 2010.

The progress report on that is that work is not completed yet; it is ongoing. The question has certainly been asked and one would hope those changes are forthcoming in the very near future. I am sure there are many public servants in those departments listening to this debate. That is the assurance I will give you on the floor of the House, but I am unable to tell you they are completed. That work is in progress.

You talked about a number of recommendations. I am pretty sure I got the major ones you were concerned about. You talked about the HOIL, recommendation 8, and specifically you said the comment was:

DHLGRS will write to Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) seeking their confirmation that funds from the HOIL program are to be utilised to construct dwellings that meet existing agreed national standards for Indigenous community housing.

My advice here, member for Nelson, is that the department's Mr David Alexander contacted IBA to check their guidelines included a requirement that the houses financed through HOIL would need to meet a certain construction standard. We have been assured by officers from IBA that all dwellings constructed through the program will be required to meet standards documented in the Commonwealth's National Indigenous Housing guide.

As stated in IBA's 2008-09 report:

HOIL display homes at Nguiu, Bathurst Island and Northern Territory. IBA's role is to develop, design and procure construction services.

The outcome, I have been advised, is:

Cost-effective designs were completed, drawing on the National Indigenous Housing Guide and in consultation with the communities. Homes will be constructed for on-selling to eligible HOIL program clients in 2009-10.

You mentioned some of the history. You called them the 'Chinese' houses in Nguiu. That opened up my desire to find out more about those. I have been advised of some of their history when I was there, member for Nelson. I am advised that four of those so-called Chinese houses, which were imported, were more or less kit houses constructed under the auspices, or the direction, of Mal Brough. He was involved in that whole process when he was minister. I am advised that four were constructed at a cost of \$700 000 each.

Our aim with the SIHIP houses is an average of \$450 000, and the houses that I have inspected, the new houses, are very good products, extremely good products, ones that anyone could be proud of. I am sure the Alliances are proud of them, but certainly not in the region of \$700 000.

I am advised that the ceilings are so low in these houses at Nguiu that the Chief Minister almost had to duck when he went in because his head was just inches below the ceiling. I am advised there is not even room for a fan in these houses to cool them down because the ceilings are so low. I suppose that is history, but this is what Mal Brough turned out.

A member: I think you are making up the history.

Dr BURNS: The opposition keeps on criticising the government about SIHIP, but I do not think they can really criticise us about our new houses. I have not heard too much criticism about the new houses. Other new houses produced by Mal Brough – Wadeye - \$900 000 each. I am advised there were four of those. This is at the outstations. They had no glass in the windows, no capacity for floor ways. They had a special sealant on the floor where it was non-stick, so people really could not clean those floors, or they had great difficulty. There were no door knobs on the toilet door - the list goes on. So this is the great Mal Brough. I know he is a bit of a hero to the member for Braitling, but this is his legacy of Indigenous housing. I digress, Madam Speaker.

Recommendation 9: the member for Nelson pointed out that he did not think the response from the department really addressed the issue that was raised, which was about the local government entities having the ability to determine their own organisational structure.

In regard to the Tiwi issue raised by the member for Nelson, we, as a government, accept and support the premise underlying that recommendation that those matters could have been handled in a more collaborative way. I can confirm that it is our intention that our relationships with the shires are based on support and

cooperation. I thank the member for Nelson for raising the issue. He, to some degree, was right: I believe there may be a misunderstanding from the department about the thrust or the focus of the recommendation. As government, I can assure the member for Nelson we accept the premise that a local government entity should have flexibility in determining their organisational structures. I thank the member for Nelson for raising that issue.

Turning to other recommendations, there is a recommendation about SIHIP - as the member for Nelson said, we could probably spend another whole debate just on SIHIP. I tried to cover most of the issues in relation to SIHIP which have been raised. There are a number of recommendations of the committee about certification. I think the member for Nelson was saying that the process is too complicated and costly: 'Why can't we just engage certifiers to come in and certify these buildings just like you would if you were building a house in Katherine or in the Katherine region. Why can't we use the same process?' The advice that I have is that qualified building practitioners licensed to act as certifiers are in short supply in the Northern Territory. We all know that. As such, alliances have entered into contractual arrangements with certifiers to ensure that they are available when required. This is the most efficient way, we believe, the alliances can ensure that properties are issued with certificates of compliance when works are completed.

Each alliance has engaged an independent building certifier to conduct a series of inspections of works and rely on self-certification of certain works to create certificates of compliance equivalent to those required under the *Building Act*. Indigenous communities in which SIHIP is operating are all outside the building control areas of the *Building Act* and, as such, there is no legislative requirement to certify works in accordance with that act. However, SIHIP has undertaken to operate as if it were to have all building works certified in accordance with that act.

What that is saying is, just to clarify, in the remote areas where the *Building Act* has a different set of requirements, we are undertaking a process which makes the certification process of those new buildings equivalent to what would occur under the *Building Act*. Electrical and plumbing works are subject to self-certification regimes and that operates in major urban centres as well. Only qualified electricians and plumbers are engaged through the alliances.

The member for Nelson asked a number of questions about the Earth Connect Alliance and I answered some of those questions in my original speech saying there is no pay-out for exiting the

project but there is a process of negotiated settlement for the works already completed and also materials. The member for Nelson asked a specific question, and a very important question, about the undertaking given by government that there would not be unnecessary delays in Territory Alliance taking over works within SIHIP where Earth Connect was previously.

In particular, the member for Nelson asked about Groote Eylandt and this is the advice that I have: four new houses have been completed at Umbakumba, three rebuilds are complete, 17 refurbishments are complete and an additional one is under way, two new houses have been completed at Angurugu, two rebuilds are complete, six refurbishments are complete and an additional three are under way, one rebuild and six refurbishments are complete at Milyakburra.

About a fortnight ago I was fortunate to be on beautiful Groote Eylandt and I inspected both the residual works undertaken by Earth Connect and the ongoing works on new dwellings and refurbishments being undertaken by Territory Alliance. It was all full steam ahead for Territory Alliance. I inspected a block of units; very well constructed and progressed. I believe they were to the stage of roofing and that building had been under way for a very short time and was due for completion within the next week or so. I believe it was a duplex, or it could have been more units than that; I was very impressed by that.

You asked some questions about why it took so long to transition Earth Connect out of the program and I say this: obviously there are negotiations going on at present and I do not want to disrupt those negotiations. However, what I will say is I saw what you saw with some of those footings. I saw the laminated beams, I saw a whole range of issues, and I also met with the person who is overseeing SIHIP works on Groote Eylandt. I believe part of it was we had to afford that alliance partner natural justice. We had to afford them the opportunity to rectify works or satisfy the government, and the project, that they were able to do that.

Mr HENDERSON: Madam Speaker, I move an extension of time of 10 minutes to allow my colleague to conclude his remarks pursuant to Standing Order 77.

Motion agreed to.

Dr BURNS: I thank members for that opportunity and I will be relatively brief. It was about trying to negotiate our way through this. Those works were stopped in their tracks - the ones you saw. There was political spin by some trying to say that things were being demolished, and as you rightly pointed out there is nothing to

be demolished. There were issues around not only the footings but the preparation of the pad where those buildings were sitting. I believe much of it revolves around giving the alliance an opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

The department, particularly Mr Andrew Kirkman, and others at a local level responded very quickly when the alarm bells started ringing; that is the story there. It is an ongoing story because those negotiations have not been completed, but I hope they are completed in good faith.

In relation to other areas where Earth Connect was located, Gunbalanya, Acacia Larrakia and Belyuen, six new houses are being completed at Gunbalanya, one rebuild is complete, with a further one under way; 25 refurbishments are complete with a further five under way; 13 refurbishments are complete at Belyuen; and three refurbishments are complete at Acacia Larrakia, with a further two under way.

It was my privilege to visit Gunbalanya about two weeks ago to meet the alliance people on-site, and inspect some of the refurbishments and see some of the new homes which are being tenanted. I know the member for Braitling visited Gunbalanya; he went past a few of the houses and asked some questions. My advice was in relation to that, and I believe I said publicly those houses were in the cleanup phase and in the process of being handed over to tenants. Those are the transitional homes at Gunbalanya and it is necessary for people to move out of their house into the transitional accommodation so their own houses can be refurbished.

I commend this report to the House. I know there is consideration to changing standing orders so, as I understand it, the member for Nelson will be presenting the reports in future. Is that right member for Nelson?

Mr Wood: Ask the Clerk?

Dr BURNS: I believe that is appropriate; you are the Chair of that committee. For my part, I believe you should be the one presenting the report and wrapping up rather than me. I commend you and the committee. I know it has been a hard road, there has been much criticism, and I encourage the opposition - I noted with some concern both the member for Katherine and Port Darwin saying: 'We will be speaking to our leader and seeing whether we have an ongoing role within the committee'. I hope the Leader of the Opposition would say to them: 'This is a very important committee. It is important for the Territory'. However, from self-interest, we are actually accessing much information, we are able to raise many issues publicly from the work of the

council, and I believe they should stay there because this is a good path, a good committee.

As the Chief Minister said, post-2012, if Labor wins majority government we will continue with the Council of Territory Cooperation. We have made a commitment. I am not sure what the opposition is committed to in that regard, but we value the work. In some cases, we will have to agree to disagree. I suppose that is the nub of it. You should draw a lot of satisfaction, member for Nelson, because we have agreed with quite a number of the recommendations. I have come back to you with some questions you have asked. You will not be satisfied with all of it, but that gives you some more work to do and some more things to follow up, and for government to ensure the issues we have agreed to and committed to, are followed through.

Madam Speaker, I commend this report to the House. I commend the future work of the Council for Territory Cooperation.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT **Establishment of Marine Supply Base**

Mr HENDERSON (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, today I outline to the House the government's intention to proceed with the establishment of the marine supply base as the next major industrial development for the Northern Territory.

The Territory economy is stronger, more stable, and more diverse today than it has ever been. Over the last decade, our economy has deepened and strengthened. We have grown this economy in a sustained away. I am confident, over the next decade, this growth and development will be sustained, but it did not happen by accident and it will not last without the ongoing vigilance and role of government.

This government has focused considerable effort investing in infrastructure. Since 2001, \$7.7bn in cash has been spent on infrastructure across the Territory. This investment has been used to create and sustain jobs, and has been targeted at projects that leverage the economy. As a result of this expenditure, we have in place the transport framework we need to progress our economy in the form of effective road, rail, port and air infrastructure, although I acknowledge there is much more that still needs to be done in transport infrastructure in the bush. It is an absolute imperative the Commonwealth government lift its effort in that regard, though there can be no doubt that is a significant issue.

Through investment in education and training, the Territory now has a more skilled workforce with more people in training than ever before. Through careful management of industrial land around the port, we have an effective Business Park which has been an outstanding success. The fledgling Defence Park is at the early stages of its development.

The government has placed an emphasis on trade and export. Not only have we built the infrastructure to make this happen, we have strategically funded business through grants and have engaged in a coordinated and comprehensive program of ministerial and business visits to our key markets in Asia. We have put into place key strategies aimed at delivering foreign and interstate investment into the Territory.

Let me focus on one example, the Northern Territory government's China Minerals Investment Attraction Strategy. This strategy actively encourages Chinese investment in mining and exploration. It is a four-year strategy launched in 2007. It aims to assist Chinese companies identify investment opportunities in exploration and mining to advance exploration in the Territory through Chinese partnerships and investment. We have a dedicated investment team to assist Chinese companies to: customise a visit program to the Territory; meet with potential business partners, government agencies and key stakeholders; apply for exploration licences; and understand how to do business in the Northern Territory.

The success of this strategy has been strong. Over \$140m in publicly announced deals has been made. This does not include private business deals. Over 120 visits by Chinese companies since 2007, six Chinese companies granted exploration licences and commenced exploration programs. We have seen investment from the China Guangdong Nuclear Power Corporation in Energy Metals, East China Minerals Exploration and Development Bureau; and Anhui Geology and Mining in Territory uranium, and Tri-coastal Minerals Holdings in Matilda Zircon. As a result of efforts such as these, we are building a good reputation in China, Japan as well, and have made real progress on trade with places such as Vietnam and other South-East Asian nations.

The government actively champions trade and foreign investment. We believe in a can-do approach to expanding business. The government and the public sector are geared to support industry across the board. To facilitate and accelerate strategic developments, the Territory government assigns major project status to major developments. The rationale of

conferring this status is to ensure that a project is fast-tracked through the government's necessary regulatory requirements.

Major project status brings agencies together and provides proponents with a single point of contact. Examples of success are the ConocoPhillips Darwin LNG plant and the ENI deal for Blacktip and INPEX. The government is deliberately focused on the gas and oil industry and this focus has brought success. Darwin LNG is now an important underlying part of our economy. The ENI Blacktip project supplies gas for our electricity. There are proposals in place to establish floating LNG facilities at a number of places in the Timor Sea, especially at the Sunrise project field.

I recently returned from Japan and I am more convinced than ever that INPEX and Total's Ichthys project is definitely coming to Darwin. That project brings with it a new level of industrial and economic development for our Territory. It is the next platform for our growth. Not only is it billions of dollars of investment and thousands of jobs in the construction phase, it provides a base for further industry. These projects make the Top End of the Territory one of Australia's premier hubs for the gas and oil industry, and will drive our economic development for the next 40 years at least.

I am proud to say that efforts of the last decade are coming to fruition. It has been the dream of this government to develop this hub and now it is a reality.

It is now time to focus on what is next. It is our intention to use the existence of the oil and gas industry as a means of expanding our research, training and industrial base. The government has two key plans in place, and both of these feature strongly in our *Territory 2030* plans.

Today, I want to focus on the marine supply base, but in the future I will be informing this House about collaborative efforts being made to develop and expand the CDU and its research skills and training capacity in the field of oil and gas exploration and processing.

Yesterday, I launched an invitation to suitably qualified proponents to develop and operate a world-class marine supply base to be based here in Darwin. An important element of *Territory 2030* under the core priority of economic sustainability is an objective of growing local industry. Contained within this objective is a target of establishing Darwin as a key centre for oil and gas operations, maintenance and workforce. That is the basis for our development of a marine supply base.

A marine supply base is a purpose-built facility that enables the rapid and efficient servicing of the offshore petroleum and gas industry. It is capable of servicing all activities associated with exploration, construction and operation phases of this industry. The interested parties will be asked to build and operate this supply base. The marine supply base will ensure Darwin has world-class marine infrastructure to support oil and gas exploration and developments in the region.

The supply base will have a dedicated marine berth and support facilities, for example, fuel and water storage, and will increase Darwin's capacity to support offshore oil and gas developments in the South-East Asian region, including operations in the Arafura and Timor Seas and Browse Basin; facilitate growth in local rig tender vessels which supply offshore gas rigs with all their supplies from food and water to fuel and piping; reduce congestion at the main wharf by providing a purpose-built marine supply base and support facilities; grow local businesses currently supporting the offshore oil and gas industry; and, attract new investment and business opportunities in the Territory.

Key components of the marine supply base will be: dedicated, multi-user marine berths; berth pockets; staging areas and channel connections to service rig tender vessels which supply offshore gas rigs with their supplies; undercover, open and bonded storage areas to service critical cargoes being transferred to and from rig tender vessels; connections to all utilities and easy supply of fuel, water and other supplies to enable quick turnaround times for rig tender vessels. It will be complementary to existing business in the Darwin region which already provide services to the offshore industry. The marine supply base will allow these businesses access to these facilities.

The petroleum services sector in Darwin has developed rapidly in recent years. It has broadened and deepened its capabilities. Local and national firms and international service providers have invested in facilities and equipment. This base will complement and build on the work of these businesses.

Locally-based companies such as the Toll Group, Wood Group, Shorelands and Darwin Offshore Logistics Base are currently providing many maintenance and supply services to the offshore gas industry including customers such as ConocoPhillips, ENI and Woodside.

We expect a Darwin marine supply base to establish a strong position in the market due to the established role of Darwin as a supply and service hub to the offshore petroleum industry, proximity to large producing and prospective petroleum fields, established offshore supply and service

operations in Darwin with industry clustering occurring in the East Arm Industrial Precinct and nearby industrial areas.

Synergy is associated with: existing infrastructure such as port, road and rail infrastructure and common use area with established national and international shipping links, together with domestic and international air links for personnel and time-sensitive freight; available land at East Arm Port for use by the marine supply base operator and for other supply and service operations in nearby industrial areas; and available skilled labour and competitive construction and operating costs.

As members would be aware, the Darwin Port Corporation has a strong and growing business at East Arm Wharf providing facilities for rig supply vessels servicing the offshore industry. This business has grown significantly during the past five years, driven by increasing offshore activities. Rig supply vessel calls have increased by 14% compound per annum since 2005 and at approximately 30% per annum since 2007. In addition to vessel calls the port exchanges cargo. Cargo volumes have grown at similar rates.

The Territory government will undertake a three-step process. The government will take this process to secure private sector investment for this project which we envisage will be delivered on a build, own, operate and transfer basis.

Expressions of interest from suitably qualified international MSB operators, or their consortia, have been called with submissions due by 27 October. This will be followed by a request for detailed proposals phase, with a short list of bidders and subsequent finalisation of contracts with the preferred bidder. I expect we will be in a position to announce the preferred bidder in late 2011 with construction commencing early 2012.

The government has established an onshore gas task force and working group to manage the expression of interest process. Feedback was sought from industry groups, the petroleum sector and local operators including the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Council, INPEX, Shell, ConocoPhillips, the Toll Group, the Wood Group, Shorelands, Darwin Offshore Logistics Base, and Paspaley.

It is envisaged that the successful proponent will build and operate the facility for up to 30 years before handing it back to the Territory government. At this stage, the Territory government's role is to facilitate the EOI and environmental assessment process.

In accordance with commercial principles the proponent is expected to take all delivery and

operational risk associated with the marine supply base in any future expansions.

This is an important venture for the Territory. The estimated cost of developing this facility is in excess of \$100m. Its contribution to our economy over the years that follow will be great. It is the next stage in the development of our economy and will broaden and deepen our economic base.

I cannot stress to this House enough the importance of developing a strong and diverse economy. It is at the very core of what this government is doing every day. We are establishing new opportunities in green energy and investment. We are seeking to strengthen our tourism base; we are seeking investment in our mining industry. This marine supply base is another element to this effort.

Madam Speaker, I look forward with interest to seeing the outcomes of these expressions of interest and look forward to further updating the House and I commend this ministerial statement to the House.

Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr MILLS (Opposition Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, the Chief Minister at the commencement of this statement says:

Since 2001 \$7.7bn in cash has been spent on infrastructure across the Territory.

This government talks a lot but does not deliver. Instead, it relies on other people's investments, other people's major project investments such as: Alcan, \$3bn; ConocoPhillips, \$1.5bn; ENI Blacktip plus Blacktip pipeline, \$170m-plus; Montara and other oil and gas field developments, \$750m; new mines facilitated by the \$1bn investment in the railway such as Frances Creek and Bootu Creek; mining expansions because of the China growth story; the Ranger mine expansion; and GEMCO expansion.

These are examples of the \$7.7bn being spent - not by this government - despite this government. Let me remind you of the projects which have stalled. Where was the assistance for Arafura Resources, or the trans-Territory pipeline? Where is your support for the projects remaining on the horizon, which includes ConocoPhillips second train or Dow Chemical Condensate downstream processing? Where is the Northern Territory government's investment in the port?

Our port problems continue even though you have, apparently, the money in the bank. There is not enough berth space; it is one of the most expensive ports in Australia; and you still have not

delivered on promises on the conveyor belt and bulk commodity storage even though the allocated capital from Infrastructure Australia is supposedly in the bank. You have a continued reliance on a small number of customers, and continued problems with pollution, even after studies were done before new bulk commodity projects were taken on.

In your statement you mention the fledgling Defence Park. During the estimates process we asked the following questions of your Minister for Business and Employment:

Can you advise how much business has been gained by government's investment in Defence Support facilities?

And this was the sorry answer:

It is quite a specific and detailed question. The big expansion in the Territory does equate to about 6.1% of the total national Defence budget. There is \$280m worth of Defence infrastructure progress planned for the Territory. As to exactly how much every single Defence business in the Territory gains, I do not think I have that exact figure. It is a bit hard to actually quantify.

We ask another question of the minister:

Has your government made any investment into Defence Support facilities?

The response was:

... work is currently under way for a subdivision for a Defence industry out towards Robertson Barracks, with a total of almost \$1m going into the subdivision.

We are still waiting, however, for any meat to be put on that bone; and that is a very real concern. So what was the minister's response when asked:

... what is your specific objective in the area of Asian Relations and Trade ...

A very specific objective. The minister acknowledged, and again I quote:

I am new to this area, but it seems to be - speaking to previous Labor ministers and also previous CLP ministers from previous governments - it is about continuity of engagement with key players in Asia ...

I am certainly glad the minister also spoke of previous CLP ministers. I wonder if that includes the former Chief Minister. In the past the Country Liberal government had excellent relationships

with Asia. There is no point in seeking, and I quote the Chief Minister:

To facilitate and accelerate strategic developments

Whatever the heck that means.

Mr Knight: Your mate, Shane Stone, has led you down a path now. Cost you your job.

Mr MILLS: What is that? I would not mind hearing that. Tell me about it later. I would like to hear it. I quote the Chief Minister:

... facilitate and accelerate strategic developments

That is a little hard to understand – gobbledegook. This government has failed to put the proper infrastructure in place in the first place.

Indeed, I include in that comment the previous Rudd government investments in infrastructure; a government that failed to support the request for much needed funds for East Arm Port. There is a continued failure to answer the need for a future port which will deal with the environmental concerns we see on a daily basis in the heart of Darwin Harbour. Please, Chief Minister, stop playing such obvious catch-up.

I thank you for your statement to the House today, but note, yet again, you have recycled concepts which go back decades. The marine supply base is not a stroke of genius masterminded by your department or your expensive consultants. No, Chief Minister, it is a concept dusted off from the Country Liberal's legacy and claimed as your own. Come up with something of your own, for goodness sake.

With your tardiness, the project timetable indicates the earliest date possible for construction and completion of a marine supply base should be mid-2014; this, despite the significant growth of business for rig supply vessels. Your own figures note an increase in traffic of 14% per annum since 2005, and 30% per annum since 2007. Indeed, the executive summary within the East Arm Master Plan states the Port of Darwin will experience capacity restraints by 2011 and, under the section on the vessel number forecast, it states:

In the short term, next four to five years, according to the forecasts, it is most likely that the number of vessel calls at the EAW precinct may more than double, and in the high end forecast, more than quadruple.

Further:

The single largest number of vessels calling are rig tenders.

Now we witness your long overdue intention to proceed, as you put it, with the proposed marine supply base. It is pertinent to nut out some detail more than that supplied within your minimalist statement.

Indeed, I recommend the House read the newly-released invitation for expression of interest document available from the Invest NT website in its entirety to ensure the right questions are posed for the future. For instance, regarding securing private sector investment you state:

... we envisage will be delivered on a build, own, operate, and transfer basis.

Chief Minister, will the eventual private investor have the option to renew within their lease and, if not, why not? For example, Darwin International Airport Pty Ltd has a 50-year lease plus a 49-year option over Darwin international Airport from the Commonwealth of Australia under the *Airports Act 1996*.

The invitation for expressions of interest includes the following features to be addressed: creating necessary deep water access to new marine berths - and we are talking about another dredging problem here; are you confident this will work?; tanks and silos for fuel, chemicals and drilling muds; appropriate warehousing and workshops; multi-user berths, berth pockets, staging areas and channel connections. I question the Chief Minister: does the access channel lead to a secure lock basin, or to a protected dry dock?

During the estimates process, the following questions were raised by the member for Nelson.

In relation to the marine supply base, is that inside the port or is it inside the Land Development Corporation land?

The answer:

Conceptually, the way it is evolving - and we are still working this through with Mr Tyrrell and others - we are certainly working with the port and the Land Development Corporation. For the marine supply base, conceptually it would involve land at both parts. At this stage, it would involve land at the port but also some additional hard land which is currently under the control of the Land Development Corporation.

I turn to your invitation for expressions of interest under the heading 'Sight Size Detects' it reads:

The Territory considers that an appropriate amount of land to be made available for MSB is up to 17.8 ha. This includes an area of land approximately 7 ha and up to 10.8 ha for marine infrastructure. In addition an area of approximately 12.9 ha will be made available for the construction of a dredge channel to the MSB.

However, in the East Arm Master Plan, the preferred option reads:

... an area for a possible future marine supply base with up to 45 ha of land available for reclamation.

Chief Minister, what infrastructure does the Territory government have to provide? What investment in infrastructure will the private sector or the private operator have to provide? For instance, power. Under the summary of Darwin capability provided in the invitation of expression of interest there is the heading, 'Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services', but, in the text there is no mention of electricity - not one.

The chapter titled, 'Key Features of the Project', includes a clause 1.4(b) for power. Chief Minister, what have you done to plan for the supply of electrical power to the marine supply base? What about prompt resolution of the other urgent issues listed in the Darwin Port Corporation Master Plan? Where is your strategy to sort out those priorities? For example: relocation of the Navy's bunkering facility at the EAW precinct; an amphibious craft landing area for Defence; facilities for loading and unloading bulk chemicals, both inbound and outbound; expansion of storage for diesel fuels supply, particularly for regional developments; facilities for the handling of oil gas products from projects from the Middle Arm; dredging requirements again; the need for harbour developments for all tides access; the remediation of Pond D; contamination by the addition of material from dredging at the waterfront development; even a simple turning facility at the port gatehouse.

There are important criteria to be established for our oil and gas business right now, so let us hope that in 2014 we will eventually get upgraded cargo handling, water and fuelling systems to reduce rig tender turnaround time. Where and when are these issues being fully resolved? Chief Minister, yes we need a marine supply base, but for goodness sake, ensure that the correct infrastructure is included for the long-term benefit of the Territory.

In conclusion, I will share an example with you from Singapore, a country which has been serving the oil and gas industry for nearly 40 years. You will find a 52 ha offshore supply base catering for the region, jetty services, tug boats, supply vessels, barges and cargo ships. There is a medical centre and a canteen located inside the supply base. It hosts 200 established oil and gas-related companies. Their current stage of development will include one 280 m long by 36 m wide concrete deck wharf, and a rock revetment with extensive concrete pavement and hardstand areas, widening of the existing jetty structure over a length of 140 m, and a new two-storey operational building and ancillary structures, etcetera.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we commend the establishment of a Northern Territory marine supply base, but caution the need for care to ensure an efficient, workable solution for the future.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister for his important statement. I also thank the opposition for a very good analysis, and it raised many important issues about the development of the port, which is an area that needs much more discussion. I have a plan here, which is a concept for a proposed marine supply base, and the development shown on this plan is huge. It needs a reasonable amount of public scrutiny, because when you see the amount of land, or the amount of sea that is being reclaimed, if you can call it that, we would be interested to know, from an environmental aspect, what effect that will have on things like the tides and what effect it will have on other areas of the harbour. One of the issues faced when you start to change tidal movements is there are effects on the harbour.

I said I would only speak for a few minutes on this, because we have a fair bit of work to do today. I wanted to comment now because I have been talking to a person who has been involved in marine supply bases for a long time and has a lot of knowledge. His concern is, that by handing this over to a company, especially if it is a company involved in freight and transport, or that sort of industry, you may find that will work against other companies. I like the idea that he put forward.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a question I had in the estimates, and I was probably leading to that at that time as well - why could not the Land Development Corporation run this? It is a commercial body. I have not heard any complaints about the manner in which it has been looking after the Darwin Business Park, or the old TDZ. If you go there you would have to say that what is happening is pretty remarkable. There is huge development in that area; some of

the biggest sheds you will see, are in that business development area. That kind of development shows that the Land Development Corporation is capable of developing the services required for the port.

This will be a neutral body not involved in transport of materials to the oil and gas industry, but simply there to provide a service for all the companies needing to use the supply base. That way, you get away from any complaints or issues that may be raised. If you hand this over to a company already involved in supplying for the oil and gas industry, then you may find some of those companies start to say: 'We are being priced out' or, 'the prices are unfair'. Having an independent company operating this will be a far better way, after all, it is a service for the industry, and you would have to ask, is it an industry in itself? It would have to make some money because there will need to be maintenance of the supply base and people have to be paid. The Land Development Corporation would be an ideal body to run this important concept.

It is no small project. If you look at the amount of land that would need to be filled, this plan also is a multi-user barge landing. It shows some other areas set aside for bulk mineral stockpiles. It is a big area that needs to be developed and we should have the time to debate the issue fully so we can get the best outcome for the Territory and the best outcome for the suppliers using this supply base. We will also ensure the environment is not unduly affected.

If you are going to put that much extra onto the edge of the port there is sure to be some effect. It may not be detrimental, but I would be expecting that if we are going to develop the port and change its shape to that extent and include dredging, there may well be some environmental effects to be investigated before building this facility.

I am not against the idea. It has much support from those companies dealing with the oil and gas industry offshore. They want this facility. I am saying, instead of giving it to one of them, give it to a neutral body like the Land Development Corporation and allow the companies to use it without having to be concerned there may be some uncompetitive practices involved by allowing another freight company to run the show. That would be a far better outcome for this facility.

Debate adjourned.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Little Mindil – Transition from
Public to Private Land

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Speaker has received the following letter from the member for Port Darwin.

Madam Speaker

I propose for discussion this day the following definite matter of public importance: the transition of public land to private land at Little Mindil.

Yours sincerely

John Elferink
Member for Port Darwin.

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to discuss the issue of Little Mindil. I am grateful to the government for allowing this debate to occur outside the normal parameters of two speakers each. We should not waste the time of the House with two speakers each and we have other issues to get on with today. We have limited ourselves to one speaker each and I will get on with the matter now.

The other night in adjournment debates I started to raise the issue of Little Mindil and what has occurred there. The essence of what I said in adjournment debates was there were, at the Darwin Cup Ball, some surprising events which occurred, particularly on top of the escarpment area at Burnett Place overlooking the Little Mindil area.

It is my understanding that the other night the casino had seen fit to post, on top of Burnett Place, on top of the escarpment overlooking Little Mindil, and ultimately the casino, a security guard. As people approached the area from Burnett Place the security guard shooed them away. Depending on the account that was given, one person told me the security guard had explained the reason they were being shooed away was they did not want people looking at the ball as it was going on. Subsequent to my adjournment debate the other night, I have confirmed the other side of the story was the area at the top of the cliff was being protected because of the public safety issue. Both those reasons cause me some concern.

I will go to my concerns shortly, however, the reason I have remained reasonably mute on the issue of Little Mindil until now is I have accepted the assertions made by government, in good faith,

which deal with what was going to happen at Little Mindil.

I draw to members' attention the document I tabled the other night, namely document 944, which was an attachment to a media release issued by the then Minister for Lands and Planning, the member for Karama. Government has been at pains to reassure Territorians, and the people of Port Darwin, that what was going to happen at Little Mindil was not going to be something of profound effect, and they have given that guarantee. I was aware of the arrangement the other night, which was basically a leasing arrangement until a 10 year period expires when the land transfers from the ownership of the government to the casino.

That brings me to the issue of the top of the escarpment, because whilst the Northern Territory government is the owner of the land the leaseholder is now the SKYCITY Casino. People could well have been forgiven for relying on the document provided by the Minister for Lands and Planning, Delia Lawrie, that the area of Little Mindil was going to be a low-level development and the only thing to occur on the escarpment was rehabilitation.

Clearly that work has now been done. It is a low-level development, however, and this is the important part, the top of the escarpment everyone would have expected, quite reasonably, to remain a public domain to which the public is accustomed to have access. A heritage site sits directly opposite on the other side of Burnett Place; some of the old houses of Darwin, including the old magistrate's house, are in that area.

What we saw the other night was the exercise of a proprietorial right. This means the leaseholder was doing one of two things depending on the rationale granted or given by the security guards. If they were trying to prevent people from looking down into the Darwin Cup Ball then the right being exercised by the security guard, as an agent or employee of SKYCITY Casino, was an exclusive proprietorial right. If the other excuse is true, the same applies. If they are trying to prevent people from falling off the escarpment it naturally follows they believe they carry liability for the area thus demonstrating a proprietorial interest in the land. I am less inclined to believe that reason because if it were true a security guard would be posted at that location every night, which has not occurred.

The other component which concerns me is the way this matter is being dealt with. I note from my map from the Northern Territory land system, which I tabled - I think it is called the Atlas system - I cannot quite make it out but I think Lot 6663 or

6643 appears on that map. That is the area of currently private land on the casino side of Burnett Place leading to the edge of the cliff on the escarpment. A resident of my community was able to obtain a copy of that tabled paper, and expressed their difficulty in making out exactly what the boundaries were. I, therefore, seek leave to table a second copy of that document.

Leave granted.

Mr ELFERINK: I have taken the liberty for honourable members, of filling out in felt-tip marker some of the areas concerned.

One of the promises made by the Northern Territory government about Little Mindil was guaranteed public access rights to Mindil Beach. The document I have just tabled is taken from the Atlas system and matches inasmuch the document tabled the other night in relation to the boundaries of Lot 7651, which is the Little Mindil site.

I point out, before I talk about access to the beach, the lot number which appeared on the Atlas system a week ago over the top of the escarpment has now disappeared. There is a single lot which includes the escarpment and Little Mindil. Where there were two lots, there is now one. I presume this is part of the deal struck with the casino. I presume part of the deal is the casino has now - either forced upon them or by acquiescence - received ownership of the escarpment as part of the overall and now single lot.

Returning to the issue of access to the beach, I note that Lot 7651, the lot which is the area of Little Mindil, now including the escarpment down to the drain, protrudes onto Mindil Beach. Moreover, that lot, by all appearances, looking at the aerial photographs as well as Google Earth, as well as the Atlas system, appears to protrude to below the high water mark. It will be impossible, if the casino decides to exert their proprietary rights on Mindil Beach when the tide is in, to traverse Mindil Beach from Nurses Walk or pass through the Little Mindil Beach area and along to the rest of Mindil Beach. When this land transfers completely into the ownership of SKYCITY, who knows how they will exercise those proprietary rights when they have absolute freehold over it. I note also the land in question, for the record, is zoned Tourist Commercial.

Comparing what was given to the public in 2006 as an indication of what was going to occur at Little Mindil to what has actually been granted at Little Mindil, there are substantial differences. For honourable members, there is a nice little arrow in the 2006 document leading from Gilruth Avenue past the casino car park and along

onto the beach near the seawall marked 'Public Access'. No such thoroughfare on the Atlas system appears at all. One can only assume, for the term of the lease handover, there is some sort of contractual arrangement which demands public access. I do not know if any caveats exist beyond the term of the lease handover. Moreover, there is a clear area where it says, 'Extent of development' in the 2006 document. No such apparent limitation at all exists in the Atlas system produced today. The area which was merely marked 'Rehabilitation of the Escarpment' in the 2006 document produced by the government becomes the freehold possession of whoever owns the casino in about eight years' time.

Many people have raised the issue of Little Mindil over the last few years. I have been watching it develop, but now express my concern about the ability of government to, in any effective way, assert the privileges that the community has been assured of into the future.

Because the title itself is the only item of which I can find a public record, then I can only assume that some sort of caveats are guaranteed. I assume those caveats do exist in the leasing agreement between now and the terms of the exploration lease when the land converts to freehold, owned by whoever owns the casino at that time. I would like to know from the minister today what the terms of the current leasing arrangements are, and what guarantees, caveats or easements are in place once the title transfers to the owner of the casino in eight years' time. I am aware of the sacred site in the location and I am aware of the public access promise made by the Northern Territory government. I am also aware of the government's promise that access to the beach would be guaranteed at all times.

I would like the minister to make available to the people who live in my electorate of Port Darwin the document which is the leasing arrangement between the Northern Territory government and SKYCITY Casino. I would also like the government to outline any future arrangements or guarantees which have been given by the casino about what will happen to the land after the title transfers from the Northern Territory government to the owners of the casino.

It is not inconceivable that, if those guarantees have not been secured by the Northern Territory government, or any form of guarantees have been secured by the Northern Territory government, particularly after the transfer of title, a structure will not be built on top of the escarpment next to Burnett Place. That would offend the local residents substantially, because it would have the effect of diminishing one of Darwin's true heritage sites, which are the houses that overlook the Little Mindil area from Burnett Place.

I urge the government to come clean on the arrangement between itself and SKYCITY Casino and to outline, not what the casino's plans are, but what guarantees the government has secured. If they fail to do so, this issue will become a running sore for them into the future. I am concerned that these arrangements have already been struck, essentially secured to the point of no return. The fact that the lot on top of the escarpment has disappeared in the last week and merely been absorbed into the general lot, which is now the site of Little Mindil, is of concern to me, because it looks to me that this system is advancing very quickly.

Clearly, the casino believes it has a proprietorial interest in the top of the escarpment. The casino, looking at the Atlas map produced by the Northern Territory government system, would also suggest that access to the rights to the Little Mindil Beach are not guaranteed to transverse the beach. I am deeply concerned that, as time passes, the rights of the people of Port Darwin will be diminished by the proprietorial rights exerted by the owners of the casino into the future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the minister's reply and, believe me, there are many, many people who live in and around the area who are looking at this issue very, very closely indeed. If the minister fails to give satisfaction, it will become a problem for government.

Mr McCARTHY (Lands and Planning):
Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the discussion on this matter of public importance, and when you hear grammar using 'very, very', then you know how important this matter is.

Being a regular visitor to this fine city, when I became aware of this matter of public importance, I used the department and wonderful public servants to do the research so I could reply to this. As a visitor to this city, and now a minister in the Henderson government, visiting the site and watching the site take shape, I would like to add a personal comment: it is one of the most fabulous developments I have seen which will add to the whole foreshore extravagance which has been developed in the capital.

I will start my contribution by taking us back to the reality of the Little Mindil development and, as I have just mentioned, look what we have achieved at that site! As a result of strategic decisions by this government, a degraded, weed infested and poorly used site has been turned into a great area of open space for Territorians. I remember taking excursion groups to the site before it was developed. I remember visiting the site and seeing the potential, but also recognising the serious disadvantages which existed there,

and consequently my support for what has taken place. I do recognise the local member's concern and I hope today we will be able to address any concerns from constituents in the seat of Port Darwin.

Let us start with anyone who has been to that area lately and spent time at a major function like the Darwin Cup Ball. Maybe some members on the other side were privileged and had the good fortune to attend and would have seen this new area in operation and seen the wonderful outcomes and the potential for further opportunities there.

Let us go through the process and take it step-by-step. The rejuvenation of the Little Mindil site is the outcome of a transparent and public consultative process commenced in 2004. Late in 2004, the Northern Territory government sought comments from the public on the future use options for three sites located within the Myilly precinct. Initially, the consultation period was from 5 October until 12 November 2004, but was extended to 26 November 2004. The outcomes were published in a report titled *Myilly Point Precinct: Summary Results of Public Consultation*, available on the then Department of Planning and Infrastructure's website.

In May 2005, noting the prevailing views of the community, the Territory government determined to retain the Tourist Commercial zoning of Lot 5994 Little Mindil, while requiring that any future development be low-rise, and public ownership of the beach and foreshore. Unlike previous administrations, it is this government's policy to release Crown land for commercial development only through a public, competitive and transparent process, as occurred with the Little Mindil site. In line with the views gathered through community consultations, in March 2006, government publicly sought expressions of interest to develop a low rise, tropical, tourist resort in the Mindil Beach/Gardens locality, and offered Lot 5994, the Little Mindil site, for sale.

The expression of interest document outlined that the Territory government envisaged a resort that would be situated wholly or partially on Lot 5994, and that if the resort was not to be wholly on Lot 5994, then the facilities to be built on the lot must be integrated with the resort being developed elsewhere in the locality. Evaluation of the expressions of interest resulted in three proponents being invited to submit detailed development proposals. Detailed development proposals were lodged in August 2006 and proponents made presentations to the evaluation project team in September 2006.

The evaluation report on the detailed development proposals was considered by the

government in October 2006 and the SKYCITY Entertainment Group was selected as preferred proponent. Negotiations between the government and SKYCITY in relation to the final terms of the development agreement were concluded in mid-2008, including a requirement for SKYCITY to develop its existing lawn areas for a low-rise, tropical, tourist resort and the redevelopment of the Little Mindil site as open space.

I want to touch on that announcement of 9 June 2008 when the Chief Minister said in his media release:

... the sale of the area known as Little Mindil will allow the development of a new \$50m beachside resort on the SKYCITY lawns. This is a great project that will deliver opportunities for Darwin's tourism industry and provide a great parkland destination for families' ...

The Chief Minister was right. We now have a great parkland, and we will soon have a great resort, Darwin's first beachside resort, taking full advantage of our beautiful harbour.

The agreement process was overseen by a probity auditor to ensure fairness and impartiality were observed throughout the assessment process, and consistency was applied across all aspects. Government recognised the importance of the beach and foreshore area for the community. That is why we ensured the development agreement incorporates specific requirements for public access through the site to the Crown-owned Little Mindil Beach and foreshore, along with rehabilitation and maintenance requirements for the escarpment and tidal creek into the future.

The Crown lease term over the Little Mindil site was issued to SKYCITY Darwin Pty Ltd in July 2010, following the consolidation of Lot 5994 and Lot 4818. The consolidation of the lands enabled the protection of Power and Water infrastructure, and was an administrative action which did not result in any changes to the escarpment boundary. The Development Consent Authority issued approval for the Little Mindil redevelopment for leisure and recreation purposes in December 2009. This application process also involved public consultation and a public hearing by the DCA prior to its approving the development.

The works to redevelop the Little Mindil site have now been completed in accordance with the DCA approval, and the first Gala Ball was held at the new Little Mindil site on 31 July 2010. I am sure some of the members opposite attended this great event and will testify to the development and vast improvement in offering Territorians another element to the great lifestyle we enjoy.

Let us have a closer look at how far we have come from the weed infested and degraded Little Mindil of old to where we are now. I have some photographs to table, and these photographs clearly display wonderful opportunities for the community to enjoy this incredible site; the signature bridge over the creek, leading along a famous walk, the escarpment – and I took great notice of the escarpment when it was being cleaned up and renovated, and the revegetation process occurring, weed-free, and a real credit to the area and to the community that will enjoy it.

I show a photograph of the great open space with the access to the beach. I went for a little infrastructure in this one, and the car park, where the public can park their cars and walk through that area, have picnics, enjoy the amenity, and go to that famous beach. This one I really like: this shows you the access to what you can enjoy as a Territorian. For the public record, the wonderful plaque shows the Little Mindil site was officially opened by the Hon Paul Henderson MLA, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. These photos will go on the public record to acknowledge that incredible site we are discussing today.

The Little Mindil site is now held under a Crown lease by SKYCITY Darwin Pty Ltd and comprises open space areas, including a large lawn, the tidal creek, and the escarpment. A public walkway has been developed along the revegetated tidal creek which links Gilruth Avenue and Little Mindil Beach. The Little Mindil Beach and foreshore, which remain Crown land, directly adjoin the Little Mindil site and have been developed with a new promenade walkway linking Nurses Walk and Cullen Bay, and a pedestrian bridge crossing the tidal creek to connect Mindil Beach and the market area.

I was particularly interested in the area. What do you do when you are a visitor to this great city? Ask the locals. I found out Nurses Walk has a great history. One of my staff members tells me his mother did the walk every day when she was nursing and attending Darwin High School. What a great walk to school, I said to myself, from Cullen Bay down the escarpment, along a fantastic beach and then to school. I believe when she was nursing, she and the other nurses used to go walking and fishing in that area. She thinks it is great now it is easier to access the walk and there is a bridge over the creek to enable access, irrespective of stormwater and tide.

The Little Mindil site is zoned Tourist Commercial with smaller proportions on the beach side of the site within a Public Open Space zone. The zoning of the land came into effect with the introduction of the Consolidated NT Planning Scheme in 2007, and was a direct transition from the previous Tourist Business zone. The Open

Space zone extends beyond the boundaries of the Little Mindil site and covers the foreshore and Mindil Beach area.

Ongoing, permanent public access to the Little Mindil Beach and foreshore is secured, as these areas remain Crown land. Public pedestrian access from Nurses Walk to Darwin City Council land in front of the casino remains in government ownership and control. Additionally, public access to Little Mindil Beach along the new tidal creek pathway from Gilruth Avenue is secured for the public through a registered easement. The easement allows SKYCITY to close the pathway only 20 times a year for up to a maximum of 40 days. During these periods, the public can still access the Little Mindil Beach and foreshore via Nurses Walk or along the Darwin City Council owned land along the beach frontage of the casino.

Public access to the new grassed open space lawn is also secured through a covenant in gross. Like the tidal creek pathway, this area can only be closed to general access 20 times a year for up to a maximum of 40 days. This covenant is required to be carried forward onto any freehold title issued to SKYCITY. A freehold title can only be sought over the land once SKYCITY has fulfilled its obligations in relation to developing a low-rise, tropical, tourist resort on its existing site.

A further covenant in gross requiring SKYCITY to maintain the escarpment and tidal creek is also registered over the site. This covenant specifically requires SKYCITY to rehabilitate, preserve and maintain the tidal creek and escarpment now and into the future. The boundary of the SKYCITY/Little Mindil site extends to the top of the escarpment, but does not impede access along the road which separates the cliff top from the Burnett heritage houses. The boundary of the Little Mindil site was clearly identified in the expressions of interest documentation, and this documentation was available to the public, and has always included the escarpment. I understand SKYCITY placed barriers for safety purposes along the top of the escarpment during the recent gala ball event, but it did not in any way impede access along the roadway for the public.

Concerns have been raised that the escarpment will be developed in the future with cliff top towers similar to those that overlook the Waterfront redevelopment along The Esplanade. The covenant in gross, which requires protection and maintenance of the escarpment, will prevent development from occurring.

The Little Mindil site has now been developed into a great venue for the casino to host their outdoor entertainment functions, attended and enjoyed by thousands of Territorians each year.

The public continue to have access to the site and foreshore with greatly improved facilities.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I am sure the member for Port Darwin has seen comments made in the media by the former chief of staff to former CLP Chief Minister Marshall Perron, and I took great interest in these comments as well in my research. The comments read, and I am taking this from the discussion stream about media release on the Country Liberals website:

Not often you see me defending the government, John, but you are not factually correct about Little Mindil. The boundary of the allotment always extended to the top of the escarpment, while the public is always to have access through the land to the foreshore. SKYCITY was always to have the right to exclusive use for particular events. See following extract from Crown Lease publicly available through ILIS.

Now, it is point 16, and it is heavy language, but that is what you get to when you research these issues.

The lessee must either cause to be carried over or deliver up to the Territory on or before the registration of a certificate of freehold title to the leased land in the name of the lessee, duly executed, registrable, public easements, utility easements and the open space and maintenance covenant determined in accordance with the agreement which by their terms provide for:

- (a) restrictions on development of a defined open space within the leased land with a right of public access to the open space within the leased land during times when the lessee is not holding functions or events for a period of 10 years from the commencement date of this lease. Title to Lot 7651 does not extend below high water mark. The land was originally zoned Business B5 by the previous Country Liberal government. Rezoning it to TC, Tourist Commercial, merely brought it in line with the new planning scheme, indeed, this occurred after the sale process was complete and SKYCITY was selected as a tropical resort proponent.*

Sensible factual comments from someone who knows what they are talking about.

The weeds and erosion issues have been addressed and the Little Mindil site is now an asset for Darwin. SKYCITY is now proceeding to develop their tropical tourist resort and recently obtained approval to start the bulk earthworks. This will be another great development and a boost for our construction industry and economy.

Madam Speaker, I wish SKYCITY all the best with this new, exciting development. I look forward to enjoying the public spaces around Little Mindil and the new facilities at SKYCITY and I will be bringing all my relatives to town, and that will certainly be one of our tourist stops in this wonderful city of Darwin.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms LAWRIE (Justice and Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, this evening we are having valedictory speeches for the member for Araluen. I have to say that last week I would not have expected the member for Araluen to be having valedictory speeches this evening. I note that members wishing to speak about the member for Araluen will be speaking first. I call the member for Araluen.

Ms CARNEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, in this, my final speech in the parliament from this spot, I would like to do a few things. I would like to advise the reasons for my retirement, say some thank you's and remark on a few things.

In the statement I issued earlier today, which presumably many have seen, I said until recently I intended to contest the 2012 election. However, as a result of ongoing health issues of which members are generally aware and on the advice of my doctor, with whom I met two weeks ago, it is necessary for me to move on.

The people of Araluen, of whom I am very fond, are entitled to have a member of parliament who is able to represent them tirelessly. I am unable to continue to provide that level of representation so it is appropriate for me to move aside to allow someone who can, to represent them with every bit of devotion and energy they deserve. I regret that my announcement is so close to a federal election and I appreciate it will cause some inconvenience. However, one can never script these things and arguably there is never a good time.

Madam Speaker, I know some people will be disappointed by my decision today and to them I apologise, but as you and others present would appreciate, my own disappointment is very significant.

I thank the people of Araluen for placing their trust and confidence in me over the years. Representing them has been a genuine honour and a privilege. It has also been an enormous pleasure. I have enjoyed working for them, assisting them, advocating for them on a range of local issues as well as representing them in this place. I will always be grateful for the opportunity they have afforded me. I have been very fortunate, like some other members, to have formed friendships with many of my constituents and I sincerely wish them all the very best for the future.

Some other thank you's. I thank my Electorate Officer, Dee Davies, the best Electorate Officer in the Northern Territory, who served under Barry Coulter. This is a woman who has a very thorough and detailed understanding of this parliament, government and politics. I publicly thank her for her hard work, loyalty, support and friendship and for everything she has done for me over the years, especially in the last, very difficult, six months.

I also express my thanks to my partner of nearly 16 years, Carolyn, for her unwavering support. Partners and families, as we know, endure inevitably the worst of a politician's lot; she is no exception. My job, with its highs and lows, has presented numerous public and private challenges but together we have got through them and words can never adequately convey my thanks or repay the debt I owe her.

I thank the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and his staff as well as the fabulous staff of the Parliamentary Library Service, all of them, for their professional and friendly assistance to me throughout my time as a member.

Being a member of parliament has been an enjoyable and fascinating experience. Contrary to popular belief, I have formed some friendships on both sides of politics and I look forward to maintaining those friendships. I will miss many things about my job; I will miss the electorate work more than anything else and I will miss the people. I will also miss, perhaps slightly less so, what goes on in this building, the challenges, the theatre, the hustle and bustle, the adrenaline rushes, and the issues we debate.

When I was first elected in 2001, it was quirky timing. I was elected when the CLP lost government after being in government for nearly 27 years. I, of course, was delighted to be elected although most of my colleagues at that time were devastated by the loss. As I said in a debate several months ago, I was pretty philosophical about that election loss and the election of the Labor government. Over the years I have seen this government do some good things. I have also

seen this government do some bad things, and the same can be said of the opposition.

I am going to go down in our history as one of those unusual members of parliament who will have spent all their time in opposition. For others, that may create a level of frustration and anxiety. While I certainly would have liked the opportunity to have been a member of a government, I am acutely aware of the importance of the role of a good opposition. Governments are famously bad at keeping themselves accountable, and in order for citizens to have good government they need and deserve a good and effective opposition.

I was especially aware of this after the 2005 election when I became the leader of an opposition of four. If ever there was a time for an opposition to be diligent, hard-working and effective, it was then, when the government, with its members, staff and other resources, ridiculously outnumbered the four member opposition. Although parts of that period were ghastly, it was a time when I was constantly driven by the importance of the need to be a good opposition, and one which would hold government to account. That was the critical role I saw we had and, on a good day, I even thought if we got everything right we could even demonstrate we would be an alternative government.

Years later, as many believe the CLP may win the 2012 election, and after working so hard and seemingly so long to keep government to account, I am going. It is fair to say my political timing is awful, however, I can leave happy in the knowledge I have done all I could to contribute to the very important role of ensuring our citizens have an effective opposition, and one which holds government to account.

Someone - and I cannot remember who - said to me many years ago the highs I would experience in opposition would be 10 times greater and more enjoyable than the highs ever to be experienced in government. I asked that person why that was the case and he said: 'Because you have to work 10 times harder for them in opposition'. That is certainly the case. A win in opposition has to be worth 10 times more than a win in government.

I have spoken about many issues over the years. I remember in the first term receiving a ministerial statement about weed control and *Mimosa pigra*. I did not even know what *Mimosa pigra* was. I ducked out to the lobby, someone gave me a three minute crash course and then I was able to be on my feet for many more minutes talking about it, which was somewhat remarkable.

I know people here know about the issues that are especially important to me. Child protection

and violence against women are particularly important. I know there are other important issues and other important concerns, but these issues are not like infrastructure or tourism. They are serious problems confronted on a daily basis by some in our community who have no, or little, opportunity to improve their circumstances. I believe now, as I did when I entered the parliament, we are not much of a community if we cannot make all our members safe.

I have often quoted from a long forgotten source that children who are abused or neglected are highly reliant on a well functioning child protection system. We owe it to Territory children to provide them with one. I deeply regret I will not be in this House when the board of inquiry delivers its findings in the next month or so, however, I have a telephone and I welcome any calls from any member of this Assembly, because if I can contribute in any way or assist I would be very happy to do so.

There have been times – and I am sure I am not alone in this – in and out of this parliament where I have laughed, cried, been uplifted, been disappointed, been frustrated, and outraged. There have also been times when I have felt immensely satisfied. We see in this place the best of people and the worst of people. It is, in so many ways, a peculiar and even artificial environment. But, for all that, it is a very important institution and I have been honoured to have been a part of it.

Madam Speaker, these words comprise all I wish to say. I will not be making any further public comment. I wish members and parliament of the Northern Territory the very best for the future. Thank you.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, I have enjoyed working with Jodeen since 2001. In fact, it was a little before that - and it might have been Tennant Creek at a party meeting. I was immediately taken by the obvious intelligence and the interest in important matters. It was something I was pleased to see in our party.

Being elected in 2001, we share that unusual time in history where there is the exhilaration of being elected to find that a number were leaving the doors, the end of an era. We came in at that point, and not to go any further than to say it was a very difficult time from 2001 to 2005. We shared those times together. In fact, it was just you and I who were there from 2001 to 2005. Our memoirs later on will tell the whole story.

Then, from 2005 to 2007, Jodeen, it was an honour for me to serve you as leader. They were

also very difficult times, but we felt we were in a unique time in history; we made the best of it. It was an honour to serve you. I have always admired your professionalism. I can remember our conversations. I have not studied the law, but I have been increasingly interested in how the law works. You have been a good tutor in that, particularly when it comes to the power of words and the construction of sentences and arguments. I have learnt much from you.

I thank you for the professionalism you brought to the team, to this parliament, the cut-through you provided by the strength of a well-organised argument, with research supporting that argument. It has been most impressive and, many times I have been so pleased you are on our side, because I would not like to be on the other side of such an argument if you are not prepared.

For your assistance as Whip - sometimes I have reflected, when there were just the four of us, it was not too hard for a Whip to do their job. However, cats are difficult to herd, and I admire the work you have done as Whip. It is not an easy matter to hold it together.

They often say for anyone who embarks on their journey in life, as we all have, you want to get to a point and be able to turn around and see there is legacy that stands there. I often look at public buildings and I see plaques - bronze plaques, brass plaques, plastic plaques. I always look at the person's name and, more often than not, they do not ring a bell at all. I do not think that is the sort of legacy Jodeen would ever draw comfort from, and nor is that a sustaining legacy: a plaque on a building.

What Jodeen has left is a response, and a welcome response, to the very important issue of the protection of children. That is a monumental legacy, and I say to you today it is a legacy that I, and I am sure my colleagues, will honour, and to ensure that which has been established continues to serve the interests of children. The fact that inquiry is on foot, I give you credit for, Jodeen, because it would not have happened. Your relentless pursuit of that which was right ultimately yielded those results. The beneficiaries will be children today, tomorrow and into the future. I thank you for that.

I have to remember to mention one thing, it is just between you and me, Jodeen, one thing I remember most of all and enjoyed was that drive we did from Palmerston to Katherine to some meeting. We had a good chat all the way there and all the way back and discovered our mutual interest in art. Often in this business we do not get to know each other very well. There are little times when we do get insights into each other,

and I just let you know, it is a personal thing, but I really enjoyed getting to know you at that point and your interest in art and my interest in art as well.

To you and Carolyn, I wish you all the best for what lies ahead. You can rest for a while and know that you have left something of great value that will last for a long time. The example you set in here, the professionalism, the hard work that has borne results in action around the issues, children in particular, stand. You can look back and see that you have done a good job.

Mr HENDERSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I pay my respects and say thank you, Jodeen, for your contribution to political life in the Territory, and also to this parliament. I will not say it has been a joy being opposite you, Jodeen, in many debates in this House over the years, but I can certainly say it has always been a challenge.

I agree with you entirely on the role of opposition. I am the only member on this side of the House who has actually spent time in opposition, two years in opposition. There were many members on this side of the House and some very formidable members, and very formidable former members on this side of the House. It is the role of the opposition to keep the government of the day held to account. When you are a minister and you have a very feisty, determined, competent shadow minister on your heels, it certainly keeps a minister honest.

Jodeen, you are a person of enormous ability in the advocacy you have led in this House, particularly around violence against women and children, enormous ability. I do believe, in spite of the political battles which we have engaged in, you are also a person of great integrity and honesty, and I commend that in any opponent. When you are dealing with an opponent whom you know has great integrity and honesty it puts some reality into the debate that you are having of the position you have held.

We have had many debates over the years, and I pay tribute to you during those days after 2005 when you did lead an opposition of four. My time in the Labor Party goes back many years when we had a very tiny opposition. I know, not firsthand in the way you did, how hard that must have been: to sit with four people and confront benches all the way across to the other side. Your feistiness, your ability to hold us to account - you should be proud of those days. You did an extraordinary job, even if you were a bit shrill in here sometimes, Jodeen, just a touch shrill. I can bellow with the best of them, but I think you out-bellowed me on a few occasions. I am sure you have many memories.

Even from opposition you can make a difference, and all of us enter and put our hands up in that branch meeting for pre-selection for a seat. We all do that wanting to make a difference. You can look back genuinely on your time in this Chamber, knowing that even though you did not have the opportunity to serve as a minister, you did make a difference. You certainly made a difference in your advocacy around women and children. The fact is that all the ministers who have held those portfolios over the years have taken your contribution seriously. Those contributions have found their way, reflected in legislation, reflected in policy development and policy thinking - maybe not to the extent you wanted or hoped for. I know all my colleagues whom you opposed over those years on those issues certainly took your views seriously and took them on board for the evolution of policy and legislation.

Although you did not have the opportunity to serve as a minister, you can leave this parliament knowing you did make a difference and that is a good effort from opposition. Well done!

Political life does take its toll. It is hard on families; it is hard on our health. We all look back on the photographs of when we come into this place and we had more hair, it was less grey, some of us pile on the kilos, take it off and put it back on again. The pressure on families and the people we love is extraordinary. Political life does take its toll. I am sorry to hear about your health, but I know now the weight of political office will be off your shoulders. You can get away and relax and smell the roses, and do the things you want to do, instead of the things you have to do as part of the hurly-burly of this life. I hope, and I am sure, you will go from strength to strength. All the best for the future, Jodeen, I wish you well.

Madam Speaker, this is also a farewell to a real friend and colleague of mine and, with the indulgence of the House, there is only one opportunity to say farewell to Alf Leonardi who is having his last sittings as my Deputy Chief of Staff. He is staying on for another couple of months. He spent his life surrounding this parliament and I have to say a quick adjournment to Alf tonight.

It has been a dramatic day for announcements of retirement and, after more than 24 years in Territory politics, Alf has decided to move on from the strange political world that he has inhabited for 24 years to another world. I am very unsure how he will fit into it, but he is going to give it a go.

Alf came to the Territory from Queensland in 1985 to take a job with the Central Land Council. In 1986, he joined Brian Ede, the member for Stuart, in Alice Springs as an Electorate Officer. I

first met Alf in that electorate office in Alice Springs in about 1988. I had joined the party in 1987. I was in Alice Springs for work and I saw Brian's office and thought I would drop in and say g'day. I have never seen anything like it in my life; it was total chaos. There were many countrymen all trying to access the phone and Alf, surrounded by boxes and paper, was trying to create some order as to who could use the phone. That was the first time I met Alf Leonardi and we have been firm friends ever since.

What a different town that would have been back in the 1980s, and Alf speaks fondly of this time in that office with Brian. When Brian took over as Opposition Leader in 1990, Alf stayed on as a policy advisor and spent much time up and down the track representing Brian and supporting both Brian and other Labor members in the bush. Alf helped run, and did run, many election campaigns. When Brian retired in 1996 and Maggie Hickey took over as leader, Alf, by then a key part of the Labor Party, stayed on as a policy advisor to Maggie. In 1997, he went to work with Clare Martin in the Fannie Bay electorate office. Friends recall him surrounded by metre-high stacks of filing; strangely, he could always find the appropriate documents with very little effort.

Whilst working in the Fannie Bay electorate office he was inundated with requests by residents along Hudson Fysh Avenue for it to be closed to all but local traffic. As many would know, Alf has never got his driver's licence so, whilst on his way home, Alf was dismayed whenever his taxi would use Hudson Fysh Avenue as a quick thoroughfare to Bagot Road. Alf would, without doubt, receive a phone call from a local who had spied him using that road as a short cut.

When we won government in 2001, Alf became an integral part of the team, whether it was a senior adviser to Kon Vatskalis on many occasions - keeping Kon under control is a big job - delivering budgets with Syd Stirling, being Clare Martin's Chief of Staff, or my Deputy Chief of Staff. His passion for this job is incredible and his work rate is without equal. He is almost always the first one to arrive in the morning and the last one to leave at night. Alf, putting it simply, you will be impossible to replace.

Whilst we all appreciate the long hours he works now, just imagine in the days of opposition, there was only a staff of six and just as many policy areas and nearly as many MLAs to support as we currently have. As well as cutting up the carrots and celery for no frills soirées we organised for visitors, Alf's main job was to pull together policies and alternate plans. Alf did an inspired job. Those days, Alf used to have a swag in his office. It was not for sleeping in the outdoors, but for Alf to take power naps during an

all night policy drafting session. You would know if Alf was under the pump when he would bring the swag into work, break all previously made dietary promises and get stuck into a huge laksa. Twenty-four hours later the Labor opposition would have a policy document produced.

It was a hard slog in opposition, and often a small band of hard-working MLAs and staffers kept the Labor candle burning during those long years.

One of his long-time colleagues, Jamie Gallacher, also recalls those long nights and the incredible amount of time Alf was willing to spend ensuring the policies were well written. Many laughs, tears and more than a few drinks were shared during those years. He also said policy discussions with Alf could include shouting, arm waving, door slamming, long bouts of silence, but he never, and I mean never, failed to produce what was needed.

With indulgence, I have several pages to go ...

Members: Please, go on.

Mr HENDERSON: Alf used to smoke, and during those times when you could still smoke in the office, Alf would be surrounded by Diet Coke cans and overflowing ashtrays; he was, and still is, the ultimate political campaigner.

One issue which always arose was his despair at having to fly, and the amount of alcohol he needed to consume to relax him for a two hour trip to Alice usually needed 48 hours preparation time. When he went overseas a couple of times, I believe it was about a week!

Another fond memory from his EO days was during a cyclone. With water leaking through the roof, computers sizzling and urgently trying to get Telstra to reconnect the phone lines, a constituent presented Alf with a terrified baby bird. After several remonstrations, hands flapping in his usual Italian style, Alf simply tucked the bird under his arm and continued to fight with Telstra. I had not heard that story before.

Alf has committed much of his working life to the Labor Party and the Territory, in opposition and in government. He may be largely unknown by the general public, but he is one of that small, dedicated group of people who commit themselves to making democracy work.

All of us in this House, whichever side of politics, know there is an enormous amount of work required to keep our system of government alive and vibrant. As politicians, we all put in a fair effort, but I believe we all know we certainly need wonderful staff to make it all work.

Amongst all the members of staff who have come through this House, I do not believe there are any who have put in the length of time and effort that Alf has. I am sad he is leaving, but I know he will still be giving his all to the Territory and, for that, I am grateful.

I asked my office to contact as many past colleagues as they could for more Alf anecdotes but, unfortunately, many of them have advised they are unable to contribute any of their recollections of Alf mainly because they are not fit to mention in this House!

Alf will be around for a couple more months yet; he is not leaving the Northern Territory. He could never leave the place he loves so much and to which he has contributed so much. He really is the ultimate true believer in the Labor Party. Not only the enormous work he has done developing policy—I do not know what your policy frameworks are like through the CLP, but platform committees and policy committees in the Northern Territory Labor Party, trying to balance all the individual issues, the factional issues and actually get platform through conference—the many hours of Alf's life he has spent on those committees, and the Rules Committee; I believe it took nearly 10 years to change the Labor Party rules, and Alf was on that Rules Committee for all of those 10 years, and finally got them through. No one out there will give a rat's about that, apart from us.

That is the type of person Alf is—he really is the ultimate true believer—he will continue to believe.

I am not sure how Alf is going to function out in the real world doing a normal job. He will arrive for work at 6.30 am and find the office closed; the cleaners will be booting him out at 7.30 pm. He is not a great person for meetings and I am sure we might see Alf back in some way in the future, because I do not think he will survive in the real world but I really hope he does.

Alf, my sincere thanks and also from everyone you have worked with over those 24 years. Mate, you have done an enormous job. We all wish you well in your new life but you are welcome to walk back in the door anytime you chose.

Thank you, for your indulgence, colleagues.

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the member for Araluen.

In my previous employment with the Minerals Council we held an annual mine rescue competition, and in 2005 the event was held in Alice Springs. As was usual with the Minerals Council, all local members and the Mines minister

were invited to the presentation dinner on the Sunday evening. Sadly, the Mines minister could not attend, nor could any of the local members, with the exception of a person called Jodeen Carney who I did not know much about, nor did the competition people. I can tell the House the burly miners and the suppliers who were there that evening, after a few drinks, were very impressed with Jodeen taking time out on a Sunday evening to sit with them talking about twin ropes, protective gear, and which bringing-up apparatus was the best. I am not sure how much Jodeen remembers from that evening, but it left an impression with me and I was thankful for her time attending an event.

I was also thankful for meeting someone like Jodeen because, in the normal course of our lives, our paths most likely would not have crossed, as we are seemingly poles apart in interests, attitudes and backgrounds - or so it would seem.

Let me give you some examples. Jodeen drives a nice clean car; I drive a feral ute. I have made Jodeen ride in my old ute in the past, and did she whinge, all the way - about the smells, the look, the accessories; you name it, everything about it was wrong. Jodeen dislikes dogs; I have four of the mutts - hence the smells in the ute. Jodeen dislikes firearms; I am a gun owner. Jodeen is an urban dweller; and I am a full feral bush person. I have been known to bag lawyers quite a bit, and Jodeen is a lawyer. Jodeen is known for her very fine and probably valuable etchings; I collect Phantom comics which are not that valuable at all. My lack of tolerance for certain social issues is well known to my side of the party; Jodeen embraces a wide range of social issues and does it well. Recently in this House, I referred to Jodeen as our side's 'token lefty' and I am to the right of Genghis Khan.

Despite what seems to be a chasm of differences, there is much that holds us together. I have always admired Jodeen's drive and commitment, and the level of seriousness she gives to her research, her work, and the causes she supports. There is never 'near enough is good enough' with Jodeen, and the people she supports and helps know this. That is why she was a good lawyer and she was good as a local member and a parliamentarian.

Jodeen knew what she wanted and set out to achieve it. There was no thought of failure and, in her success and achievements, there was no overt display for all to see. Rather, Jodeen took on board the successes and continued forward as if the successes were not so much hers as more the people's she was seeking to assist, help or represent.

Jodeen's contribution to Territory politics and legislative reform will be remembered for many years to come. Her work in making legislation dealing with child protection, sexual assault, and justice the best we could possibly have will be her foremost legacy, as will her dedication, commitment, and leadership.

I have learnt much from Jodeen in her work in these areas, and would not have paid any attention previously. I know I will from now on because if Jodeen is trying to make it a better place then so should I.

I am glad Jodeen came to that Mine Rescue Competition dinner and allowed me to be part of her life and to receive her friendship. I wish all the very best for her, her partner, and her family.

Mrs AAGAARD (Nightcliff): Madam Deputy Speaker, tonight I recognise the political and parliamentary career of the member for Araluen, Ms Jodeen Carney. As has been demonstrated over and over again, a day is a long time in politics. I would not have predicted these sittings would see the retirement of the member for Araluen, and I feel sorry that they have. I hope her health improves with retirement from politics, and she is able to pursue a long and satisfying career in another area.

I note that today is 19 August and, therefore, the member for Araluen has been a member of this parliament for nine years today. Like me, and a number of other members, she was elected in 2001 at the time of the change of government in the Northern Territory. As she has alluded to, it was quite a difficult time to have been elected.

The member for Araluen entered parliament as a person of integrity with a number of passions and a genuine desire to effect positive change for the people in her electorate and the Northern Territory. I believe she has succeeded. Over the years, she has managed to hold the government to account, particularly in areas of child protection, and detailed legal bills - there would be a number of members in the House who did not have any idea what they were about - and has also demonstrated a continued dedication to the people of her electorate and of Central Australia in general.

She has also given a number of impassioned speeches in this House. When I was thinking about Jodeen and her contribution, a number of her speeches and debates came to mind, including the gay and lesbian debate in 2003 where she very courageously crossed the floor and joined the government with those changes to that legislation; the Victorian bushfires debate where her brother's home and family were

involved; as well as several speeches relating to child protection.

The member for Araluen and I enjoy a special friendship across the political divide - which is probably somewhat surprising. It probably started when she became the Leader of the Opposition in 2005 and I became the Speaker. At that time, the Territory was leading the rest of Australia in senior parliamentary female representation, with the Chief Minister, Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker all being female. I also note that the member for Araluen was the first and only female leader of the Country Liberals, a great personal achievement.

I comment too, how difficult it was being the leader of a team of four, but what you made up for in lack of numbers, you certainly made up for in volume as I recall during that time. There was much latitude given by the Speaker in relation to the volume in the House, and while there were only four opposition members and two Independents, frequently their volume would be greater than the 19 members on the government benches.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the member for Araluen's passion for art. Some members would be aware that last year, in the lead up to the Alice Springs sittings, the member for Araluen asked me to open an exhibition of her collection of etchings. I kept saying at the opening they were paintings, and she kept saying to me they are etchings. She has a particularly spectacular collection of etchings - you have Brett Whiteley's and all sorts of famous Australian painters ...

Ms Carney: It is a lithograph, but that is okay.

Mrs AAGAARD: What was that? I did not hear that.

Ms Carney: It is a lithograph.

Mrs AAGAARD: Lithographs. Well, whatever they were, they were very good, and it was a particularly spectacular collection. In trying to prepare for that speech to launch that exhibition, I spent time looking at all the different etchings and lithographs, and it seemed to me that, for each part of the member for Araluen's phase of her life, there was an etching.

The first one she received at about 13, or as a teenager, from her parents, and that was the beginning of her collection. Then she had some when she entered university, and when she graduated from university. There was a special one which had been given to her by a family friend, quite a valuable piece of art, when she thought she had failed her law classes, although

she did incredibly well at Melbourne University. Then there were others, all parts of her life, graduating from law, being admitted to the Bar and later in life, her parents, Willi and Kevin Carney, came for the opening of parliament in October 2001, and there is an etching given to her at that time, and at other stages such as when she became the Leader of the Opposition.

This is a very significant stage in your life, member for Araluen, and I encourage you to go to Framed and buy a very special etching, so you can move on to the next phase of your life with the grace and integrity that you have shown so far.

Mr CONLAN (Greatorax): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I am able to stand here tonight and say a few words about my good friend, Jodeen Carney. Jodeen and I met, I think it would almost be 10 years maybe not quite to the day, when I moved in next door to her on South Terrace, before she was a member of parliament. She was a lawyer in Alice Springs and I had just moved into a flat. I remember upsetting her and Carolyn on quite a few occasions with loud parties and that sort of stuff, but they were very tolerant of that and we used to give each other a wave in the driveway.

Jodeen is renowned - and I know it has been spoken about tonight - for her strength and her fortitude, and Carolyn and Jodeen are very strong women, not easily brought down. That formidable mettle was tested one particular day when Carolyn came to my house and said: 'There is a dead mouse in the closet. Can you do something about it?' So I went over and, sure enough, I found a rat. It was buried amongst all the shoes and whatever. I rescued these poor damsels from this mouse, and that bonded us a little more. I remember Carolyn bringing me a bottle of wine to say thank you.

We formed a friendship there. Territory Today started up when I was the breakfast announcer on 8HA and, at times, Jodeen was a guest on the radio station as a local member of parliament. She would come on and we would have lighthearted chats about things; it was not really any political stuff.

I do remember, though, we embarked on a bit of a campaign together on the radio to bring Virgin Blue to Alice Springs. You might have been shadow minister for Tourism at the time and that was the point. That also sparked a few debates in the early days with the member for Johnston. I am not sure what the portfolio was, perhaps the minister for Transport or Tourism, but the member for Johnston was heavily involved. This was about 2002, well before Territory Today, so the combat between the member for Johnston and me started very early.

I remember Jodeen and I formed more of a friendship through that and we eventually had a bit of a win. Certainly a win as far as opposition goes and a win for Central Australia by bringing Virgin Blue to Alice Springs.

As I moved on to host the Territory Today program our friendship strengthened and we became quite good friends. I used to request you in the studio quite often as a local member and, as a result of that, we strengthened our friendship, but it was in 2007 when we sort of got married, I suppose, with the Greatorex by-election. I know my wife did not see me for a long time and Carolyn did not see you and so we were essentially hitched and spent four weeks, arm in arm, knocking on doors around the electorate of Greatorex and that really cemented our friendship.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity you presented me to come into this parliament. It has been a life changing experience and not something that is easily come by. There are only 25 members in this House and many people want these jobs, so I am eternally grateful for the opportunity you presented me. However, you did not tell me everything that is involved in the job and I am sure, if you did, you would be flat out getting people to stick their hands up if you told them the whole truth.

It was a wonderful time. We can look back on that time of the Greatorex by-election and I think we did have great fun. I was part of that team of four for 12 months and we were both wondering what the future might hold for the Country Liberals and where we both might end up if we did not succeed at the Greatorex by-election. But, the slogan for that campaign was *Losing is not an option* and we got there in the end.

Jodeen, you have proven in opposition clearly and you have been a role model for all of us, certainly on this side of the House. Most of us, 90% of us, apart from perhaps the member for Port Darwin, the Opposition Leader and the member for Fong Lim, are very new members of parliament and you have shown us all how to get in there and get things done.

You have been a shining light to those of us in opposition to show that opposition can make a difference and can contribute to the betterment of the Northern Territory. The most recent example, which has been spoken about tonight, is the Child Protection Inquiry and you can certainly hang your hat on that. That is a wonderful testament to you and your strength, your calibre and your character overall.

I know that as parliamentary colleagues it is coming to an end. As I said, it has been 10 years almost to the day, as far as the friendship goes,

and I am certain our friendship will continue. I look forward to being your friend in a less parliamentary capacity as we move into the next phase of your life. So hear, hear, Jodeen, good on you!

Ms SCRYMGOUR (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I wish to contribute to the adjournment, which is actually quite sad. I remember coming into this Chamber in 2001 as a new member, and the person I walked up to the Clerk's desk with was the member for Araluen. I often look at the photo which showed Jodeen and me much younger, I must admit, and I was much skinnier in 2001 than I am now.

It has been amazing to reflect how our lives have paralleled since 2001. To hear of your resignation - I believe this parliament is losing someone with great intellect, integrity and with the courage of her convictions. Sometimes it is hard for members of parliament, but you have worked through many of the hard issues since 2001. I remember your swearing-in, and my husband, who has been a criminal lawyer for a long, long time, was sitting behind listening to your maiden speech where you listed all the legislation you were going to push through government and fix. David was blown away because he was trying to look up the legislation you were going to address. He was very impressed and he has listened to your debates; not that he agreed with everything you were saying, but listened with much interest to your contribution.

As a minister I believe you are the only member on the opposition it has been an honour to have worked with - not just on the issues of child protection, and your commitment to child protection, but when I became the minister for Child Protection we had legislation overseeing the child protection system in the Northern Territory which was over 20 years old. We had an exposure draft which had gone into the community, and I thank you for your assistance in drafting modern legislation.

Often we forget that we need a good system; we also need a good legislative framework to protect those children. You should be proud of that legislation. We worked quite solidly together on that, and it shows sometimes on important issues there is a lesson for all of us: we can put aside our political differences, our own ideologies, and work for the benefit of the Northern Territory. For you and me it was about those children and your contribution to that will always be recognised. That is the sad thing; that same courage and conviction on your side of politics - I look at my colleagues and it is something we are committed to, and it is not just children.

When we passed the motion in this parliament there was a bond, particularly amongst the female members of parliament, on violence against women – there was the then member for Port Darwin, Sue Carter, yourself, Clare Martin was the Chief Minister, myself, the member for Karama, and the member for Nightcliff; all the women in this parliament working together. We came up with the ‘no drop’ policy, and put in place that policy in the hospital system, which had not been in the Northern Territory before. That policy started changing and assisting women, particularly Aboriginal women, who were going through the hospital system. I know many people have looked at your contribution to child protection, and you can walk away from this parliament knowing you made a difference.

You made a contribution to Aboriginal women, constantly putting on the agenda of government not to sit on our laurels or to forget there are issues confronting our women. There is the ‘no drop’ policy and the mandatory reporting; there were many things, particularly for women. That is another issue I worry about, with the removal of that commitment, to keep on the agenda of the opposition issues affecting women, because I do not think that same conviction is going to be there with your departure.

The Chief Minister and most speakers summed up your intelligence. The Leader of the Opposition talked about your intelligence, your good sense, your wit. I often smiled at the banter between you and the now Chief Minister, and the grilling – well, he called it ‘shrilling’ - you would give different ministers. Your ability to prosecute is something - I remember David coming in and watching parliament one day. He was watching you grill - I forget which minister it was - and I think Peter Maley was the member for Goyder then. Maley was struggling with the legislation and you had to show him. David said: ‘She has the ability to do that because she worked in the courts before’, and it was; it was because you practised as a lawyer before you came in. I suppose it takes one lawyer to know another lawyer. I think Maley is still the same today; I do not think he has progressed from that. Maybe he needs you to show him how to go through that, member for Araluen ...

Members interjecting.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: What was that?

Mr Elferink: The problem is, you might be right.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: I will miss you. I will not say goodbye because it will be good to maintain contact with you and retain that friendship. We have always had the ability to have a discussion.

People have sometimes worried about it when I had a discussion with you. ‘What are they talking about; what are they sharing?’ It is good in this game to have a friend and friends. People often say in politics you do not have friends. Like you, I have been fortunate to have colleagues I am friends with but, also, to be able to say there is someone on the opposition bench I respect and classify as a friend.

I look forward to seeing you beyond this life and I wish you and Carolyn all the best.

Mr GILES (Braitling): Madam Speaker, I have listened to everyone speak tonight. I met Jodeen in 2005, just after you became the ‘gang of four’ we have heard so much about.

Being a fairly sensitive and emotional kind of person, this is difficult for me to talk about. It is really just sinking in. In the five years I have known you, and since I have been elected for two years, I have not really thought about the contribution you have made to my life. I have not had the time to reflect on that. Since being elected you and I often speak on a daily basis, and we have talked about different things and worked together. I have picked up much from you in a personal capacity and also in a professional capacity.

I have watched you kick the daylight out of people in the Chamber and in estimates, and seen you prosecute the cases the member for Arafura just spoke about. There are 10 others on this side of the Chamber who will excel because of the learning you have provided us. I am no different and it will probably take me three to six months to really understand many of those things you have shown and taught me, and much of that learning will probably come at night. It is funny; the dynamics of politics in Alice Springs is very Country Liberal, as one might say.

Ms Carney: More Country than Liberal.

Mr GILES: That is right. For someone like me, having had my backside kicked twice before in federal elections, it was fantastic to walk into a solid base. You were the person who made that. It was really good to have that support in a political sense.

Part of my reflection, without being self-interested, is to sit back a little and say, well, what now? How do you continue the legacy which you have built for the last nine years to the day? I think some time in the future the member for Grotorex and I will be asking: ‘How do we live up to Jodeen Carney?’ Some of us have only been elected for a short period of time - the member for Grotorex for three years, and me for two years. It is almost that point in time when you are at a

fork in the road. Do you stand up and lead? What if you are not as good as Jodeen? That is the point where it is now: to stand up and be as good as Jodeen. That is what it is about. It is about stepping up to the next level. I think the member for Greatorex and I will have to now do that and that will be a huge responsibility. I do not mean to reflect on us in our roles, but that is the position it will put us in. It will difficult for us to get there.

Let me reflect on an overseas trip I took last year. I am sure the member for Daly and the CLP era will come out. Michael Howard, the Opposition Leader for the Tories in Great Britain, spoke to us. There were about 50 in the delegation. He said the first time he held his shadow Cabinet, John Howard, who was the Prime Minister at the time, addressed their shadow cabinet. He asked: 'How many of you like your jobs?' About half of the people put their hands up and said: 'I love my job'. John Howard said: 'Well, you should all be sacked', and he was serious. Michael Howard said: 'Why should they be sacked?' He said: 'Because everyone in the opposition should hate their job. You all want to be a minister, you want to be in government so you can achieve the things you set out to achieve when you were first elected and you made your opening speech'.

You take a lot away from those sorts of things, and I took that away; I thought that was very important. To recognise that Jodeen has been in opposition for nine years and has not made it into government, busted herself, and, hearing that it is 10 times better than achievements in government is a message I will remember and it fits into what I heard from Michael Howard and John Howard.

To hear of your health and the situation you are in, I personally feel it. It is terrible to be in that situation. I have had a few conversations with Carolyn over the time and I am sure she will be happy to have you back more now. I am sure you will enjoy more time together. In relation to Alice Springs and my job in my electorate, I say, thank God you are going because the number of people who ring me up and ask: 'How do I find Jodeen?' and I say: 'You are in my electorate.' They say: 'But, I really want to talk to Jodeen'.

I had a caller today from Stirling Heights: 'I am trying to get to Jodeen to find out how to vote'. 'Well, I can help you.' 'But, I like Jodeen.' Good on you! So, there may be an opportunity now to bring that together.

The recognition of your name in a political sense, your popularity, the people who know you, the people who respect you, even the ones who do not vote for you who still respect you, is a testament to your efforts in Alice Springs. We punch above our weight in Alice Springs and you

have been the one throwing the right hooks for a number of years. When I sit on my backside when I am retiring, I hope I have achieved some success and have that same feeling you must have for everything you have done, as disappointed as you must feel to be leaving. I did not write any notes because I did not have that time to reflect ...

A member: You write notes?

Mr GILES: Well, sometimes I write notes. You will be sadly missed by me. I have learnt stacks and, in that three to six month period, when I work out much of the stuff that I have learnt from you, I will make some notes and then I will make sure that I improve on all of those things. So, thank you.

Mr HAMPTON (Stuart): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the contribution made to this House by the retiring member for Araluen, Jodeen Carney. The member for Arafura did say it right; it is a sad occasion. Even though we sit on opposite sides of the fence, politically, I applaud the member for Araluen as a passionate supporter and advocate for our home town of Alice Springs.

I first became aware of Jodeen in 2001, after the election. I worked for the government very early on in Alice Springs and, as an advisor, I was one of those people who constantly watched parliamentary proceedings, listened to it on the broadcast, read everything, and Jodeen really did stand out in the opposition with regard to, as many people have said, her qualities - her legal background, her qualities of intellect, hard work and being able to debate issues and really hold government to account. Since 2001, when I worked for government, much of my time was spent listening and watching and hearing about Jodeen Carney and what a great politician she is.

We may not have always agreed on issues, we sit on different sides of the political fence, but I do have enormous respect for you and your hard work over many years and particularly the hard work you have done for Alice Springs and the issues we have there and will continue to have.

Since 2006, when I became an elected member of the Assembly, some five years later, after all that time, watching and listening to Jodeen, it has just been a pleasure to be able to work with you in this Assembly.

One of my first memories is not long after I was sworn into parliament, on one of the many flights back to Alice Springs for Christmas, Jodeen, the Leader of the Opposition, and I were ready to get a ride to the airport and she very kindly offered me a lift in the government car. At the airport checking in she had too many boxes of

mangoes, she was over the weight limit so she very kindly gave me a box of mangoes. I thought: this is a great Christmas present; we had a great feed of mangoes in Alice Springs that Christmas. Jodeen is a really kind person. With the hustle and bustle of Question Time and estimates, people have summed her up very well tonight. That was the kind side of Jodeen Carney and I thought after all those years of listening to her, is this real?

There are many other memories for me. To me she is a member of this parliament and politician of principle, and a politician who can resign with dignity and with her principles intact. That is something I would like to be able to walk away with when I retire, and not many do. Jodeen can certainly walk away proud of that fact.

I have many other memories; bumping into each other on a Sunday at Woolworths doing our shopping. Like the member for Arafura, it is not me who is saying goodbye because I am sure we will bump into each other again, probably on Sunday at Woolworths – with my green bags.

Another memory is her advice and compliments to me, not often, about my dress standards. I appreciate that; it keeps me in check.

I worked very closely with Peter Toyne over many years when he was Attorney-General; I learnt many very important qualities from him and for me it is the same with Jodeen. I have learnt so many qualities from you, Jodeen, hard work and being passionate about Alice Springs, and the issues people have talked about tonight – child protection, speaking out against violence, and making our communities, particularly our Indigenous communities, those in my electorate and in the Northern Territory, safe communities. I believe we still have much work to do, and I have always enjoyed listening to you talk passionately about those issues. I have learnt much from you in that regard.

You have never been afraid to stand up, as the member for Arafura said. There has been much legislation debated in this parliament and when we had a majority of members and you were an opposition of four it must have been so hard but you continued to hold government to account on many issues through sheer hard work.

I believe everything has been said. Congratulations on a great political journey. You are now moving into another journey, and all the best. We are going to be sad to lose you in Alice Springs. I hope you do not move away too soon. You will leave large footsteps to fill.

The members for Braitling and Greatorex have a bigger task ahead of them than me; however I

will keep fighting for Alice Springs. Many times as the only government member from Alice Springs I have appreciated you putting on the gloves and standing up, and I will continue to do that. All the best!

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, today we say goodbye to the best minister the Northern Territory never had. Could you imagine if a woman, or a man, any person of the formidable nature of Jodeen Carney, were to have gotten their hands onto the organs of government, the profound impact that would have made on the Northern Territory. Rarely do you see somebody from the opposition benches make the resonating impact Jodeen Carney has to the people in the Northern Territory. It is something which still leaves me awestruck.

I could hardly be accused of being a wallflower, yet there is only one person in this room right now who can intimidate me and she is about to leave, and I find that an awful shame.

I was thinking of words to describe Jodeen Carney; words such as nice, pleasant, likeable, did not spring to mind necessarily, not because she is none of those but, rather, because the words integrity, clear-headed and decent are words I would apply more readily. They are the ones that carry more gravitas, and would be more important to Jodeen Carney if she is the woman I think she is.

I have known Jodeen Carney for many years. I realised, with some dread as the Chief Minister was on his feet, I am probably the second oldest member in this Chamber. My entry to this House, whilst I appreciate the departure for one term, dates back to 1997. I met Jodeen Carney in the subsequent years and, after the calamitous result for the Country Liberals in the year 2005, I found myself in the wilderness. I received a telephone call one day from Jodeen Carney and she asked: 'Can you come to Darwin and give us a hand with a few things? I think you are the only person we have our hands on who can actually read a budget'. So I did that. What rose out of that was a staffer's job which I did until the last Territory election.

One of the areas where Jodeen Carney was not formidable was in the budget, and she wears that as a matter of pride. Her aversion to opening a budget book was truly monumental. The moment I uttered something like 'vertical fiscal imbalance' or 'horizontal fiscal equalisation' her eyes would glaze over and the response was, 'Yeah, whatever'. That is because she is very single-minded - no, that is not correct. That is because she was focused in other areas which were important to her - and we will not visit those areas now.

One of the things I have always admired about Jodeen Carney is her clarity of thought; her capacity to see through all the gumph, all the BS, and all of those peripheral issues on any specific matter, and see right to the heart of the problem, so much more often than most other people in the room. She has a very disciplined mind. We have seen the product of that discipline introduced into this House to the point where - I think I described it this morning - it looked like she was disembowelling ministers with toothpicks, piece by piece. It is that clarity of thought which will be the greatest loss, not only to the Country Liberals but the Chamber as a whole, because it is that incisive nature which is the very thing that makes her formidable.

I picked up on the things, particularly the member for Braitling had to say, in realising that the vacuum she leaves behind on this side of the House will have to be filled by changes exemplified by the rest of us. If we all pick up a small part of what Jodeen leaves behind, in the vacuum she leaves behind, I still wonder whether we will be able to fill the hole between the 10 of us. I certainly hope whomsoever should replace her brings at least half as much as Jodeen has brought to this place and, if they do, they will be a valuable contributor to the people of the Northern Territory.

Not many people know Jodeen Carney is also the godmother of my youngest daughter, Gwenevere. The reason my wife and I asked Jodeen to do this was because we had regard for all the capabilities and capacities she has. I still consider it a great honour she condescended to say yes when we asked her. I am proud to this day she is the godmother of my youngest daughter. Moreover, I suspect when it comes time when my daughter, her goddaughter, is old enough to become interested in what her father did in politics for all those years and she reads her father's contribution and listens to her godmother's contributions, I am scared my daughter will find me wanting.

However, that should inspire me to take heed from what the member for Braitling had to say, and use this opportunity of reflection to commit myself to being better than I have been in this House until now. I hope that if I can do so and am better, that the legacy of Jodeen Carney will resonate in this place into the future.

Mr TOLLNER (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I was quite surprised to hear the news about Alf Leonardi from the Chief Minister. Alf has been a good friend of mine for several years, and I had no idea he was such a political animal. I knew he was involved with that side of politics, but I have to say, the guy is a thoroughly decent man and very easy to get along with. I certainly will be sad to

see him go. He is one of the very few people employed on that side of the House who is happy to pick up the phone to me. I do not think it is wrong to say that Alf has been a good bloke for me to be able to contact within staff of the government. And my Electorate Officer, Helen Bateman, I am sure will also feel the same way, because he has been a good bloke in the job. If we can avoid politics, we generally do, so I will be sad to see him go. I wish him all the best for the future and, unlike the Chief Minister, I think he will survive perfectly well in the private sector. Good luck to Alf.

In relation to the member for Araluen, this week has been - well, I have seen, really in my time in politics, no other week like this week. It has been unique for a range of different reasons. I have been shocked on a range of different levels, but a phone call this morning from one of my colleagues at 7 am, asking: 'Have you heard the news?' was probably one of the biggest shocks, well, probably the biggest shock I have had for the week.

Jodeen and I go back a little way. It has not always been a fun relationship. In fact, I think it would be fair to say initially it was very painful for both of us. Jodeen and I agree on the vast majority of things, but it is not what you agree on that you often discuss. It quite often happens to be what you disagree on.

I do not think anyone in this place denies she is a feisty character. We have certainly had our fair share of arguments. It is probably fair to say that often when you see things in the media about a little division within political parties, that sometimes is completely false, but other times it carries a grain of truth, and other times it is just merely showing the tip of a great big iceberg.

I have to say, and it is probably okay to talk about this now, given the fact that it is still recent history, but the issue of nuclear waste in the Northern Territory created one of those flashpoints for Jodeen and me. I am prepared to mention this now because it is no longer our problem. That problem now belongs to the other side of this Chamber. Needless to say, my view has always been, and it has never really changed, since I could never see a great deal of problems with nuclear waste, whether it was stored here in the Northern Territory or in the middle of Sydney or, in fact, underneath Parliament House in Canberra. I think it is a fairly benign type of waste and, provided it is handled correctly, it is all okay.

On the other hand, at the time she was Opposition Leader, Jodeen had a completely different view and probably still does, although I am not going to ever go back there again and question her on that one. Needless to say, we did

have a slight disagreement in that area and it did not go particularly well.

It is funny how people who start off at loggerheads can end up being best friends and you see it sometimes in pubs. Two blokes have a punch up, next thing they are crying and cuddling each other and saying what great friends they have been and they will stick with each other forever. You probably do not see it much these days but certainly in years gone by there was some of that.

So it has been with Jodeen and me. I will have to say that, in private, behind closed doors, I have gone out of my way to make friendly but sexist, boorish, insulting and sometimes inflammatory comments to Jodeen and she has taken it in the spirit it was intended. Obviously, it was intended to shock but not in a nasty or negative way. I am sure that will surprise many members in this Chamber but it certainly does not surprise Jodeen.

It would be very remiss of me not to thank Jodeen for the friendship, support and love that she has given to my two sons, William and Henry. They think the sun shines out of Jodeen. They cannot wait to catch up with her whenever they visit Parliament House. Whenever we are in Alice Springs they are very keen to catch up with Jodeen. That sentiment is not limited to them either. Their father very much looks forward to meeting with Jodeen these days and loves her company.

I am not going to talk for very long. I did want to place those sentiments on the record. People have spoken already, and I am sure will continue to speak about the huge legacy that Jodeen leaves behind; her capacity for work and all of the other things that surround her professionally. As a person, I found her a wonderful friend and I am so grateful for the strong friendship we have.

To Carolyn, who is here tonight, can I say, we may well finally get her into the boob tube and hot pants that we have so long been waiting to see her in. Now she is retiring from politics and public life it should free her up a little more to let her hair down and, once this is over, the three of us can go to Casuarina shopping centre. We will go into Sportsgirl and a few other places and we will do some shopping for her.

Jodeen, thank you very much and also a particular thank you to all parliamentarians for the respect you are showing to my good friend, Jodeen Carney, right now.

Ms McCARTHY (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute to a very passionate, committed and incredibly skilled member of this parliament, the member for Araluen, Jodeen Carney. It is an

incredibly sad day for this House. Jodeen, when you have a chance to reflect on your relationships with people, whether it is in the parliament, or in the offices, or in your constituency, I think each one of us takes that opportunity to reflect on how we relate to one another.

Hearing the news of your retirement certainly brought a great deal of sadness to me. I know the many very strong and passionate advocacies that you have paved in this House on behalf of the women and children of the Northern Territory are an absolute testament to you. Despite the fact you will be leaving in opposition, you need to leave this parliament knowing you have made an incredibly important and effective influence on the many policies of this parliament from your position. I know without a doubt, as has been said this afternoon, in a position of minister you would have shown even greater direction.

In this position as the minister for Women, also my previous role as the Minister for Children and Families, it was an absolute privilege to work in opposition to you because I have firm beliefs in an effective democracy. I have always been a very passionate believer in an effective democracy, and to have an effective democracy you must have an effective opposition to keep a government accountable. As the previous Minister for Families and Children, I say thank you to you in your role in opposition for doing exactly that.

That is why there is a great deal of sadness as we look at the children of the Northern Territory, and the important inquiry going on across the Northern Territory under Howard Bath. You are very much a part of all of that as well as the *Care and Protection of Children Act*, as well as the mandatory reporting of domestic violence, and your advocacy for the families of Central Australia. I also believe, along with an effective democracy, Jodeen, in the importance of leadership. It does not matter whether you are a leader of the party, a leader of your family, or a leader of your colleagues. What matters is the kind of influence you provide to the people who work around you. Your influence has been incredibly profound, at times very hard to learn from, at times very burning in the questions you can so directly ask of a minister on this side. I know; I have been one of those ministers.

When I think of you, I think of two words: 'bold correction' - 'bold correction', because you were spot on. Bold correction is exactly what we needed to do in the Northern Territory for the care of our children. I would like you to leave knowing that is exactly where we are going. The respect we have on this side of the House for you and, in the words of the Chief Minister, the sparring, the jousting, it is terribly important each member of this House can raise an argument in a debate for

the benefit of the people of the Northern Territory to better their lives.

We each are here to represent them, and each of us are here to ensure the laws we make are about making their lives much better. Sometimes we do a good job, sometimes we do not. The important thing is the debates we have constantly remind us to be vigilant about the enormity of the responsibility we have as parliamentarians, and the impact we have on the lives of those whom we govern.

Two things will stand out for me along with 'bold correction', Jodeen. My first time at estimates, and what a great teacher, is all I can say! Three or four hours of absolute scrutiny by someone as sharp, intelligent and passionate about these issues as you, was an important time for me, and I thank you for that. It is important that all members, in particular ministers, are always checking everything and are vigilant about all things. My first committee stage hearing was with you and we spent three hours on the floor of this parliament with the amendments to the *Care and Protection of Children Act*. Again, an important learning and, in some respects, you taught me a great deal through that too.

When I say a sad day, I also say it from the point of view of women, Jodeen. As Minister for Women's Policy, leadership is about the influence we have on others - positive or negative. It is really up to each one of us to decide what kind of influence that is. Your influence on women across the Northern Territory is quite profound. It is important that each step we take, even if we think it is insignificant, has an impact on someone else somewhere. I remember before I came into parliament, as a journalist doing interviews with you, but I also remember listening to you and the member for Arafura at a women's conference talking about your roles as political candidates. Do not ever underestimate that positive impact you have had in regard to that, and on the many people who have listened to you along the way - young women, older women across the Northern Territory and, no doubt, across the country at different times.

When you go back to Alice Springs, you can also be incredibly proud when the Kilgariff Estate comes online because that suggestion had come from you. It is something you said during the condolence motion we had, and the Chief Minister took that on board ...

Ms Carney: That is the scholarship.

Ms McCARTHY: The scholarship, sorry, the Kilgariff Scholarship. The Chief Minister took that on board.

In closing, Jodeen, I wish you and Carolyn all the best. It certainly is a difficult road, sometimes, as politicians with the incredible load we all carry with regard to our constituents, our families, and the portfolios, whether in opposition or in the ministry. You go with my utmost respect, and I sincerely wish you and Carolyn all the best. I let you know, those phone calls which will continue on from here, I am sure I will be one of those, especially in regard to the inquiry.

I keep in mind, as we do the reforms with the growth towns and the homelands, when we talk about the infrastructure we are trying to put into the remote regions, we know we have to look at our families and how we are shaping the future and a firm foundation to grow into the future for these young children who are coming through. I see that inquiry as the heartbeat to why we work on *A Working Future* with the infrastructure. We can put as much money into these communities, but unless it is the people themselves who start to really take the responsibility of their own lives and their families, it will be money gone to waste.

Thank you, Jodeen. I do not know where this quote comes from, but it is something I like and I want to read it out for you:

It is not the chances we take in life, but it is the choices we make that determine our destiny.

All the best, Jodeen!

Ms Carney: Thank you so much.

Mr CHANDLER (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I also add my thanks to the member for Araluen. My speech will be short, much like the advice I have come to appreciate from the member for Araluen. We who have worked with the member for Araluen accept this announcement today with a mixture of sadness, and acknowledgement for the opportunity we have all had in knowing her, and the opportunity it has provided in learning from her directly and indirectly.

I will recount an interesting moment I had with the member for Araluen not long after the 2008 Territory election. In a rest from the aroma of the recent celebrations and, this being my first trip to Alice Springs since the election, I was walking around the room saying hello, introducing myself to other people in the room when I spotted the member for Araluen. I immediately walked over to her to offer my greeting, put my hand out and leaned over to give her a friendly kiss on the cheek. At that very moment, the member for Araluen immediately pulled away, put her hand up and gave me a very strange look. Thinking she might have a cold, I quickly said: 'Sorry, do you have a cold?', when she replied: 'I hardly know

you'. At that moment, I thought, either this lady has a very sharp wit, or has a rock solid position on boundaries. I now know she has both, and with that I had just had my very first lesson of what would become one of the many lessons over the next two years, and for that I thank her.

Much more important than a quick anecdote, the member for Araluen, through her presence in this House, and as she demonstrated through her approach, has challenged me to grow in quality. Her advice is always short and to the point, but nonetheless valuable. She has also challenged me at times to forget the game that lies before us, the game that has a unique ability to change on a dime, can give rise to panic attacks and other stress-related disorders, and can drive others from either side of this House, or the parties they represent, to a form of sabotage through a wicked web of deceit and betrayal. Nonetheless, it is a game we all play, and it is called politics. The member for Araluen has reminded me that we all need time out from time to time to forget the game that continues on around us.

The game, and more succinctly, how the game is reported to the wider community, is often an important indicator of one's progress, but as the member for Araluen has rightly pointed out to me when discussing members travel, etcetera, they should not rule over you. It should not drive me and my decisions, nor should I allow it to provide a distraction from what is most important.

In regard to life, in my opinion, Machiavelli got it wrong when he said the end justifies the means. Life is not a simple process or function where the only thing that matters is the end result. In life, the process and the reasoning behind it is everything. The member for Araluen has taught me to focus on what I need to do, what I should do, and not what looks better, and the results will most certainly follow.

Some may see the member for Araluen leaving behind a great rift. I, for one, see it is as an incredible opportunity for all of us to reflect on the place in the history of this parliament that she has built for herself through her ability, her talent, and with her dedication in her role as a fantastic local member, a leader, a shadow minister and, of course, the most important role of all, an advocate for all Territorians.

Jodeen, in the slightly revised words of Samwise Gamgee in *The Lord of the Rings*, you have shown your quality, ma'am, the very highest and we salute you.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I believe important people are people who you learn from, and I certainly have learnt from the member for Araluen. This morning, I was

disappointed to hear of the member for Araluen's retirement, as I started preparing for 2011 estimates the day after 2010 estimates, and I am very disappointed that the member for Araluen will not be there in 2011 to further advise me on the way forward with my ministerial duties.

The member for Araluen has contributed to the new era in corrections admirably over a long period of time and I thank her for the great advice she has provided, not only for me as a minister, but for the Territory, on our way forward in changing the lives of some of the most disadvantaged Territorians. To the member for Araluen, good health and happiness on the way forward.

Madam Speaker, I would like to adjourn on Dr Dirk Megirian. I will share with the House the story of an important Territorian and a recent event held to honour his memory.

Dr Dirk Megirian was employed as Curator of Geology with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory from 1985 to 2009. On 26 July 2009, Dr Megirian passed away at the Alcoota Scientific Reserve after a long battle with cancer.

On Saturday, 31 July, I was pleased to join his colleagues, family and friends at a memorial service at Alcoota to remember this great Territorian and his important works. A memorial plaque dedicated to Dr Megirian was located at the Alcoota Field Station in memory of his lifetime of work, his long and distinguished career, and his significant scientific contribution to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory.

Dr Megirian was probably one of the most broadly based vertebrate palaeontologists active in Australia. He published papers describing and interpreting fossils of frogs, crocodiles, turtles, birds and mammals, and his work included a number of seminal papers in Australian palaeontology.

Dr Megirian was praised for putting science ahead of personal gain, advocating against parochialism and sensationalism, and making available research material to other investigators. He played a key role in the training and mentoring of graduate and undergraduate students. Dr Megirian engaged in and strongly promoted the need for more field based, empirical research so the geological and palaeo-environmental findings from our past could be properly documented and understood by the global community. Dr Megirian worked closely with the MAGNT with the Curator of Palaeontology, Dr Peter Murray, to extract, identify and describe much of the fossil, flora and fauna heritage of the Northern Territory.

He was instrumental in the establishment and operation of the Alcoota Field Station for well over 20 years. The Alcoota, in the Northern Territory fossil site, is one of four known vertebrate fossil sites from the Cenozoic Era or the Age of Mammals.

Because of the importance of Alcoota, it is protected as a heritage place within a scientific reserve. The Alcoota site contains the remains of thousands of individual animals and has produced some of the best, most diverse and most complete representatives of larger extinct animals such as species of marsupial rhinoceros, marsupial tapirs and giant flightless geese - an amazing source of information on the evolution of animals on our planet. The Alcoota centre and the fossils, plants and minerals found in its soil is a legacy for which scientists will be grateful for years to come.

It is through the work of passionate and dedicated people like Dr Megirian that MAGNT research expertise is acknowledged nationally and internationally and the institution is renowned as one of the Northern Territory's premier cultural centres. That is a legacy of Dr Megirian of which his family can be proud. It is a legacy of Dr Megirian of which Territorians can be proud.

Dr Dirk Megirian passed away one year ago while undertaking field work at the Alcoota Field Station site after a long battle with cancer. Dirk was the Curator of Geology with MAGNT for 25 years and dedicated over 20 years of field work to this site. The fossil site is unique in time and location and is of immense national significance. Dirk was loved and respected as a colleague and friend to many people at the museum and is sorely missed by MAGNT staff. The plaque recognises the work of Dr Dirk Megirian, his dedication and his commitment to this site and to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Earth Sciences Program over many years.

Dr BURNS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute to the member for Araluen with a valedictory speech. People have already acknowledged the special relationship that exists when people come into parliament together at the same election and it is the nature of politics that we come to know each other's strengths and weaknesses. Of course, tonight the member for Araluen has no weaknesses, only strengths. We only have to look at the election results in her own electorate to see she has gone from strength to strength. She now enjoys over 70% of the primary vote, so everyone in her electorate loves her. It is a pity she is not going to be around in 2012. It would probably be 100%, an Australian record. It is the measure of her hard work as a local member that she enjoys such support.

The strengths of the member for Araluen: she is intelligent, she is articulate, she is courageous, she is dedicated and she is fearless. We have 'shared' many portfolios in our respective roles. One lesson I have learnt is never get backed into a corner when the member for Araluen is starting to forensically cross-examine you with 'yes or no'. That is not a place anyone wants to be, and if you look at the *Parliamentary Record* you would see I have said many times: 'This is not a court of law, member for Araluen', and I have been able to back out of being backed into a corner.

Other speakers have mentioned, particularly the member for Arnhem, the dedication of the member for Araluen in the areas of child protection and fighting tirelessly against violence against women. That is one of your strengths, and has shown your tenacity and commitment. Many speakers tonight have said how you fought that battle in this parliament, and in the national arena, and the outcomes you have had from opposition have been considerable.

I have talked about your courage; you have spoken yourself about the four of you after 2005. I have placed on the record in this House admiration for your courage and tenacity and your commitment. I have the word 'energy', particularly during estimates with just four. 'Indefatigable' is a word which also springs to mind. We witness many things in this parliament. We witness drama, sometimes we witness farce, we witness very funny moments, and we witness titanic struggles, even in this very small parliament.

I recall the titanic struggles between the member for Araluen as the Leader of the Opposition and the former member for Fannie Bay as Chief Minister; two people of incredible intellect, incredible ability, and incredible class. Far be it for me to say who the winner was and who was the loser; it was a titanic struggle. Some days one side would win, and some days another side would win. I know if the former member for Fannie Bay was here today she would want me to pay tribute to you. I have written here: 'never bowed, never afraid'.

On a lighter note, one thing I have always treasured is this note that I would like to table ...

Ms Carney: Oh, you bugger!

Dr BURNS: It says:

Dear Chris, I love you, Jodeen.

I do not know whether I was very bad, or very good, but it is a measure of the member for Araluen's sense of humour. She has a great sense of humour, as the member for Brennan said, and she is very direct. I like this; I am going

to table it. I know you probably do not want me to. Maybe the Speaker would have it expunged, and my words, from the record and the notice expunged. There it is; it is a bit of humour and I certainly value it.

I have written here: 'mutual respect, even affection'. Maybe that note is a measure of that affection and friendship. We have talked about music; that is something we have in common. I wish you and Carolyn all the best.

Ms Carney: Thank you so much.

Mr STYLES (Sanderson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak in this rather historic adjournment debate. I know there have been others, but for me this one will be an historic one. I have known the member for Araluen, Jodeen Carney, from her first involvement with the Country Liberals. In those days, she was a great proponent of women's rights and had a leadership role on the Women's Advisory Council.

It was from those days and through the party where she rose and, obviously, it was going to be a choice of pre-selection. She was a great contributor to the policy debate and the policy development. If the people on the other side think it is not very good to stand in front of Jodeen, let me tell you, behind closed doors on our side, it is no better. I can tell you, Jodeen has mopped the floor with me in debates, and I have not won very many. She has won many. But, in this game - and I think the member for Barkly said you learn a lot from people in this House, on both sides - I have to say I learnt an enormous amount from Jodeen Carney.

I echo the sentiments which have already been expressed in this House. We have all said things, and we can all say the same things over and over. Jodeen, I would like to say that you are a person of great intellect, integrity, and commitment and a person I respect and am grateful to. There is no manual for this job. The only way you learn is through the role models in front of you who talk to you and teach you. Leadership is about developing other leaders, and you have been such a great role model in, hopefully, developing not only leaders in this House but in your community. I can only aspire to reach the standards and professionalism of your electorate work and that of your parliamentary preparation performance. You leave a great legacy in this House and the parliament will be lesser place without you.

I sincerely hope you will continue to have an input. I say to you, I, too have a phone and would appreciate any free advice. I reiterate 'free advice' because I know lawyers also know how to charge. I am sure, well into the future, people

from both sides of politics will consult you, and I hope you will give us the advice we need to keep us on track to hold government accountable and, if we form government in the future, to ensure we are accountable to the people of the Northern Territory and, in particular, our youth.

I share the passion for looking after youth. I also spent many years in that area, although different. I share your passion. From Linda and me to you and Carolyn, we convey our very best for your next chapter. The greatest accolade you can give someone is to salute them. I salute you. It has been an honour, and I will be so proud to say to anyone in the future: 'I worked with Jodeen Carney'.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, it is quite common to see passion and emotion bubble up in this House but, tonight, I have seen something I have not experienced before: the passion and emotions which have bubbled from so many on both sides of this House for Jodeen Carney, the retiring member for Araluen.

This morning, when Jodeen announced she was retiring, I was shocked. They say a week is a long time in politics. Well, I can tell you, hours these days seem to be a terribly long time in politics. I was saddened, Jodeen, to hear you are leaving us - saddened on a number of levels. First, on a personal level because, as a team as we all are, we all contribute in our own way. We rely upon each other as a team and your contribution as a part of that team will be sadly missed by me. On another level of sadness, I am sad for the Northern Territory that you are leaving. The Northern Territory needs people like you in this parliament, who work so tirelessly and with such passion. I said it to you this morning: we can all only aspire to the heights I have seen of your performances, both in this parliament and outside.

I have known Jodeen for only two years and, in that time, I have learnt a great deal from her. I was listening to the member for Barkly recounting his experience with you at estimates this year. I was not going to mention it specifically, but since he raised it, I sat through a fair bit of that estimates process. I described your performance there, because that is what it was, on the Minister for Correctional Services as the death of a thousand cuts. I was terribly impressed, but that is not the only time I have been impressed watching your performances.

You often stand in this House with prosecuted arguments and a tongue that is as sharp as a knife, and I mean that in the nicest possible way. I have seen you on a number of occasions literally disembowelling the members on the other side of

the House with your words. That sounds terrible, but really, when you sit and watch it, that is how the performances come across and I understand from what members on the other side of the House have said tonight that they felt every one of those cuts, Jodeen, so well done.

Even though I have only known you, Jodeen, for a couple of years, I have known of you for a great deal longer, and I reflect back on my time in Alice Springs when I was a police officer there. I do not think we ever met, but I certainly saw you in the halls of the courthouse from time to time. You were a defence lawyer then, I believe. I never crossed swords with you in the courthouse, I was never placed in the position of being cross-examined by you, and on reflection, I am so glad I never had to face cross-examination from Jodeen Carney, the lawyer, because I am sure she would have torn me up just as well as she has torn up many members in this parliament in the last two years.

Jodeen, I will miss you. I do not think it is possible to fill your shoes. What we will do is put a new person with new shoes. You leave behind you an enormous legacy. I thank you for that. You have taught me a great deal about politics and we can but aspire to the performances we have seen from you over the last two years.

I wish you and Carolyn well for the future and I hope if you ever come through my little town of Katherine, that, please do drop in and say g'day and do not be a stranger. All the very best to you, Jodeen!

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I can say that my relationship with the member for Araluen was not always close. In fact, you would probably best describe it as a love/hate relationship, and it probably would continue if the member for Araluen continued as a politician. But, believe it or not, I have some memories - some are scary and some are good. I will give you the scary one first.

Where the member for Goyder sits used to sit Steve Dunham as the shadow Attorney-General or shadow Health minister, and Peter Toyne sat over here. I do not know if the member for Araluen went to Steve Dunham's school, because he was a hard taskmaster. I am glad I am not Peter Toyne because the member for Araluen kept the Health minister, or Attorney-General, on his toes. That is where I learnt that the member for Araluen was a determined person. That determination could be scary; however, you knew this person, regardless of the differences I have had with the member for Araluen, was sincere in that she wanted to help people.

We have spoken about her absolute passion for child protection and the prevention of violence against women. There were other things I noticed which people have not pointed out as much, and it came to me in little ways. We had a bill - I think it was the Penalties Bill - this is another area I need to learn from the member for Araluen, the attention to detail. When you are an Independent you tend to be shadow minister for everything, and sometimes you do not put as much effort into certain pieces of the legislation. Along comes the Penalties Bill. It is the Penalties Bill; big deal! What does the member for Araluen do? She goes through it with a fine-tooth comb. Who does she protect? She protects the beggars. She saw the penalty for beggars was outrageous. That said to me there is a person who cares. It was a ridiculous thing, but it would have been a shameful thing if this parliament passed it. She saw it, and we changed it.

I do not regard myself as passionate - I might not show that passion, I probably have the concern. I have concerns about the way we deal with prisoners, and on the news recently it looked like the government was going to change visiting hours for prisoners. I heard the member for Araluen say that is a bad thing, and I agree, especially when people have to travel miles to visit a prisoner. That is the sort of person the member for Araluen is.

Yes, by all means we might have had our differences of opinion, however, I would be a fool to say you just look at those differences; you look at those good things in people which you agree on, you respect your differences. The member for Araluen was sincere and passionate about what she did and I saw it in the things she did. They might not have been big things because the big issues we all saw. With those little things I realised we have a person who was very determined.

I will miss her attention to legal matters. I have always struggled with legislation. I have to work hard to understand legislation, but the member for Araluen can have a debate for many hours on whether the word should be 'shall' or 'must'; those type of things. Sometimes that is really important, because there was a lawyer recently who had someone acquitted based on the word 'shall' should have been 'must' or vice versa. We had someone who was making sure legislation which is so important was correct. That is something I will miss because we need people who can analyse legislation. For many people it may be just words, but how much could that affect someone's life? How much could the penalties for begging have affected someone's life, because they were ridiculous? She picked that up; she picked it up from a legal point of view, she also

picked it up from a compassionate point of view. That is where she shines and will always shine.

I should mention she also plays golf. No one has mentioned that. I go to the Masters, and I think the Masters is about tough things. I run, I go to the shot-put, and that is what Masters is about. She plays golf. The Alice Springs golf course is one of the most beautiful courses in the world, and they play the Masters on it and think they are having a hard time. I go around the track and wear myself out. I know you are passionate about your golf, and I hope you get plenty of time to play golf. I am sure you will enjoy it.

My big regret is I did not get a roundabout on the corner of Lovegrove and Larapinta Drive. I sat there. We tried, and it was an interesting debate in parliament as you would remember. We nearly turned the budget upside down. I have been told that T-intersection is going to be upgraded. We did not quite get what we wanted.

Ms Purick: Little by little.

Mr WOOD: That is right. It has been raised before what a popular member you are. We used to have a debate about who had the highest first preference votes. I do not need to be told that you had a percentage of such and such. I know from talking to people in Alice Springs you were a very hard-working member, and I believe your electorate will be poorer without you because people want hard-working members who are compassionate, who understand, and who are willing to listen. You are obviously one of those people.

Yes, we have had our ups and downs; we will probably always have our ups and downs; that is life. I must admit it probably would have continued if I said I agree with the member for Fong Lim about nuclear waste. That really would have ruined my day. Be that as it may, I hope whatever you do in the future is something which is fulfilling. I hope your health improves.

I hope your life with Carolyn continues to be a happy life, and I wish you all the best in the future. I am sure I will see you around the place one day.

I appreciate, believe it or not, the comments you have made. Sometimes you have been a bit harsh on me. I have heard some things said about me which made me groan; that is politics, that is life, we move on. I appreciate all the work you have done in this parliament, and I believe your legacy will be compassion for other human beings, and that is a wonderful legacy to leave in this House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Araluen, I take this opportunity from the Chair to

thank you for your friendship, and the wisdom you have shared with me which has transcended political boundaries. I also acknowledge, as a member of this parliament, your enormous contribution to this House, to the Territory, and to your constituents. The accolades you have received today from all members are testimony to that enormous contribution.

We are all very sad to see you go. We wish you good health and happiness, and for you and Carolyn, only the very best for your future.

Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.