CONTENTS
VISITORS ................................................................................................................................. 3343
   Humpty Doo Primary School ............................................................................................... 3343
SPEAKER’S statement ............................................................................................................. 3343
   Ides of March ....................................................................................................................... 3343
VISITORS ................................................................................................................................. 3343
   Essington International School ......................................................................................... 3355
VISITORS ................................................................................................................................. 3359
   Essington International School ......................................................................................... 3359
MOTION ..................................................................................................................................... 3360
   Note Statement – Tourism in the Northern Territory ......................................................... 3360
PETITION .................................................................................................................................. 3364
   Petition No 22 – Unconventional Gas Mining to be Banned from Northern Territory ....... 3364
MOTION ..................................................................................................................................... 3364
   Note Statement – Tourism in the Northern Territory ......................................................... 3364
PAPERS TABLED ...................................................................................................................... 3399
   Members’ Satellite Telephone Payments 2017 ................................................................. 3399
   Auditor-General’s March 2018 Report to Legislative Assembly ........................................ 3399
MOTION ..................................................................................................................................... 3399
   Note Paper – Auditor-General’s March 2018 Report to Legislative Assembly ................. 3399
CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE AND AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT
RESPONSES ............................................................................................................................... 3399
ADJOURNMENT ......................................................................................................................... 3399
Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Humpty Doo Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of more exceptionally bright students from Humpty Doo Primary Year 3/4, accompanied by teachers and support staff. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER’S STATEMENT
Ides of March

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I want to make sure you know that today is the Ides of March, so be wary. But more importantly it is the day for acquitting debts. Ngaree wants all her Greatest Shave debts paid today and so does the Member for Namatjira.

Mr Mills: You know, I happen to be on the Ides of March.

Madam SPEAKER: There you go, Mr Mills.

Mr Mills: Repaying debts!

Madam SPEAKER: There you go. For noting, honourable members.

EVIDENCE (NATIONAL UNIFORM LEGISLATION)
AMENDMENT (JOURNALIST PRIVILEGE) BILL
(Serial 37)

Continued from 23 November 2017.

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

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give this speech on behalf of the Member for Spillett who is running late this morning.

Whether there is such a thing as journalist privilege and, if so, what the contours of that privilege are have long been a source of debate in Australia. There is a marked lack of uniformity across the jurisdictions. South Australia; Queensland; and, until this bill, the Territory; have applied the common law. Whereas New South Wales, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania have adopted various versions of the uniform evidence legislation. On the other hand, Western Australia has its own unique codified journalist privilege provisions—sections 20G to 20M of the Evidence Act 1906.

This lack of uniformity is curious given that journalism has moved from a dispersed regional business to a national, and even international, integrated industry. At the same time, the Internet has created the phenomenon of the blogger, the Twitter commentator and the armchair keyboard warrior. To some extent, all of them fancying themselves as journalists.

There is little serious debate over the importance of the press and the broader media to democracy. A founding father and third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, said:

… were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

Indeed, journalism has often been referred to as the fourth estate—a term coined by Thomas Carlyle in 1787 while debating the opening of the House of Commons to the press in Great Britain. As the term implied, journalists play an important role in holding governments to account, assisting in the searching for truth and informing the public. The freedom of press was so important to the founding fathers of the United States, like Thomas Jefferson, that it was included in the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution did not only guarantee the rights of private individuals to express themselves, but also preserves the right of journalists to distribute their opinions without censorship or interference by the government.
This freedom has been interpreted to cover all forms of press, including new and emerging forms such as electronic media. That said, even the freedom of the press in the United States is not boundless. For example, the press is not free to defame a person and traditionally, even in the United States, there has been no general applicable journalist privilege.

In Australia, the implied freedom of political communication is now well-established, but the common law has traditionally afforded no protection to information obtained or disclosed between a journalist and source. However, protection has been afforded to the disclosure of an informant's identity in certain circumstances.

For instance, in the leading common law case on journalist privilege, John Fairfax and Sons Ltd v Cojuangco. In that case, the High Court adopted the so-called ‘newspaper rule’, which provides a quasi-privilege that could be invoked by a newspaper and their full-time journalists to resist disclosing the source of information in interlocutory proceedings for defamation. The rule was not described as a rule of evidence or a strict privilege, but operated as a sort of de facto privilege.

As Mason CJ, Wilson, Deane, Toohey and Gaudron JJ held in a joint judgement in that case, the purpose of the newspaper rule was to cater for:

… the recognition of the public interest in the free flow of information

… by exercising a discretion to refuse to order disclosure of some sources of information

… even though disclosure would be relevant to the issues for trial in the action.

While the purpose of the newspaper rule was clear, and the contours of the rule often were not clear. This was the impetus behind the development of a uniform law that might precisely define the contours of the newspaper rule and/or to provide for a statutory journalist privilege.

An example of the uniform legislation is section 126K of the New South Wales Evidence Act 1995. This section is similar in scope and purpose to section 127A of the bill we are debating today, in that it provides a qualified privilege to journalists, providing that if a journalist has promised an informant not to disclose that person's identity then neither the journalist nor the journalist's employer may be compelled to disclose the identity, except if disclosure would be in the public interest.

Section 127A goes a bit further than the NSW legislation though and adds subsection (3), which prescribed the factors which a court may take into consideration, including, among other things:

1. whether the information is a matter of public interest
2. how the information is being provided to the journalist
3. whether the information has been verified
4. how it is being used.

The explanatory note to the bill suggests that this section is meant to place limits on the privilege by limiting the situations in which it might be applicable. The rationale is that the factors in subsection (3) mirror the ethical duties of a professional journalist and therefore act as a check on journalist conduct when the privilege is being employed.

The wisdom of this approach was questioned in the hearings conducted by the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee. For example, SBS argued that the provision shifted attention away from the public interest and towards a value judgment. On the other hand, it was noted that the Western Australian legislation has a more exhaustive list of factors which may be considered by a court exercising discretion to compel a journalist to reveal a source.

For example, section 20K of the Western Australia Evidence Act 1906 provides that a court must consider evidence concerning ‘misconduct’ on the part of the journalist or the informant. Deceit, corruption or partiality are all factors that a court can use to upend the privilege.
The opposition is of the view that it would have been preferable to include a more robust list of factors, which includes the misconduct factors identified in section 20K of the WA statute. Moreover, the factors included in the WA statute are those that the court 'must' have regard to, which might also have been a better option. Finally, given the broadness of the public interest provision in this bill, it is unlikely to narrow the scope of the privilege in any meaningful way.

Nonetheless, the opposition supports the recommendations of the committee and will support the bill as drafted. If there are problems with the application of the privilege and its contours, we expect that, as that point, the government of the day would be justified in revisiting the provision and making changes as necessary.

The opposition is of the same view with regards to section 127A(6) of the bill. That section defines the term 'journalist' extremely broadly as any person who

(a) obtains new or noteworthy information about matters of public interest; and

(b) deals with information by;

   (i) preparing the information for a news medium; or

   (ii) providing comment, opinion or analysis of the information for a news medium.

In turn, news medium is expansively defined as:

... any medium for the dissemination of information to the public or a section of the public.

As with subsection (3), concerns were raised during the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee hearings over the definition of a journalist.

In contrast to the very broad definition in the bill, section 126J of the New South Wales statute narrowly defines journalist as a person who is engaged and active in the publication of news and who may be given information by a source in the expectation that the information will be published in the news media.

The New South Wales provision more closely mirrors the commonsense, traditional definition of a journalist. Section 127A(6) of the bill does not require that a person be currently engaged and active in journalism as the New South Wales statute does.

Accordingly it would theoretically protect a person from receiving confidential information from a source and then, in an effort to conceal the source, creating a spur of the moment blog or Twitter post to earn protection of the privilege. While I note the intent of the government to create a provision that takes into account the characteristics of the Territory and dispersed nature of journalism and its forms in the Territory, the current bill may be open to claims of privilege that are not necessarily genuine.

Nonetheless, the courts will have the final say on these matters and it is assumed that if the privilege has been claimed for reasons other than those of legitimately protecting a source, a court would not afford the party the protection.

In the event that this does not eventuate and the court has trouble determining the bounds of the privilege, it will be the responsibility of their legal professional to raise these matters and ensure the government of the day makes necessary changes to ensure the provision is applied in a manner consistent with its intent.

I would like to thank the Attorney-General for bringing this legislation to the House as well as the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee and those who made submissions for their attention and input into the process. As with any legislation it will be important to monitor the application of this legislation and determine whether the intent is being fulfilled in practice.

However as an overall matter, codification of the contours of the journalistic privilege is desirable and will add certainty to both court proceedings and journalists' activities.

Madam Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MANISON (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support the Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017. The media plays a pivotal role. It is the guardian of the public
interest and the watchdog on governments around the world. Journalists need to be able to do their jobs if they are to carry out that important responsibility of acting as one of the checks and balances of a modern democracy.

This bill is about allowing journalists to do their jobs; that is to inform, uncover, explain and keep those in authority honest including members of parliament. Journalists can only do those things if they are legally allowed to protect the identity of their confidential sources.

The Watergate investigation is a good example of what can be uncovered when a journalist is able to protect their source. Carl Bernstein, of Watergate fame, was asked in 2006 about why journalist privilege is so important and he said:

_I know of very little important reporting of the last 30–40 years that has been done without the use of confidential sources, particularly in the national security area. What we know about the last 5, 6, 7 presidencies, we know through the use of confidential sources. If we had relied on the information from the President, from the Secretary of State, from the Secretary of Defence, from the Vice President, we would know almost nothing about the truth of the Iraq War._

But it is not always about bringing down a President or getting to the truth of a war, there are countless stories of corruption and wrongdoing uncovered every year through the use of journalist privilege.

The European Court of Human Rights says the protections are important because:

_Protection of journalistic sources is one of the basic conditions for press freedom … Without such protection, sources may be deterred from assisting the press in informing the public on matters of public interest. As a result the vital public-watchdog role of the press may be undermined, and the ability of the press to provide accurate and reliable information be adversely affected._

The Northern Territory legislation is overdue. We are proud to be part of a government that has introduced it and, in doing that, we have committed to improving government transparency and accountability in the Northern Territory. It is what Territorians want us to do and what we are working hard to deliver on.

This government was elected on a platform of openness and transparency, and this is another example of us not just talking about things but making them a reality.

The government has already passed legislation to create an independent commission against corruption, which will be up and running later this year. Hopefully this will help improve trust in politicians and other public officials which was taken to a new low following the behaviour of some of the members of the previous government.

The introduction of an ICAC will help restore faith in how the Territory is run and the legislation before us today will reassure many Territorians about what this government is trying to achieve. We are not afraid to be held to account because we strive to meet the high standards we set ourselves.

An important part of that is providing journalists the ability to legally protect the identity of confidential sources. This journalistic privilege also comes with great responsibility. I will quote Carl Bernstein from 2006:

_But with the use of confidential sources, certain things are incumbent on the reporter: to represent a kind of responsibility and refuse to be whipped around by a source, to be led astray by a source. There’s a responsibility, if possible, to identify the particular orientation of a source._

It is not just the journalist who needs to be responsible. There needs to be safeguards built into the legislation to make sure the privilege is not abused. This bill does that.

Primarily, as the Attorney-General outlined, journalist privilege will be limited only when a court decides that the interest of justice provides an overriding public interest for consideration that requires a disclosure of the source. This is not an onerous ask. In many ways it reflects a journalist’s basic professional ethical standards. There will be safeguards to make sure the protection is not used as a weapon to unfairly inflict damage on someone’s reputation.

The Attorney-General spoke about trying to prevent fake news cloaking itself in the protections this privilege offers by prescribing that the privilege can only be claimed by a person involved in the profession or occupation of journalism.
In particular, this legislation protects full-time and freelance journalists but denies the privilege to people who ignore the generally adopted ethical practices of professional journalists. The Attorney-General explained what the court needs to consider when deciding to apply privilege including whether:

- the information was new or about a matter of public interest
- steps were taken to verify the information
- the journalist used the information in a way that minimised undue harm to a person or their reputation
- the information was used in a fair and accurate manner.

The legislation gets the balance right, protecting journalists’ sources and making sure this privilege is not abused.

In a perfect world you would not need to rely on these laws. Protection will be given, but there have been a number of Australian journalists who have served time in gaol for refusing to reveal confidential sources. That is not a good thing for our democracy.

This legislation helps promote openness and transparency, and it strengthens our society and political and judicial institutions. This reform is overdue in the Territory. We are playing catch up with the rest of the country. We are a government delivering on this legislation because we believe in healthy and robust debate. We understand the important role of journalists and the media in ensuring governments and authorities of the day are held to account, and if serious questions need to be answered, that they are asked. This is an important part of democracy.

I thank the Attorney-General for bringing forward this legislation and acknowledge the work done at a committee level and the contributions at agency level to prepare this important legislation before the House.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Speaker, I also thank the Attorney-General for her hard work on this legislation, as well as the committee.

I support the Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017. The Territory Labor government believes in open and transparent government and has been restoring trust, transparency and accountability after four years of CLP chaos. This is something Territorians support and we are delivering. This bill is one of several ways our government is strengthening accountability.

In February, we passed legislation creating tough new penalties for corruption and granting important investigatory powers to the independent commission against corruption—a historic milestone and key election commitment. I am very proud to be part of the Gunner Labor government that is delivering in these important areas.

Anyone who was paying attention in civics and citizenship education or social and cultural education, understands the crucial role the media plays in our democracy. The notion of the media as a fourth estate of power serving the public interest is a very important one. I value the role of journalists in providing information to the public so they can make informed decisions about who they vote for and what they believe in—and their understanding of the impact of the policies and actions of others.

The hard work of journalists is often what brings to light corruption—and not just on the global scale of things like the Panama Papers, but at the local level too. Journalists obtain information from a diverse range of sources and sometimes this information will only be provided on the condition that the source remains anonymous. Promising to keep sources’ details anonymous is a long-standing practice in journalism.

Our Territory journalists work hard to deliver stories that serve the public interest and not just interests of crocodiles, I must add. This bill will support investigative journalism in the NT by providing important legal protection for journalists who need to protect the identity of confidential sources. This will bring the Territory in line with most other Australian jurisdictions that have enacted journalist shield laws.

The ability to protect confidential sources will be limited only when a court decides that the interests of justice provides an overriding public interest consideration that requires disclosure of a source. The bill includes provisions that address concerns that journalistic privilege could be misused. We can all understand these concerns in this day and age, where the issues of fake news and urban myths perpetuated by social media echo-chambers are on the rise.
The bill prescribes that privilege can only be claimed by a person involved in the profession or occupation of journalism. In order to determine whether the privilege applies, the court is required to consider whether:

- the information in question is new or noteworthy information about a matter of public interest
- the journalist took steps to verify the information, where this was reasonably practicable
- the journalist dealt with the information in a way that minimised undue harm to a person, such as to a person’s reputation
- the journalist used the information in a fair and accurate manner.

These factors provide incentives for journalists to verify their information, to handle it accurately and to avoid causing harm beyond what is needed to make fair comment and raise awareness about matters of public interest—in short, responsible and ethical journalism practice.

Our government and this bill also recognise that journalism is a profession that is in a state of change. These days, news can be communicated with text, audio, video, photography, social media apps and other emergent technologies. News can be presented in many different forms, from serious traditional, factual style through to a more entertainment-focused tone. We cannot forget that important public interest issues are sometimes raised by longer-form publications and not just by short pieces aimed at the daily news cycle. Whether this information is genuine—public interest journalism depends on its content and not on the form, medium, or style of its delivery.

This bill recognises that a journalist shield law must make sense, not just now but also into the future as technologies and communication practices evolve. This bill provides a journalist privilege with robust, technology-neutral definitions that support full-time journalists and occasional freelancers, while denying the privilege to persons who do not adopt the basic ethical practices of professional journalists. The privilege covers both the journalist and their employer.

The bill clarifies that the privilege can be claimed even if the journalist has only engaged in preparatory work and has not yet published their confidential source’s information. The bill also recognises that more than one journalist may be involved in preparing a piece for publication, and the privilege will only be effective if each of those persons is able to claim it.

The privilege applies to courts and the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal. There is also the ability to prescribe further bodies in relation to which the privilege will be able to be claimed.

The privilege will apply in relation to information that is given by informants to journalists before the bill becomes law, but it will not apply to legal proceedings that have begun before the act commences. I think this is very sensible and clear.

This bill is an important piece of contemporary legislation that allows for journalist privilege to apply to a broad spectrum of people involved in public interest journalism. It really brings us in line with most other jurisdictions, and it encourages ethical practice and supports investigative journalism in the Territory. I think that is really positive. This is another action our government has taken to restore trust and enshrine mechanisms that allow for government to be held accountable.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Attorney-General for bringing about this bill, and I commend the Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017 to the House.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I also thank the Attorney-General for bringing this important legislation to the House. I support the Journalist Privilege Bill.

This government came to the election with the commitment to public accountability and transparency. Last year we passed legislation which created an independent commissioner against corruption, and this bill is another step forward in ensuring the government remains accountable.

Journalists play an important role in our democracy in ensuring governments and politicians are kept honest. They also play a vital role in keeping the community informed and creating public debate on areas of public interest. Journalists have been at the forefront of creating major social change and exposing major corruption through good investigative journalism. Often they place themselves at risk covering stories in difficult places—often against powerful people.
There are many examples of where journalists have been imprisoned or charged for their journalism. Good journalism depends on being able to talk to individuals—often known as sources. Without being able to guarantee privacy and protection of their sources, they limit their ability to do their job well. The sources, if exposed, can be subject to retaliation such as harassment at work, losing their job, legal action and even imprisonment.

There are many good examples of journalism that have resulted in major social change. For instance, we all learned about Watergate, which is a well-known example of extremely good journalism that had a major impact on the American government of the day.

Closer to home we have our examples. *Four Corners* on the ABC has often been at the forefront of creating major change. This includes program exposing the corruption of the Bjelke-Petersen government and police in Queensland, which led to the Woodward Royal Commission. This resulted in setting the standards not only in Queensland but across the country. It showed that a government can be overthrown where corruption is at the heart of issues within that government.

As politicians, the media can make us feel uncomfortable at times; we need to be honest about that. We saw the *Four Corners* program on Don Dale and the broken youth justice and child protection systems in the Northern Territory. That led to a Royal Commission and major reform, which our government came to the election with a commitment to deliver.

This legislation will bring the Northern Territory into line with other states in ensuring journalists are protected from having to expose the identity of their sources. Robust democracy depends on this. This bill also acknowledges that the world we live in is changing at a fast pace. The world of media has become more diverse in recent times and with a range of mediums including social media, bloggers, and the rise of a fake news culture. This legislation will make sure that all forms of media in journalism are covered.

In providing protection for our journalists, we also need to ensure there is enough protection for those who are potentially exposed through these news items and that this privilege is not misused. This is particularly important is a small jurisdiction where privacy can be easily breached.

As a social worker there have been a few times when I was training that we used a case example—it is not only where people can be identified that is a problem, but where people believe they know the person you are talking about in a small jurisdiction. In this example, we had a case example which we were using to illustrate the training and someone said to me, ‘How dare you talk about this person in this forum’. It was not based on that person at all. I did not even know the person they were talking about, but in a small jurisdiction people can see similarities and that is something we have to protect, particularly in my portfolio, where we are dealing with sensitive and difficult areas.

There is a need for transparency and accountability and we need to balance that. That is the tension governments and media sources struggle with. I commend the legislation for bringing a requirement that journalists, regardless of what media they use—this is making sure that it is not just people who are working in well-governed, well-organised organisations like the *NT News* and the ABC uphold the professional and ethical standards of journalism.

We need to protect the professionalism of journalists—that it is not just somebody at home writing a piece without regard to what professional ethics are. That is why journalists go to university; it is part of learning how to apply those ethical standards that allow the difficult issue of the time to be discussed. It is about protecting the identity of people, particularly when the information given by the source is about a third party, such as in my portfolio where those third parties are children.

This legislation is about very difficult issues and I thank the Attorney-General for bringing it to the House. No one leaks a good news story. This is about difficult issues with challenges on how we move forward. I commend this bill to the House. It is about accountability, being transparent about what we are doing making sure there are safeguards in that process, not only for the journalists but for the people who may be impacted by the story.

**Mr MILLS (Blain):** Madam Speaker. I support the intention of this bill. I make some comment related to the matter of the protection of freedoms and the freedom of speech and how these central concepts play out with the intention of the Territory government for the modernisation of the *Anti-Discrimination Act*. There are some key principles—there would be some overlap, in terms of freedom of speech. It will be interesting to see the intersection between the concepts that are being articulated, protected and prescribed on this side and how.
they interact with the proposal as outlined in the modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act discussion paper.

I am prompted to make a reference to what I hear as the constant reference to the past in a very selective manner. What happened in the last four years is the only slice of life that we are able to look at because that is the clear demonstration of the justification of all that we do now, because it was so bad.

I caution honourable members that we are conducting our business in a broader frame than a political frame. It is in the full view of the entire community with its collective memory. You commit an injustice when you start to define your responses in quite selective political terms, because you then start to sanitise the past you create a glory period in the past that was interrupted by a horrendous period, and now we are back to a glorious period, when that is not really true. You are providing a terrible disservice to our community, when we should be operating in parliament in a more objective sense.

To illustrate that, there is a portrait in the corridor behind me as you go into the opposition side of the Chamber of a prominent Territorian. Those with long memories would recall the actions of the government at that time—not in the last four-year period, in another period when other things happened. It struck me that if anyone wants to take an academic study of this or be informed, to consider the period of time when the Labor government controlled the broadcast of information related to an episode that was particularly embarrassing to the Labor Party. It managed to use its capacity to shield public view and close scrutiny of the identity of the person concerned, but everyone in our community knew who it was.

I am not saying that to draw selectively to it, but to broaden it out so we are not being tied up with politics and trying to reinforce our brand. We are not talking about supporting our team, but something bigger than that. Let us put that aside and focus on the big issues.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I support the Journalist Privilege Bill and I thank the Attorney-General and all her staff who have done a lot of hard work on this bill. This is a very important bill, as the amendments to it provide legal protection to a journalist from being forced to disclose evidence in court proceedings which would identify their source of information.

As the Chair of the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee, I sincerely thank all the members for their hard work on this bill, and for all the feedback we got on this bill.

This is another step towards our government’s policy of being open and transparent—a step forward to establish and embrace further contemporary legislation for the Territory. This bill will give any informant confidence to come forward and report issues that need to be publicised. This is legislation a lot of journalists and Territorians are supportive of. However, it is a qualified privilege and we must remember that a court or judicial entity can still make a determination that the journalist privilege be overridden if there is significant public interest in the disclosure of the source of the information. It is a reminder that if the court makes this determination then a journalist or their employer can be compelled to provide evidence that will reveal their source.

The NT journalist bill is somewhat similar to the Commonwealth laws that were introduced in 2011 and legislation for journalists in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. However, the provision within the NT bill are far more prescriptive than those provided for in the Commonwealth legislation.

The definition of a journalist has changed vastly over the years with the introduction of social media. I am pleased that the minister has encompassed this change into the NT legislation and utilised a broad definition of a journalist, as this allows the privilege to apply to a range of contemporary journalists. This is in recognition of the diverse range of people who contribute to public interest journalism and may not be employed by the traditional media organisations as full-time journalists. It also captures the evolving nature of journalists and the emerging media platforms.

Further, to balance the broad definition of journalist and to ensure people are not afforded privilege if their behaviour has been unethical, additional provisions have been included in the bill that aim to exclude protection for fake news, misleading information and publications that repeat assertions without attempting to verify the accuracy of the information.

This is an important part of the bill and something journalists are in support of. Many media corporations contribute to having good standards by having a code of conduct of policies that support good ethical and responsible reporting.
I have met many journalists over my time in government and even more so as an MLA. They are hardworking people. They have demands like any other workplace. They are busy people in busy workplaces and they are subject to having a story in on time.

I read and watch media each day. I look for the positive stories and stories that help others; stories that have substance and those that have depth; stories that are solution focused with evidence-based opinions. I am always pleased to see good reporting that captures the essence of the story, or media that gains public support to help others or even a charity.

I acknowledge that journalists must report the tough news, the stories which make powerful people uncomfortable. This is an important job that they do for our community. We would not have a good government without that.

Many of my friends and fellow Territorians watch, listen or read the news. Many still use traditional newspapers and some have transferred to using online-based applications. However, there are many that do not watch, listen or read news any more. When I ask why, some say because it is negative and always about doom and gloom. Others say that it is not reporting the full information.

This makes me think about a story on positive media that happened many years ago when I worked at the Royal Darwin Hospital in the Alcohol and Other Drugs area. At that time we were reviewing our youth, alcohol and other drug packages for the Territory. I met a young man from New South Wales who had worked with youth for many years, particularly in schools as an AOD for an NGO service. This young man’s name is Paul Dillon. He did a lot of media coverage over years on youth issues including youth substance misuse.

As we reviewed our alcohol and other drug youth education programs, Paul’s comments were, ‘Why is this information always negative?’ We discussed how the information was factual and that the data was accurate. Paul agreed and said he knew that, but that it was presented as negative data.

We were bewildered by his comments and asked him to explain. He said, ‘Turn the data around’, and proceeded to show us what he was talking about. When he turned the data on youth substance misuse around, it was clear that it was positive. Instead of the information or media blurb saying, ‘We have 9% of youth using a certain substance’, Paul changed the message to say, ‘We have 91% of youth who do not use this substance’. He continued to talk about how it is okay to not use substances, say no to substance misuse and show other youth that many people and youth do not use substances—and how this positive media actually helps make people more resilient and feel okay to say no to peer group pressures, as it is the majority.

From that day on, I talked positively in many presentations, media releases or conferences. It was a shift that many people never hear about. I would be delighted one day to hear the media outlets use this methodology to help others and build resilience in our community.

People want the daily news and they deserve good and ethical reporting to be conducted, and journalists want the same. As our journalists evolve and so does our media, one day we may even see a different approach to reporting, like the story I just told.

This is another positive step forward for journalists and their sources of information. I thank everyone who provided a submission and information to the committee. I also thank the Attorney-General, her staff and the departmental staff for bringing these changes to the journalist legislation. I also sincerely thank the members of the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee, many of them here today, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): I rise to add my own commentary on the Evidence Amendment Journalist Privilege Bill 2017. We often hear the media referred to, as the Leader of the Opposition stated earlier, the fourth estate—that is, the fourth segment of our community that wields influence on society. This term has its genesis, as he rightly said, in the European concept of three powers—those of the clergy, nobility and the commoner—with the media providing commentary on the government. Therefore the term the ‘fourth estate’ was born, and this commentary rightly continues.

With this position of influence in mind, the media, most particularly journalists, require certain legal protections in order to provide unbiased and informed commentary. In other words, for them to do their job properly, to interrogate and uncover the things that really matter, they often need to be able to protect the sources of their information.
Across the world the role of the journalist has often been controversial. We have seen journalists gaoled for contempt in the refusal to reveal their sources, and the minister spoke extensively about that in her second reading speech. It makes sense that journalists are able to protect their confidential sources. It is in the public interest to ensure that whistle blowers and journalists are both afforded some protections.

These protections or shields, as the Attorney-General referred to them, are complex and afforded across state and federal laws. The Territory today is aligning itself with other jurisdictions. I had never really considered that journalists may have to work differently in different states and Territories, it has never crossed my mind but that certainly is the current state of things. We see those examples overseas much more frequently than we do across our states and territories.

It led me to start thinking what privilege actually means. In the US it is often called reporter or newsman’s privilege. It is simply where laws are afforded to protect a journalist from being compelled to testify about confidential information or sources. It really just protects them from the act of discovery during any legal proceedings.

There continue to be journalists across the globe in gaol or facing legal proceedings that could see them in gaol, and a number of them are highlighted annually for simply not revealing their sources. These fights have triggered the fight for national uniformity in Australia.

Journalists already have a strong code of ethics, and where confidences are accepted by an information then that confidence needs to be respected under their code in all circumstance, including in a court of law. They also have to ensure that their reporting is accurate and presented in a fair and balanced way—although sometimes we might not all agree. They also already have to apply their own public interest test as part of their training.

The laws in the Territory do not currently apply an appropriate amount—for my mind—of legal privilege to that confidence or upholding of their code of ethics. A journalist needs to be able to promise an informant or whistleblower that their identity can be kept confidential. Often a great story is reliant on this commitment being made; otherwise informants, quite rightly, would be reluctant to expose issues, even if it is in the public interest. The possibility of a court being able to overrule this commitment would be a disincentive for many informants to come forward. When a journalist goes from Sydney to Darwin or Melbourne, they need to know they have the same protections and can work the same way, just as those informants need to understand that they have that same certainty of protection.

Uniformity of law is exceptionally important under certain circumstances, and this is one of them. It is also very important to things like business and issues such as surrogacy, adoption and defamation. There is a need for consistency. We also need it for journalist privilege, which affects an entire profession.

I am pleased that the Attorney-General has taken particular care in these amendments to ensure that privilege is not afforded in cases of fake news or where unfair reputational damage can possibly be inflicted. This is particularly important in the role we all play in our community, where unfounded reputational damage can seriously affect our future, employability and life opportunities beyond politics.

I am also happy to see that we are restricting this privilege to people and employers who are genuinely part of the ever-changing journalist profession. We heard some details about how that is changing before—those people who apply journalist ethics, their employers, and those people who ensure their stories are accurate, truthful and meet the public interest test.

We know there are some circumstances where the public interest will continue to outweigh the journalist’s and their source’s interests. This is simply a truth and I have no doubt the circumstances will continue to be tested in legal proceedings to ensure that the public interest is upheld. What we are doing today does not change that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, like any profession, you cannot play outside the bounds of your profession without attracting some risk. However, when you are playing within the bounds, you need to be provided some protections to ensure that you can do your job well. That is why I commend this amendment bill to the House.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank our Chair, the Member for Brennan, for his fine performance in chairing this committee about this issue.

On the surface it might sound like a relatively simple change, but it is not quite as simple as it is made out to be, when you look at the amount of paper required to change this bill. It covers a number of very important
issues. As mentioned by the Member for Sanderson and others, it is really important that we define what the rights of journalists are against the rights of the public to know. That is really what this is all about.

It also raises another issue of who is a journalist. That is something I will speak about in a minute. I will read from the Chair’s preface. He said:

*The purpose of the bill is to create a journalist shield law to provide a legal protection for journalists against being compelled to provide evidence in a court which would disclose the identity of a journalist’s source. The privilege provided in this bill is a qualified one, meaning that a court can make a determination, based on overriding public interest factors, that the privilege not apply and compel a journalist to provide evidence that reveals their informant’s identity.*

I note also that, as preamble a couple of people had a go at the previous government while patting themselves on the back about being open and transparent. These are the people who make sure you are open and transparent. You should be making sure the public know what is going on in parliament. That is a very important role of journalists, to make sure government is open and transparent.

People have commented about the importance of journalists. The problem in the Territory is that we have had one newspaper for quite a while. We had the Star many years ago. We are limited in the number of independent papers—the only one might be the paper in Katherine.

Mr McCarthy: The Tennant Creek and District Times. Katherine is not independent.

Mr WOOD: It is not the NT News or Centralian Advocate. We used to have the Litchfield Times, and that was definitely independent. If you had been on the Litchfield Council when the rates went up you could guarantee the headlines would say, ‘Rates go up by 20%’.

Those were good times, in many ways, because the main journalist was Jack Ellis, who lives at Mandorah, and he used to attend every council meeting and report on it. That kept you on your toes as a member of the council. It also informed the public what was happening at the meetings. A lot of the time the public did not attend meetings that were open to them. They did not care or it was an inconvenient time. It is therefore the role of media to put that information to the public so they know what is going on—council, this parliament or federal parliament.

It is important that we have a range of journalists from different perspectives. We have the NT News and the ABC. To the detriment of journalism in the Northern Territory—I am not saying there is no reporting from Channel Nine, but we have lost a bit of that local content that we had when it was based solely in Darwin. I am not saying news is not being reported, but we have lost a bit of that localness, if you can put it that way, of reporting on Territory issues.

There is a newspaper at Gove, from memory. Some communities have newsletters through their local council, so there are other ways of getting the news out.

My concern is with the definition of who is a journalist. We debated that within the committee. I prefer the Victorian definition, which is, ‘someone who has had a significant proportion of their professional activity involving collecting and preparing news or current affairs information, or providing opinion or analysis of news or current affairs. The news and current affairs information collected and prepared by the person is published, and the frequency of publication—the person is obliged to comply with journalistic or media professional standards or codes of conduct.’

I think other members did not agree. They believe in the broader definition in the bill, which is, ‘a journalist is a person who obtains new or noteworthy information about matters of public interest and deals with the information by dealing with the information for a news medium, or providing comment, opinion or analysis of the information for a news medium’.

News medium means, ‘any medium for the dissemination of information by the public or section of the public’.

One of the things it leaves out is the frequency of publication. Is a journalist just a person who—I release three newsletters a year; does that make me a journalist? I do not think so. There are blogs and other ways of disseminating information now. We have to be careful we do not broaden it to such an extent that people can claim they are a journalist and then claim journalist privilege. I am not sure that is really what this is about. Journalism is about collecting news and sometimes it is about giving opinion on that news.
If I have criticism of journalism today, I believe it leans too far to giving an opinion rather than just giving us the news from an independent perspective. That is not to say that journalists cannot give opinions but that role should be limited to editorials or special features. I am old-fashioned; I think journalists should be writing the news and allow other people to judge what that news means to them.

There seems to be a drift away from that. I must admit, when I was in America, I picked up a few newspapers and tended to find a more direct reporting of a particular incident. There will be a column or two which will give a comment on that but the other side of the journalism is purely the story. In the last few years, maybe a bit longer than that, we have drifted more to comment rather than reporting.

It is important that we support our journalists. Sometimes we are the ones that cop the blast from them. Sometimes it makes sure we are doing the right thing as well. It is important that journalists investigate, especially matters that are in this House and in relation to the running of government as a whole, whether it is how government departments operate—the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics would know that there was a great concern about the Aboriginal employment scheme. You would hope that journalists look at the operations of that scheme and that there is something wrong. When a journalist finds out there is something wrong, the government will also do its own investigation. They have an important role in making sure departments are doing their job but also members of parliament are doing their job properly.

The extra bit we have put in our legislation that a court will have to take into account is section 127A(3):

> Without limiting the matters that may be taken into account by the court or judicial entity for the purposes of subsection (2)(b) which is the section that allows a court to make a judgement after someone has applied for approval to find out who the sources of the journalists were, they can also take into account whether the information provided by the informant is a matter of public interest.

> Without limiting the matters that may be taken into account by the court or judicial entity for the purposes of subsection (2)(b) …

Which is the section that allows a court to make judgement after someone has applied for approval to find out who the sources of the journalists were:

> ... it is to take into account:

> (a) whether the information provided by the informant is a matter of public interest …

We do not define public interest in that piece of legislation but my book, *Butterworths Concise Australian Legal Dictionary*, says public interest is an interest common to the public, a large or significant portion of the public, and which may or may not involve the personal or proprietary rights of individual people. There is a legal definition of public interest and I think you have to understand how that applies in this particular bill.

> (b) how the journalist used the information provided by the informant, including whether the journalist:

> (i) verified the information before using the information (if reasonably practicable); and

> (ii) used the information in a manner that minimised any undue harm to any person; and

> (iii) used the information in a fair and accurate manner

Those things make the change to the legislation more wholesome. It gives the court a fair bit of leeway in what it needs to look at before it gives an exemption. I think that it finds the right balance between the rights of the journalist to not disclose the informant’s identity and the rights of the court in taking into account the public interest to say that privilege does not apply in a particular case.

I thank the Attorney-General for bringing forward this legislation and thank the members of our committee for their hard work. Some of the discussion got very legal at times and we ended up with a headache trying to understand what the legal people were talking about. In the end we have come up with a good amendment to the bill.

I support the bill and thank the committee members for their support.
Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): I support the Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill and take the opportunity to thank the Chair of the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee and all members of the committee for the work they did on this bill.

As a former lawyer …

Mr Wood: Once a lawyer, always a lawyer?

Mr COLLINS: You are probably right. I understand client legal privilege. As a former lawyer, I had professional responsibility to my clients. As with all lawyers, I was required to study ethics as a legal practitioner in the Territory. I sat as a member of the ethics committee at the Law Society Northern Territory, where I was frequently required to apply the professional ethical standards on my fellow practitioners.

Client legal privilege does not protect the identity of your client; that is known. Client legal privilege protected my clients’ information from being disclosed. Doctors and priests have similar professional relationships with their patients and parishioners. As a result they have similar obligations with regard to the privileged nature of the information disclosed to them.

Lawyers, doctors and priests are covered by ethical standards regulated by independent professional bodies. Journalist privilege of the nature protected by this bill is a little different from those other forms of professional privilege. Journalist privilege is about protecting the source of journalists’ information: the identity of the informant; not the information. The information has to go out, that is the important part of this. It is almost the opposite of legal professional privilege.

VISITORS
Essington International School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the Year 5 students from Essington International School accompanied by their teachers.

Welcome students. Enjoy your time at Parliament House. Have a good day.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr COLLINS: Welcome, students. As indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, journalists have traditionally been protected by common law rights and have been prepared to risk being gaol for protecting the identity of their sources—their professional form of civil disobedience.

While I like the romanticism of having the courage of your convictions, in this day and age it is inappropriate to have to go that length to protect a source.

This bill is about protecting sources and giving them the confidence to come forward to disclose information that might be in the public interest. I will not go into which period of government was better, all periods of government require the scrutiny that good media and journalism provide by disclosing information and calling into question what governments are doing.

Journalists should be provided with that surety. The Member for Nelson raised the question about the definition of a journalist. It is accepted that our version of the amendments goes much further than the Commonwealth amendments introduced in 2011. Journalism has moved significantly, even in that short period. While it would have been easier to be more prescriptive about what defines a journalist in times past, today and moving into the future it is not so easy.

Journalism takes on many different forms, as has been pointed out by a number of speakers. To answer your question, Member for Nelson, the answer is yes. If you are writing information in a newsletter of public interest you should be considered a journalist. That is for the court to determine. As a lawyer, I have faith in the judiciary and its ability to determine the issues with the direction provided in the bill.

I support the bill and the protections it provides for journalists, whatever form they take, whether or not they are traditional journalists who have studied journalism and work for news or media outlets that apply professional standards and codes of conduct.
If bloggers or those who see themselves as journalists continue to spread fake news, I have every faith in the judiciary and its ability to see that and call those journalists—if that is what they want to call themselves—for what they are. Those sources will have to be disclosed.

This bill protects people who provide news and information to the public in a journalistic manner. We will wait and see whether any further amendments to those definitions need to be made.

Madam Speaker, I support the bill.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I would like to say good morning to the students from the Essington International School. I was there a couple of weeks ago and see some familiar faces up there.

It is important that people understand what we do here. Madam Speaker, you do a great job inviting community groups and making sure students can participate in community education programs.

It is also the media that allows us to have a voice. We are lucky in the Northern Territory, where we represent such small electorates. We get to know our community on a level that no other parliamentarians in Australia can—whether it is electorates representing 5000 to 6000 people, whether in an urban seat, where it is easy to catch up at the markets or community events, or members from the regions who work very hard.

In this age of social media, we can see our colleagues’ activities. Our bush members for Namatjira and Arnhem have been criss-crossing their electorates over the last couple of weeks. They are in a place one day and pop up somewhere completely different the next.

The media has an important role in sharing the work we do and spreading messages. They also play an important role in providing accountability to government and giving the community a voice on issues.

Territorians deserve a government they can trust. We spoke about accountability and restoring trust back into government. We have a big job to do and are on the way to creating the foundation for a community of generational change, making sure kids have the best start and the best opportunities.

The legislation we have before us today will increase protections for investigative journalists working on stories that are in the public interest. I acknowledge all the members who spoke this morning. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support. He was on the scrutiny committee which examined the bill. I also thank the scrutiny committee members for their detailed look into this legislation. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition’s comments regarding making sure the government monitors the legislation once it is in place to ensure it continues to do the job we—and I am hopeful we pass the bill today—set out to do.

I thank the Deputy Chief Minister for her supporting comments. She spoke to the strong professional responsibilities of journalists. It is important to note they have the important job of delivering vital information to the community. The journalists I work with are professionals. You may not agree with them and they may ask very tough questions. They often have degrees and have been working in this space for a long time. This bill allows them protections in their job. The Member for Fong Lim talked about the decisions and accountability he had as a lawyer. That is what we are providing today: further support for journalists.

I thank the Minister for Education for her support. Knowing that trust and accountability are the beliefs of our government we need to make sure protections are in place for journalists to continue their work. A number of members spoke on this, providing thoughtful insight into legislation.

The Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee carefully considered the bill. We received its report on 12 March. I acknowledge and thank the Chair of the committee, the Member for Brennan, as well as the Members for Fong Lim, Daly, Arnhem and Nelson. I was pleased to see that the committee recommended the bill be passed as introduced. I thank them for the scrutiny they provided.

I thank organisations such as the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance which made submissions to the committee. It is important to note this bill replicates the protection for journalists in most other jurisdictions. It is tailored, I believe, to suit the Northern Territory’s context.

The bill amends the Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act to provide that a journalist may claim journalist privilege in order to protect a confidential source. Similar to other jurisdictions, the privilege is qualified in the court or a tribunal can require the journalist to identify the informant in cases of overriding public-interest facts. The objective is achieved by inserting a new provision, section 127A, into the Evidence
(National Uniform Legislation) Act. This allows a journalist to refuse to identify a source of information in circumstances where the journalist has promised the informant that their identity would not be disclosed.

The court will have power to compel the journalist to identify the informant in circumstances where the public interest, in identifying the informant, outweighs the likely adverse effects. In the event that a party to a proceedings applies for an order to disclose the identity of the informant, this will be decided by the court in a case-by-case basis. In the absence of such an application, the default position will be that the source remains confidential.

In making this decision, the court must take a number of factors into account:

- any likely adverse effect on the informant
- any likely adverse effect on any other person
- the public interest in the communication of facts and the opinion of the public
- the ability of journalists to access sources of information
- if the journalist is reporting on a matter of public interest
- if the journalist is acting in accordance with the traditional ethical standards of public interest journalism by taking steps to verify the information where reasonably practicable
- if the journalist is using the information in a manner that minimises undue harm to any person, and is using the information in a fair and accurate manner.

The precise weight the court gives to these factors will be a matter for the courts to determine. As such, it will be necessary to involve consideration of all circumstances including the type of court proceeding in which the application is made, the issues arising in that proceeding, and whether disclosure of the informant’s identity is necessary to fairly determine the issues in that case.

The policy intention of the bill is that journalist privilege in the Territory be available to all persons engaged in preparing and publishing public interest journalism, whether employed as a full-time journalist or undertaking the work on a casual or one-off basis. The fact journalism is broad and people provide information through a variety of sources—not just the traditional sources—was a point raised by members.

This approach has been taken in view of recent and ongoing changes within the media industry, where public interest journalism increasingly occurs under a wider variety of business models which rely on publications being written and produced by persons who do not necessarily meet the traditional definition of a full-time professional journalist such as experts, academics or freelancers. This is particularly true in the Northern Territory. The bill provides protection to those working in remote and regional areas.

Producing journalism via these non-traditional models is an important forum for voices of remote and regional areas, such as Indigenous voice. There is a gap that mainstream media does not cover and people provide that information. An example of this is the Land Rights News, which is published by the Northern Land Council.

In doing so, the bill recognises the importance of journalist privilege in fostering discussions of public interest issues to everyone in the community and across the Territory. Everyone in this Chamber has good intentions. We all want to see the Territory be the best place it can be. We want changes for the good and to tackle those issues. Community plays a large part of it. We are here to represent our communities. I am very strong on that; I am not here to represent my personal views—my community comes to me. It is our job to articulate that voice in this House.

The media plays an important role in ensuring those views are heard. We might not always like what we hear but the media is reflective of our community. In this approach to defining journalist privilege section 127A(3) was given detailed consideration by the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee. Particular consideration was given to whether the section could be improved by reference to alternative and interstate models.

This is legislation that has been enacted around Australia, although with various changes for each jurisdiction. The committee took the view that:
... given the continuing evolution of journalism and media platforms, a broad definition of journalist is appropriate to ensure that the legislation remains relevant over time to changing technologies and communication practices.

It is therefore necessary to include section 127A(3) to:

... prevent people claiming privilege in situations that would clearly undermine the concept of journalist privilege.

The committee also found that the provisions were clear in their meaning and that the bill recognises:

... the importance of journalism of our society and reflects the importance of those reporting the news maintaining high standards of honesty and integrity.

The journalist privilege created by section 127A will be available in Territory courts in proceedings before the Civil and Administrative Tribunal and in proceedings before any other person or body prescribed by regulations.

Enacting journalist provision brings the Territory in line with most other Australian jurisdictions. We have spoken about the variations in other states and territories. The Commonwealth first introduced privilege in 2010. Since then, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia have also enacted journalist privilege laws. Tasmania has enacted general privilege for confidential communications between professionals.

This is a bill that supports investigative journalism in the Territory. It provides journalists working in the Territory with a privilege adapted to the rapidly changing commercial and technological environment in which news is produced. It will protect a wide range of public interest journalism whilst attempting to exclude the fake news we often refer to—misleading information or publications which simply repeat comments without taking reasonable steps to verify their accuracy and repeat claims without looking into the detail. There is an element to try to capture fake news.

The bill also makes a technical amendment that extends the presumption in a court as to how long it takes to receive a posted letter. This amendment reflects the extended delivery times adopted by Australia Post. It is a minor technical amendment. We have all been through the changes to postal services within our electorates. Australia Post have been operating in a complex and challenging environment. In the past they dealt with a large majority of letters. Now it is mainly a parcel delivery service due to the advent of email and electronic communications. We used to have a letterbox service every day; that has reduced in my community. That is a technical amendment which extends the presumption in a court as to how long it would take to receive a posted letter.

Our government made a number of commitments based on restoring trust in government. I note that the members from the other side think we only talk about the last four years. We know there have been governments beyond that but in the last four years we saw unprecedented levels of arrogance and the erosion of the community's trust in us as parliamentarians.

We saw overseas trips being taken that appeared as, 'I would like to go to these places so what itinerary can you put together for me as a minister to visit those countries?' Ministers need to travel internationally but it should not be about ticking a bucket list for life. That is personal travel. It is what holidays are for.

We saw in the previous government—Madam Speaker, and you witnessed it firsthand, as did those in the previous Assembly—a minister decided he wanted to visit a few countries and then prepared a reason to validate that trip. That is not acceptable. As parliamentarians we have a huge job in restoring confidence that we are working for the public interest, the long-term community interests of Territorians, not just—as the community felt—the select interest of a few people. We are slowly getting there.

I had a conversation with someone recently who said they like the fact we publish the costs of overseas trips. They understand ministers need to travel and take delegations with them. I note there was unnecessary criticism of the Chief Minister yesterday regarding his recent trip to the United States. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the necessity of an American visit on radio a couple of weeks ago. The Chief Minister went with all other state and territory premiers—bar those in caretaker mode—with the Prime Minister. The governors he met and the businesses he visited have real opportunities for the Territory. In the Territory we have space, industries and resources the rest of the world does not have. It is important that we are overseas and interstate selling the Territory. As a government, we said we would publish costs
of overseas travel and report back to this parliament so there were no perceived sneaky trips of a personal interest and that things were in the community interest. Costs are published when we travel overseas. We are not waiting until the Estimates process to then have the Chief Minister questioned about expenditure, slowly reading answers out to avoid scrutiny.

Territorians understand we need to travel and that it costs money, but they want people to be up front with them. This is what we saw eroded by the previous government. When comments from the members opposite indicate that we focus on the last four years—what we saw was unprecedented.

Today must be our—I do not think you would call it an anniversary. When the then Chief Minister was in Japan, he was rolled as Chief Minister whilst representing the Northern Territory on a trade mission. Why would they want to do business with the Northern Territory when they do not know who the Chief Minister is from one minute to another?

When we talk about that last four years it is relevant because the erosion of trust and accountability was so significant. Strengthening the Public Information Act—members have spoken about establishing the Territory’s first independent commission against corruption—was a significant body of work. I would hope it would not be needed in the Territory but, sadly, we do. We need that so the public have trust that there is a body they can go to and make complaint when they think something is shady and not in the community interest.

Just this week we made the next round of members’ interests available online, something we have done to restore accountability and trust. We all have to update those within the time frames. People can search online and see what personal interests are. They can have that information and know we are making decisions in the Territory’s best interests, not our personal interests. That is why we need things like the members’ register of interests freely available for Territorians.

There have been a number of measures for opening parliament to the people and engaging with the community. Setting up the inquiry into political donations is another measure. We had the ill-informed comments of the previous Treasurer indicating a lot of people wanted to meet with him. People certainly want to meet with you whether you are a local member, minister or the Chief Minister. But his comments were that lots of people were lining up to meet with him and that money opens doors. It is those types of comments which forced us to make sure we are truly accountable to people—the inquiry into political donations, releasing a discussion on Electorate Act reforms and the ICAC. The government continues to deliver on those significant reforms.

I thank the staff of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice who work tirelessly, not only on this legislation but on all legislation. They are a small but very hard-working team. This may seem like a relatively small bill and insignificant on the day-to-day basis we operate under, but it ensures that those who hold all of us—business people and communities—to account have the protections they need.

I note the comments from the Leader of the Opposition about making sure there is uniformity across Australia with this legislation. This is national uniform legislation, but in a sense, jurisdictions have taken a different path ...

VISITORS
Essington International School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 5 students from Essington International School, accompanied by their teachers. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms FYLES: More students from the wonderful electorate of Nightcliff! It is ‘Madam Speaker and Attorney-General day’ today. Students from Madam Speaker’s electorate came in and I am very excited that there are students from my community in Parliament House. I was at the school a couple of weeks ago presenting the leadership badges. We are getting a few waves there.
For the children, we are debating a bill about journalist privilege and allowing journalists—the people who write for the newspaper and present the news each evening—the protections they need to do their job confidentially and secretly. We are nearly at the conclusion of the debate. It is wonderful to see you all here.

The Leader of the Opposition made comments about ensuring that the Territory is in sync with other states. I do not mean to verbal him, I cannot remember his exact comments. The Australian Senate Select Committee into Public Interest Journalism recently recommended there be a review of journalist privilege laws across Australia with a view to ensuring provisions are workable and that we have uniformity around Australia. The Commonwealth enacted the first provision in 2010, nearly a decade ago. The Territory is finally putting these provisions in place. We are happy to work with other states and territories to ensure the legislation is as uniform as possible and workable across Australia.

I thank all members again and the select committee for its report and work in looking into this bill. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

MOTION

Note Statement – Tourism in the Northern Territory

Continued from 14 March 2018.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, I believe you have seven minutes left of your time.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I will continue from yesterday. I was talking about the importance of using our heritage, especially the World War II heritage up and down the track, as a way of increasing tourism because it is unique to the Northern Territory. We should spend more effort preserving what we have and developing it further.

I would like to speak on mountain bike trials. The Member for Stuart sent me a column from the Advocate to do with a section of the ministerial statement which said that the Tourism infrastructure included $12m to reinforce the Red Centre as a global mountain biking destination, that the investment will allow us to open up 200 kilometres of adventure cycle tracks running along the Desert Park in Alice Springs through Tjoritj, West MacDonnell National Park at Glen Helen.

I think it is a great idea. I must admit, it has taken me five years to get another 4 kilometres of the cycle path to Coolalinga—and with one big hit he has $12.5m and 200 kilometres of mountain bike path. The minister knows my views that we should make the same effort to bring the cycle path—or use the old railway corridor—for a mountain bike trail from the Arnhem Highway through to Adelaide River on the north Australian railway.

It is a great opportunity to increase tourism recreation for Darwin and rural people. It would also fit in with the turbocharging—I use that great term that the government is using—of Litchfield National Park because it would go very close to the national park, enabling people to ride bikes to Adelaide River and Snake Creek to look at the heritage and also ride in to Litchfield National Park.

Congratulations to the government for the money spent in Central Australia for a mountain bike trail. When Ms Moss became the Minister for Tourism and Culture, I mentioned to her that there is an opportunity for something unique in the Top End as well. Mountain bike trailing is excellent but developing the old rail corridor—what we call a cycle path and most places call a rail trail—is really important and would make a great contribution to tourism.

We should also work on developing our national parks more. The previous government said it was looking at a pathway off Nitmiluk Gorge. It would be like one I saw in Vancouver where a glass pathway comes out from the edge of the gorge. People can walk onto it and look straight down to get a better view of the gorge.

That was an idea from the previous government showing we should not be scared to develop our parks a bit out of left field. People sometimes look for something a little special. What happens if you put a zip line across...
Katherine Gorge? Will people say it is terrible or that it will desecrate the gorge? Or will it attract more people, especially young people who want to take a bit of a dare?

In the rural area we will have a zip line across the Howard Springs Nature Park. I think we should throw a few crocs in the park. That would make the zip line far more adventurous. That is something the government has agreed to and will also put a rope climbing path through the trees. It is still a park. None of these things will damage the park but will add something to it.

We have to understand that our parks are important from a conservation point of view but can be used for recreational purposes as well. If we ever get to the discussion on ATVs—which has been on the Notice Paper for 12-and-a-half years—we might get around to discussing the importance of ATV parks from a tourism as well as a safety perspective. This could provide an opportunity for local people to have a recreation park they can use legally. I do not want to go too much into that. The Member for Stuart is also very happy to speak on this issue. I hope one day we can get to that. I should reinforce that it is important to look at other ways of developing our recreational facilities, including our parks, to attract more tourists.

There are lots of other things I would like to say. There have been many tourist documents issued by ministers over the years. If we are to improve our economy we have to put more and more emphasis on tourism. I have said from time to time that my area has many tourist attractions people forget about. Drive past Knuckey Lagoon; it is full of water at the moment. People could canoe through that lagoon. It is a beautiful place run by Parks, but is hardly ever is looked at.

Girraween Lagoon is privately owned but hopefully will come into public ownership as the Girraween subdivision develops. McMinns Lagoon is a favourite place for bird watchers and an area we need to put more emphasis on. A lot of people come to the Territory, especially to the Leanyer sewage ponds, to look at birds. It is an important part of our tourism culture. There should be more opportunities to do that.

Madam Speaker, I will not take any more time, but I believe there are some issues the government needs to look at and support.

Mr PEACH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I am very excited to talk about the area of tourism. While I am here, I want to ask the kids in the gallery—put your hands up if you have been to Alice Springs. Good, good. Those of you who have not, make sure you tell your mum and dad to take you there.

That is my contribution to tourism, promoting the Territory. It highlights an important fact that intrastate travel and tourism is a big area we need to look at growing and promoting, to encourage people from Central Australia to travel up the great track, stop in at Tennant Creek and see beautiful sites like the Devil’s Marbles and spend money in the local economy. Take the road to Katherine, see the beautiful gorge, stop for a coffee and a piece of dragon fruit, go through Palmerston right to the Top End. The Northern Territory is a beautiful place and I am very excited to talk about this industry and the importance it plays in the Northern Territory.

I pick up from yesterday when the Member for Araluen spoke at great length about her passion for tourism. As a Centralian I share that passion with my colleagues, the Members for Stuart and Braitling. I put in a submission to the federal Senate inquiry into regional airlines because it affects not only Central Australians, but people living across the Northern Territory in regional and remote areas. I am confident that our Minister for Tourism and Culture is very passionate about progressing those conversations on how we can work with airlines to make it appealing for people to jump on planes around the country and fly to the Northern Territory to experience the great Territory lifestyle we have on offer.

While we are talking about the work that needs to be done in tourism, we recently announced across the Northern Territory—it has been received as a great announcement and initiative—the turbocharging of tourism. This affects everyone in this Chamber and across the Northern Territory and is a great initiative. We are looking forward to rolling it out across the Northern Territory to ensure that the economic benefits to Territorians and Territory businesses are positive.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the previous government’s tourism infrastructure grants, because the Namatjira electorate received some of these and they helped a range of my constituents to enhance their tourism product to make it a better experience for people coming to Central Australia.

We heard in the Chamber this morning and yesterday about the investments in mountain biking. Central Australia is one of the most beautiful landscapes to go mountain biking, hiking or take a tour trail. We are pleased to work with the local community on this to make sure that experience can be felt by everyone who visits.
One of the most important things about the Northern Territory, which we are learning to do better—is enhancing the cultural experience people have when they come to the Territory. We have a great product in selling the Indigenous experience. That means working with Aboriginal people and tourism operators to make sure we sell that experience and come together to develop a tourism product that will enliven and educate people from around the globe when they come to Central Australia or the wider Northern Territory. They are able to experience Aboriginal culture in all its beauty and glory. We are passionate about that and will continue to work hard on it.

It would be remiss of me not to talk about the great, iconic places in the electorate of Namatjira. Uluru and Kata Tjuta are two magical places in the Northern Territory that have constant occupancy rates of over 95% throughout most of the year. Tourists flock to this place in Central Australia to see and experience the magic. For those who have not made it to that region, I encourage you to please do so. Experience the wonders of the Territory at Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

The Lasseter region has some of the highest rates of occupancy and international tourism in the Northern Territory. So much so that the ILC and Voyagers are looking at putting the Lost Camel back on track. This is a hotel that was decommissioned some years ago. Due to the number of visitors wanting to come to that region they have looked at bringing that back online. That is very exciting.

Another beautiful place to visit in the Northern Territory is Kings Canyon. It is a spectacular place in the electorate. It is great to see the beautiful landscapes and rare species of plants, birds and wildlife that you cannot see in other places of the Northern Territory.

Namatjira is also home to a range of outstanding events in the community, such as the Red CentreNATS …

Mr Higgins: Hear, hear!

Mr PAECH: I pick up on the interjection. The Opposition Leader obviously likes to give a car a good rev. I do as well, Opposition Leader. It is a great event for the Alice Springs community. The Member for Braitling and I always make sure we are part of the procession through town in the hotted-up cars.

Not only is it a great event for people involved in motorsports—we know Centralians love their motorsports—it is also a great event for the local tourism economy. The people who travel from around the country to participate in the Red CentreNATS arrive a week beforehand, driving those beautiful cars around town and spending money in our hotels, cafes, restaurants, supermarkets and retail outlets. They bring money into the community, which is fantastic. I look forward to attending another round of Red CentreNATS this year and in continuing years.

We must not forget the importance of our regional shows. The Member for Goyder is passionate about the tourism and economic benefits regional shows bring to the Northern Territory, with people travelling from around the Territory or interstate to look at local produce and participate in equestrian and cattle events.

The Member for Nelson will be very excited about the chicken competitions in Central Australia—very tough competition there. Sometimes these events are not directly associated with tourism, but they are tourism. They draw people to the Northern Territory to experience those things firsthand.

The Member for Araluen spoke about the National Transport Hall of Fame, a fantastic organisation in the electorate of Namatjira. I am happy that the Northern Territory Government has worked closely with the National Transport Hall of Fame to make sure it does not leave Central Australia. That is important. We love our motorsports, trucks, shows, and our events.

This year we will have the Masters Games. I expect to see members of this Chamber competing in an event. It is a wonderful event that is a major drawcard for tourism in Central Australia. I know that everyone here can compete in the Masters Games because as the youngest member of this Assembly—I turned 30 last year—I am eligible for a range of events, so no excuses from members!

This is a great event for tourism, attracting people from around the country to Central Australia to compete; stay in our local hotels; spend at our local cafes, restaurants and retailers; come together and catch up. There are great concerts at the opening and closing ceremonies, bringing people together in sharing that Central Australian experience.

We must not forget that when we talk about Turbocharging Tourism, we are also talking about the need to look at the infrastructure supporting those tourism ventures. This is about enhancing the tourism experience
of travelling up the Stuart Highway, but is also about turning off the beaten track, leaving the bitumen and experiencing the Northern Territory’s beautiful regions—out on the dirt tracks, the roadside stops, the local Aboriginal communities where tourism is a hot topic.

Engawala, or Alcoota, is an Aboriginal community in my electorate that is ready to take on the challenges of tourism, to sell a great product and market itself as the leader in megafauna. I am very proud to have Minister Moss working closely with this community on the economic benefits tourism can bring to the local community to ensure its future is a bright future.

As part of that package we have the megafauna in Alice Springs showcasing the importance of that region. The Alcoota megafauna site in Alice Springs is the stepping stone to tourism in the East MacDonnell Ranges. We want visitors to come through there when they are in Alice Springs, see that opportunity, look at the beautiful megafauna displays and then check out the regions. That region is very important. There is the Gemtree where you can go fossicking for gemstones—Kate Chalmers is a very passionate tourism operator in the region wanting to showcase that. This forms part of the bigger package.

We have been working with the Central Desert Regional Council and Tourism Central Australia on a master plan for the East MacDonnell Ranges to showcase its beauty. I pick up on the Member for Nelson’s comments on the work needed in our existing national parks. Arltunga is a prime example—the first European settlement in Central Australia. There is great history there, a great narrative.

Hopefully in working on the Central Australian east Mac’s tourism master plan we can promote it to people on the east coast so they visit that region and hear the important stories that are part of the pioneering history of Central Australia and Alice Springs—gold mining, the first inland European settlement.

There is a very important story to tell and it connects to a greater plan. We need to look at how we do that. We also need to have conversations with our brothers and sisters on remote communities throughout the Northern Territory. It is a great opportunity to look at inter and intra tourism opportunities, such as sport carnivals. A number of my constituents play local football. They travel to South Australia to compete in the games there. How can we grow and develop tourism opportunities amongst our remote communities throughout the country, not just limit it to Central Australia?

We also have the Cup Carnival in Namatjira. You can always watch a few ponies run around the track. It is a great event that brings lots of tourism benefits to Central Australia. Many Top Enders travel for the Cup Carnival or bring their horses and ponies; they are spending money in Central Australia. They are staying at our hotels and eating at our restaurants. It is important and we need to understand that.

The minister highlighted the national Indigenous gallery and the importance it plays to Central Australia and the nation in general. The economic benefits that will bring to the Northern Territory are substantial. The social narrative that plays to the Central Australian community is important. We must talk about that and sell it. Showcasing beautiful works from across the country is important. Talking about the Indigenous cultural centre is imperative. These are stories that need to be told in the Northern Territory: the heartland of Indigenous culture. Song and storylines from all over this nation run through the centre.

Having a centre of excellence—the national Indigenous gallery—and the cultural centre in Central Australia will provide security and sustainability for Central Australians and ensure Aboriginal people continue to have their stories told on a national stage.

As I have travelled throughout the globe in my short life, major well-developed countries can tell this story. We are lagging behind; we do not tell this important story. I am confident we can deliver an exemplary product.

We must not forget the other commitments the Northern Territory Government provides in and around Central Australia. I was fortunate to attend the AFL women’s game with the Member for Braitling. Those ladies are top performers. It was a fantastic show and there was a great crowd supporting those women.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.
PETITION
Petition No 22 – Unconventional Gas Mining to be Banned from Northern Territory

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a petition from 2305 petitioners praying that unconventional gas money be banned in the Northern Territory. The petition bears the Clerk’s certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read.

Unconventional on shore gas mining poses a profusion of risks with catastrophic consequences to the Northern Territory. There is a Plethora of both scientific and anecdotal evidence that ‘fracking’ causes water contamination, water depletion, air pollution, earthquakes, noise pollution, traffic issues, social issues, health issues, and releases climate changing greenhouse gases. It will negatively impact tourism, agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, and everyday life. We can live without gas but we can’t live without clean air and water.

We, the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory, do respectfully demand that unconventional gas mining (fracking) be banned in the Northern Territory.

MOTION
Note Statement – Tourism in the Northern Territory

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, the turbocharging will deliver great results with people across the Northern Territory. These investments are about making sure we look after tourism now and into the future.

This investment is also looking at new and innovative ways to work in the tourism space. It is not just about the traditional tourism operations where people come to the Northern Territory in caravans or cars or flying—and sticking to the traditional ways that tourism has been delivered.

Recently, I have been fortunate enough to attend launches with traditional owners in some of the national parks across the Northern Territory. One in particular was Emily Gap where the traditional owners worked with a range of organisations to develop a tourism app, which is part of the arts and trails app. This app was …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move that the Member for Namatjira be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr PAECH: Two minutes goes quickly when you are talking about good things. As I was saying, the app is about two things. It is about traditional owners being able to protect their sacred sites and keep tourists on the right tracks and paths through the national parks. The second component is that traditional owners are able to talk about the importance and significance of those local sights both in English and in their mother tongue, which is Arrernte. That is, in itself, innovation. Working with local people to look at tourism products is something this government is committed to doing.

We look at the community of Mutitjulu at the base of Uluru, one of Australia’s most iconic tourism destinations. That community is ready and willing to take up the challenges in the tourism sector. They are having conversations about developing tourism products, what that looks like and how they get people there.

Not too long ago they were very fortunate to have a range of American tourists, who were also philanthropists, come to Uluru and spend some time at Mutitjulu. They were able to put together a spectacular event.

Within the last few months I attended an event called Unconventional Uluru on behalf of the Minister for Tourism and Culture. This event was designed to bring convention and conference organisers to different places in the Northern Territory to showcase the type of conference and convention tourism the Northern Territory can offer. It looked at a range of venues in the national park at Uluru and around the Yulara community.

As part of that trip I was fortunate to spend time at the Uluru camel farm, a fantastic organisation at the base of the rock with a great tourism product. It is the beneficiary of the previous government’s tourism
infrastructure grants. I saw firsthand the economic benefit and infrastructure the grant has provided for that organisation.

The Camel Cup in Namatjira at Blatherskite Park is another key piece of infrastructure for Central Australia where we are contributing additional funds to ensure the infrastructure at Blatherskite Park is looked after now and into the future.

The Finke Desert race is a fantastic event and is great for the local community. It attracts hundreds of interstate tourists every year to camp out amongst the beautiful Central Desert landscapes or bring their motorbike, buggy, sidecar or quad to participate in the event. It is the event of the nation in off-road racing. It is the event where people come to defeat the challenge that is the Finke. It is a great event with a great committee that works tirelessly throughout the year.

It is a commute to the community of Aputula—or Finke—where there are huge tourism benefits. The local community opened its art gallery over the Finke race weekend, showcasing and selling some of the work of local, talented artists. This is in the electorate of Araluen; the Member for Araluen is very fortunate to have this event.

The Beanie Festival is an iconic event in Central Australia. It draws hundreds of people to Central Australia every year to not only showcase their artwork and creativity, but for people to come together, get the beanies, and see their family. It is part of the Alice Springs Desert Festival, another key event in Central Australia bringing people together.

We must not forget some of my favourite events in the Northern Territory across the great electorates of Namatjira and Stuart. These are the rodeos. They draw hundreds of people to the Katherine and Daly regions. They are great events that showcase our local talent and the hard work of our pastoralists. These events bring people together. I know tons of people from South Australia who bring their horses to compete in the gymkhanas, the dressage and the jumping.

Equestrian is an important tourism driver, involving the show circuits, carnivals and rodeos. When we talk tourism it is important we are not just talking about going on tours to look at iconic sites, but also about the experiences and relationships people have with the Northern Territory.

The minister spoke about the roadshow—which has been successful in talking to people about product creation and diversifying products. Tourism products change as the market changes.

Central Australia has a great opportunity to look at adventure tourism. The demographics are changing and people are getting heavily involved in adventure tourism. That is why we are investing in mountain biking and a series of other events to capture people’s interest so they participate in these experiences.

The Earth Sanctuary is another great example of local tourism. It not only talks about ecotourism and industry—which is growing—but looks at the environmental aspects of tourism. There is a great astronomy centre there and hundreds of tourists come through every year. They are able to see the Central Australian night skies; the crisp and clean skies you do not get in major cities. This is something we are passionate about marketing. Tourism in the Northern Territory is like no other with its fantastic, pristine landscapes.

We are investing $26.5m for marketing to generate a return of about $345m over the next two years. That is fantastic and the benefits will flow through the town. People said earlier that the dollars spent are in hotels, construction and across the economies. As part of our stimulus package, this work is already delivering results. We are seeing money invested into marketing and new tourism infrastructure products to create experiences. When people leave the Northern Territory they go away talking about how good it was. They talk up their special experience so much that their friends and colleagues want to experience that excitement and how good the Northern Territory is.

One thing I am excited about is the additional money—I think it is $20.78m. That will help us enhance the Territory’s existing festivals. We have a range of great festivals and we need to look at how we market those better and bring people together. A great example of this is the Wide Open Space Festival, run over the same weekend as the Alice Springs Cup Carnival—the May long weekend. It is a great time to be in Central Australia.

This brings hundreds of people from Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide because it is like a Meredith Festival. It is a music festival showcasing talented artists in an iconic place: the Northern Territory. We must also look
at working with local communities in the regions and across the NT to come up with the product to draw people to the region.

I could talk all day, but my time is coming to an end. I welcome this initiative; it is great for the people of the Northern Territory.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support Minister Moss’ statement on this government’s tourism investment. The statement clearly outlines this investment and the value intended for Territorians and tourists alike.

The tourism industry is a vital part of the Territory. Hundreds of Territorians run their own small businesses in the sector and thousands more are employed in the sector. Many more Territorians and visitors alike spend their hard-earned money and valued holiday time on tours and at festivals, as the Member for Namatjira mentioned. They also buy Territory artwork and souvenirs to take home.

Minister Moss outlined that in the year ending September 2017 approximately 1.8 million visitors moved throughout the Northern Territory. The money spent by these visitors helped the 17 000-or-so people employed directly, or indirectly, in the tourism sector.

The Territory is a unique and magical place that deserves to be promoted and shared with the world, and I am pleased to support the government’s additional investments in tourism to achieve this. It is important that government invests in a future where all Territorians can prosper, but this cannot be achieved without a significant investment in the tourism sector.

Our government’s investment consists of a variety of projects that will deliver immediate and long-term benefit to the Territory. During these economic times we understand that Territorians are doing it tough and we have implemented a variety of stimulus packages to bring immediate value to Territorians and Territory businesses.

The Home Improvement Scheme—or home renovation grant scheme—allowed Territorians to receive a discount on renovations made to their homes whilst providing tradies with much-needed work. Many Territorians benefited from this scheme, and I was pleased to learn that the Territory economy benefited with a return between $2 and $4.80 for every dollar spent by government on this package.

The stimulus package we are delivering through tourism is a sensible investment for the Territory. For every dollar we spend on tourism we are likely to see an average return of $37. This is a huge anticipated return, especially when compared to the return on spend for the Home Improvement Scheme. The best part about this return on investment is that it will be new money coming into the Territory economy whereas other stimulus packages, like the Home Improvement Scheme, see existing money recycled around the Territory.

Minister Moss already outlined the extensive tourism spend but it is important to mention a few of these.

There will be significant investments in the National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs, Darwin CBD and Myilly Point cultural precinct, and Nitmiluk National Park in Katherine, with money also being allocated to work with our airline partners to support sustainable airline services. This is a significant investment in tourism and I look forward to witnessing the impact these investments will have on our economy.

More importantly, we look forward to welcoming more visitors to the Territory who will enjoy their time here and return home to tell their family, friends, colleagues and other networks about the magnificent experience they had in the Territory. This potential word-of-mouth promotion of the Territory will further support our tourism industry and economy.

Hundreds of local businesses operating in the Territory provide a wide array of wonderful experiences for us to enjoy. I have enjoyed experiences with locals and visitors, ranging from a Nitmiluk Tours cruise at Katherine Gorge to watching tour guides feed crocodiles aboard the Adelaide River Queen. I am also lucky that Crocodylus Park is not far from my home in Karama. Each of these tours provide a unique and unforgettable experience. It is important that we each do our part to promote these opportunities as widely as possible.

I was fortunate to attend the 2nd National Indigenous Mental Health & Wellbeing Forum in Perth recently, which was attended by more than 200 people from all over the country. There are many forums and conferences like this held across Australia each year. These conferences provide an injection to the local economy through spending on travel, accommodation, transport and food. I have no doubt that many of the
visiting delegates remain in the host city longer than the conference and spend money in local businesses for shopping or tourist activities.

We have a top class convention centre as well as accommodation, shopping opportunities and tourist experiences in Darwin and in Alice Springs. It is important that we promote Darwin and Alice Springs as ideal and competitive conference destinations to conference organisers and steering committees.

I thank the Minister for Tourism and Culture for supporting more conferences to be held in the Territory. I thank her department for contacting the organisers of the forum I attended in Perth to entice them to bring that forum to Darwin next time.

On a local level, I am privileged to have the wonderful Malak Marketplace in my electorate. This organic farmers market provides a unique experience for regulars and visitors alike. The marketplace organisers do an amazing job to promote this Dry Season weekly activity and attract visitors from outside the electorate. They also work hard to attract tourists who visit Darwin and would love to see buses full of tourists from a cruise liner docked at Stokes Hill Wharf get dropped off to the middle of Malak to attend the market.

Dreams and visions like these are needed and encouraged. I will continue to support the Malak Marketplace organisers in their hard work in bringing this to life.

I also mention the NTFL and Tiwi Islands Football League grand finals this weekend. When I first thought about my response to the tourism statement NTFL did not sneak in. But when you look at our magnificent Darwin Buffaloes who will take on Southern Districts this Saturday, the interstate players our teams bring to Darwin, and the experiences each of our unique football teams have with these people—we get these gentlemen up every season to play football. They go home during the week to spend time with family and friends and tell everyone about their magnificent experiences in Darwin. Good luck to the Darwin Buffaloes and to Southern Districts.

It is important that we position ourselves as a tourism hotspot. Just as we plan holidays overseas we need people from overseas to start planning their holidays here.

I attended the World Travel Expo on Sunday at the Darwin Convention Centre, which was a bustling hive of activity. Hundreds of locals were scurrying about to fill their bags with travel and accommodation specials for destinations including Indonesia, the UK and America. As hard as I looked that day I could not find travel or accommodation specials for the Northern Territory or other destinations in our country. I cannot help but think if these were readily available at the travel expo then maybe those who attended, including me, would consider holidaying at home instead of abroad next time.

We all know at least one person who visited the Northern Territory many years ago for a holiday, work experience or other reason, and that person never left. I found this to be a common story amongst my former colleagues when I worked for the Northern Territory Government and I hope this is a tradition that continues today. These community members transitioned from being visitors to becoming permanent residents and now Territorians. They have brought their homes here, participated in our wider community, contributed to our economy and raised the next generation of born and bred Territorians, all the while foregoing face-to-face and daily contact with families, friends and other networks left behind when they first ventured to the NT.

We need to hear these stories and understand those experiences so we can continue to create a Territory that other visitors want to not only visit, but remain in, spend in and contribute to.

I am excited to learn that Donghai Airlines made a public commitment to have nonstop flights from China to Darwin. With an estimated population of more than 1.4 billion people, it makes sense that Tourism Australia is targeting Chinese tourists and that we are too.

I am one of the many Territorians whose ancestry can be traced to China so, naturally, I look forward to planning a holiday that includes a direct flight from Darwin. I look forward to welcoming more visitors from China to the Territory once these flights commence.

Tourism Australia reports that international visitors to Australia spent a record $41.2bn in the year to September 2017, which was up 6.6% on the previous year. It is great to see that Tourism NT is working hard to secure a bigger slice of the national tourism pie. It is also pleasing to read in Minister Moss’ media release, which was released yesterday titled, 'International Visitor Survey Supports Turbocharging Tourism Plan', that
the Territory attracted 3000 extra holiday visitors from the greater China region, 2500 extra visitors from France and a further 1500 extra visitors from Scandinavia and Italy.

Tourism on the national stage provides a huge economic windfall for our country. Our investments in the Territory tourism industry will help entice even more international visitors. The tourism industry has and always will be a key sector, with approximately 17 000 people directly or indirectly employed in the Northern Territory.

Visitors to the NT have the opportunity to be mesmerised by the wondrous beauty of our Territory; the fantastic, inclusive attitudes of Territorians; and numerous opportunities to spend their money during their visit.

Through the tough times many Territorians are facing, it is important to have smart investments to benefit Territorians in the short term and the long term. I thank the Minister for Tourism and Culture for bringing this important statement before the House.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also speak to the minister’s statement on tourism. I note that the other day the Leader of the Opposition claimed much of the credit for the government’s tourism policy. I was quite surprised. I hope that spirit of cooperation continues. We will wait and see.

Other members of this Assembly represent electorates which boast world-class tourist destinations: Kakadu and Nitmiluk National Park in the Member for Arnhem’s electorate; the picturesque Hermannsburg historical precinct in the Member for Stuart’s electorate; Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the Member for Namatjira’s electorate. They are clear stand-outs, but so are the stunning coastlines, oceans and river fishing experiences in various other electorates. There are numerous other experiences as well, including the events and markets referred to by other speakers.

In contrast, Fong Lim is a relatively quiet suburban electorate. In its own way, it is still beautiful. However, as comfortable a place as Fong Lim is to live and work in, we do not have the spectacular scenery of many of my colleagues. In saying this, Fong Lim is not devoid of its own charm. We enjoy colourful Top End sunsets across the harbour. We have the renowned Dinah Beach boat ramp that has received such dedicated support from the government and, in particular, the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. I can boast loudly and proudly that we have Australia’s best fish and chips outlet, as voted by the Seafood Council of Australia—Frying Nemo at Tipperary Waters, a fantastic place to have dinner if you ever have the opportunity.

We have the Dinah Beach Yacht Club which hosts the Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race each year and the Viking burial ceremony. Just quietly, the yacht club has asked me not to spruik the Annual Viking Funeral too broadly …

A member interjecting.

Mr COLLINS: No, it is already oversubscribed. This is just between us, do not tell anyone else.

We also have the Buff Club at Stuart Park which is a real slice of old Darwin …

A member: Nostalgia.

Mr COLLINS: Nostalgia indeed. A quirky and friendly place where you can step back in time and take time out. It is a great place to sit and have a drink. If you are there on Wednesday night you can help me try to beat the former Member for Fong Lim at trivia.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COLLINS: I have paid back. He beat me once.

We also have Bagot Community, which I would love to see developed as an Aboriginal arts community. It has its difficulties; as many people would be aware it is in administration. We hope that administration will end in the not too distant future. The community has its own plan and the administrator is working with the community to get it out of administration to have a degree of financial independence and the ability to self-determine where they are going.
The plan is to provide a commercial development along Bagot Road. I have spoken to some people who are looking at an arts-type facility in conjunction with that. I would love to see that happen. I would love to see the story of Bagot and its history told as part of the tourism developments being carried out around the Territory. I will continue to pursue that wherever I have the opportunity.

In talking about the tourism package, we are talking about areas and attractions that are not in Fong Lim. That does not mean the package, or developing tourism generally, is unimportant to the people of Fong Lim. Like everyone in the Territory the people of Fong Lim are affected by the general prosperity of the Territory. They are workers and business owners who rely on having work available and customers ready to purchase goods.

I am a natural sceptic when it comes to statistics, so when I hear the statement that every dollar spent on tourism is likely to return up to $37 or $38 to the Territory economy I take it with a grain of salt. Regardless of whether that figure is correct or an exaggeration, the fact is the financial return is significant and cannot be ignored.

I recently travelled to Lisbon, Portugal. The population of Lisbon is similar to Brisbane with 2.7 million people. It is a stunning, very old city founded before Rome. Being old comes with some problems. Old buildings are very expensive to upkeep. They go through changes in their makeup over time, and Lisbon was no different. In the late 20th century Lisbon, and Portugal in general, suffered severe economic difficulties.

Today Lisbon is a beautiful city and a huge tourist destination. The fact it became a tourist destination effectively saved the city. People are now able to live comfortably in the city in the magnificent old buildings because of the income generated from the visiting tourists. There will always be people who do not like that, which is unfortunate, but the fact remains that the economic benefit that flows from tourism is something we cannot replace. If we can spend a dollar and get upwards of $30 returned to the Territory economy, it is money well spent and of benefit to us all—whether in Central Australia, or various events and attractions no matter they are in the Territory.

As we have heard, these are tough economic times and the government has to do what it can to ensure there is a future for as many Territorians as possible. When we spend their money we have to make sure we do so as effectively as possible. That is what the Turbocharging Tourism package will do. It will indirectly benefit everyone in my electorate of Fong Lim.

I thoroughly support the minister, her statement and the government’s tourism package.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the statement. It is clear that tourism is the vehicle that will bring widespread economic growth and benefit to the Northern Territory. It is recognised in any emerging or developing economy. All around us we have those trying to adjust to changing economic circumstances and we have identified tourism as an area for investment with significant return.

The minister is hopefully aware of the work I did over the Christmas period in East Nusa Tenggara and East Timor. Both places have identified that tourism is an important industry in which to invest because of the widespread growth that can result from a successful tourism strategy. It is wealth that spreads to all sectors, including education and training, from those that have a small footprint in the local economy to the more significant players and investors in tourism product, resorts and the like.

From those providing room service or providing a snack to investors and those providing services, it is extraordinarily far-reaching. This has been recognised in the Territory and it is timely that we rethink our product and how we can have some benefit flow to the Northern Territory.

I share a similar view to many Territorians who have been here for some time. It is an echo to Crocodile Dundee—those were heady days and exciting times, almost like the Territory was discovered and presented to the whole world. We have been trading on that image for a very long time. It is excellent to see that those images are still timely and have potency when we see Crocodile Dundee the new version, son of Crocodile Dundee.

It shows we have significant product that could be developed but we really have to shake the dust off it. The circumstances have changed quite dramatically notwithstanding those early days. We had the pilot strike which severely hurt the Territory. Notwithstanding that, we had great product, everyone wanted to come to the Territory and there were many ways to get to the Territory. We had Ansett and Qantas competing with each other; now we just have Qantas. Of course we have Virgin, but the prices are still relative to flying overseas.
It is quite expensive to come to the Northern Territory. Those living in the Territory who want to see people from down south find they have to make the effort to fly because those down south say it is a very expensive place to visit. It costs the same amount of money to visit them as it costs for them to fly up and visit us. It is prohibitive, sadly.

Those are the same challenges we have in our immediate region; the cost of coming here. It does not seem to be getting any better. That means we have to look at increasing demand. Once we increase demand, the air services could supply capacity to meet that demand.

What is the demand? What drives people to want to come to the Northern Territory? The development of product is the right way to go. There are certain elements that need to be assessed honestly if we are to attract people to the Northern Territory. If I take somebody somewhere or pick up a friend from the airport, I even consider the route I choose to take them into the city. The route you take gives them a first impression. There are a couple of options. I take the route that passes the Cool Spot along the foreshore all the way into town. They remark on how beautiful the Territory is.

I think it is that kind of thinking we need to recognise. If we are not careful we can give people a different picture of the Northern Territory, or Darwin, by that first impression. We can take them on a route that shows places and sights that will surprise them or perhaps disappoint or disturb them.

When my parents first visited the Territory I was so in love with the place that I did not even think about the route I took. They were surprised at what they saw and got a negative impression. I did not see the Territory like that but they saw something different.

On Sunday, I picked up an important family from Indonesia. They wanted to have a look at our restaurants and the food presented in the Northern Territory. I have known them for many years. They have an extremely successful family hospitality operation in Indonesia. I have told them all about the Territory but was concerned about what they might see.

I took them to the Hilton and we sat in the Lobby, having a chat about what we were going to do over the next few days. One of our friends—who is a long-grasser as we term them here—walked in to the lobby barefoot, looked at me and asked if I could give him $2, in full view of this family who just arrived from Indonesia.

I did not create any fuss. I created the impression the gentleman knew me and said ‘I will have a chat with you outside, sir’. He said, ‘Yes, no problem’ and he went outside. They were left with a question: what was that about? Who is that man? We did not have to address it because we moved on to other things. If I was in Jakarta or Bali and a beggar walked into the lobby of the hotel that would disconcert me. That was their first impression and I managed the best I could.

I took them to a restaurant on Sunday night and had to carefully position the car because, coming out of our premier restaurant, Hanuman, I could see people with swags lying all over the front entrance to the entertainment centre. This would have been a real surprise for this family. It is not what they would have expected to see.

I took them to the mall as I wanted them to taste the food produced from Danny, a legendary chef in the Galleria. I had to take them in to different places to show them how beautiful the Territory was but they saw the vacant and quite dirty places in the mall.

I was very aware of what they would possibly see. They were polite and did not say anything but it was something I had to manage. You only have to read the NT News about people’s experiences. Just last week there was a letter to the editor of a group that visited Darwin. They were eating al fresco style and they had food taken off their plates. They were abused in the foulest manner imaginable when they resisted. They were so shocked they went to their hotel room and did not come out again.

These things need to be looked in the face and recognised. People laughed when they heard about Prince Charles coming to town—it was sort of battered away and mocked—but do not forget there will be millions of eyes following that trip and the impressions to be gained from it are priceless, one way or another.

We need to be very careful about what we present in every way and think more than just slogans—turbocharging the Territory and money invested. We have to be more granular than that and more honest about what we are investing in and the problems we need to address to get clear about this. We need to be more detailed on how we will address the actual problems.
I am talking about those who come here and observe things like crime and social disorder, or being approached by someone in the street—that would be confronting to them. They may not be accustomed to it, or know how to react. They may be so polite that they do not say anything but share their experience with a lot of other people. That has a big impact.

Townsville made a great effort to ensure visitors had a positive experience when it developed its waterfront area. That creates compounding economic growth. We have to be honest about that. The responses of government to alcohol and the drivers of crime and social disorder—really front and centre.

A friend who is very involved in the public transport industry—the buses. When you visit a city you like to use public transport. Bus drivers have commented to me that the reality is, even if the majority of our local residents do not feel comfortable using our public transport let alone those who would want to visit and make use of public transport, they do not bring a car with them. Using public transport would be a frightening experience for many of them.

We need to be honest about that. We are inviting people to our place and need to see, through their eyes, what we see and are explaining away. We need to deal with these things more robustly and have frank and honest recognition of the challenges we face in order to move towards them and be honest about it.

I had to manage it with my friends who came to visit, seeking to make a contribution to the Northern Territory. I was sensitive about the things they may have seen.

Those are the obvious things. In the responses I have not heard much comment on that, but it is part of the package. It is not a criticism of government. Do not be thinking I am criticising the government. We need to recognise these things and move honestly and maturely to address them.

The next area I will speak about it solutions. What are the problems and what are the solutions to them?

I mentioned Crocodile Dundee. I came to the Territory when Crocodile Dundee was just airing, so it was a long time ago. There are people who talk about new product and new concepts. I will offer one just for interest, and others may want to offer some as well.

My family has a tradition—it might be surprising to some—of canoeing down the Daly River. Yes, it is a bit scary at times but you know what you are dealing with and are mindful. We go from Claravale to Ooloo Crossing and sometimes other places in between. We are careful of crocodiles and the like. We usually do this after Easter or as soon as things calm down but there is a fair volume of water. We have noticed—and you may see photos on my Instagram or Facebook—massive trees, high up in the river gums, that are probably 100 metres up in the air. They have been lodged up there by the massive water flows we have in the Territory.

Around the campfire we have had conversations about being in awe of the volume of water that has flowed down this river. We go back to Katherine and the water is almost flowing over the bridge. You could put in an airboat at Katherine and end up in the Daly River in a flash. That would be the sort of thing you would see on an adventure channel. It would change the look of the Territory, where you have bold people having fun doing something like that being televised around the world. We immediately begin to think of people in our networks who are looking for an adventure of that kind. An airboat going from Katherine to Daly River could be done in a short period of time. You would be over the top of the trees and get a completely different look at the Territory.

Jim Jim is absolutely spectacular but very few see it because it is closed for a good period of the time. There are people who have great ideas of how you could present some of these hidden gems that make them more accessible.

The Road Transport Hall of Fame has been mentioned by the Member for Araluen. It was really shocking to see that icon threatened. There are sometimes treasures here that we may not realise, living in the Top End, but in Central Australia that is such an important showcase. My dad and mum saw it—they have a background on the farm. It was such a magic time to see mum and dad walk around there and experience the memories of every truck or tractor they saw. That has been replicated a hundred-plus times over, and to have something like that threatened was a concern. I am glad things have stabilised. It really does need ongoing support.

My work in recent times—it is not the answer but it is one answer. The proposition is that we need more airlines. In the past I have noticed that governments sometimes recognise this and respond politically by
demanding that an airline service the Territory. That is fine; you might get a bit of a hit in the paper and people will be relieved that government has called for something. But how do you get an airline here? You have to increase the demand and you increase demand by having new product that attracts people.

There are some things the Territory government can do. I have made the suggestion, particularly considering that Darwin is not Perth, Sydney or Melbourne. It is a niche place with a capacity to respond to the opportunities immediately around us. Dili is one hour away; Kupang is one hour away and is the provincial capital for East Nusa Tenggara and a hub to the rest of Indonesia up to Bali—then from Bali to the rest of the world. It gives us a very unique connection to a growth area.

How do we get a plane to fly at an affordable price with some competition so we have good prices that make an attractive proposition to go from here to Indonesia via Kupang, Singapore or Bali through Dili? One thing the Territory should consider is creating the need for people to move in the area.

We have not heard a lot about the Arafura Games and that concerns me and a number of us. We have not heard enough detail about this event. I suggest, as I have many times before, that the reason to reset the Arafura Games is to make sure it aligns with our strategies for tourism, education, training and existing trade routes so wherever we have those points of contact and linkages we develop partnerships in those places, rather than a general event where we invite as many people as possible. It must align with our strategy—in this case, tourism—and within our immediate region of East Nusa Tenggara and Dili in East Timor. We should be cultivating a need for people to move from those places to Darwin. If you create that demand then there is an interest …

Mr HIGGINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I bring your attention to the state of the House.

Mr MILLS: Must I cease speaking until we have a quorum?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, so the bell does not interrupt what you are saying

We have a quorum. Member for Blain, you may continue.

Mr MILLS: If we think of the Arafura Games as a way of attracting demand on routes then we need to service and support our strategies in the region so we get a double hit. This is what it was originally about. Rather than just having an event, it is an event with a purpose.

I would like to hear a statement from the minister responsible on the Arafura Games to make sure we are heading in the right direction, as time is ticking away.

The other issue is the education exchanges we have had in the region for years and years—to reactivate the exchange program so there is a need to travel from East Nusa Tenggara, for example, or the schools that have had pre-existing relationships. Give them a reason to start moving this way that will attract the attention of an airline.

The purpose of my recent work there was to bring together East Timor, East Nusa Tenggara and the Northern Territory to develop a concept around our joint product to attract people into this zone. Four million people go to Bali a year. We want to attract them eastward to end up in Kupang or Dili and then come to Kakadu, one hour away. The same here; we attract them to the Northern Territory to have a look at Kakadu. One hour away is Alor or Toro and other such places.

I believe that kind of fresh thinking would have the support of the Commonwealth. I am already speaking to DFAT about this; there is some interest through the trilateral working group and support from East Timor and East Nusa Tenggara. This is the sort of fresh thinking we need to do these things.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave for an extension of time so I may finish my comments.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MILLS: Next is the new networks. In having the Chinese interested in flying to Darwin, we have to be clear about what we are offering and how we maximise that exposure to China. My observations, personal as well as inquiries of those involved in tourism in Vietnam and Indonesia, is that there needs to be a specialist approach to the Chinese market. They are particularly focused on looking at particular product and staying together. Whereas the adventure tourists from South Korea or Japan are looking at traveling independently and exploring more widely.
When I speak about the airport—and I am aware of this privately—China has a great interest in not just coming to Darwin but going further to East Timor. Therefore we need to connect the two so that if people come this way they go further and do more.

This leads me to the new networks. I would like to hear from the minister whether there has been serious engagement with our own Chinese networks in the Northern Territory. We have Chinese families—with a long association and familiarity with the Territory market—who have strong connections into China and strong investment in East Timor. These groups need to be brought in and their assistance sought on how we can reach—they understand how to reach these markets. Have they been included? Have they been involved? Are they organised? Are they being assisted in helping to market and assist the government in marketing the Northern Territory?

I am very interested to hear what level of work has gone into engaging our Chinese community on their interests in East Timor and China. They are already successful and use these networks. It would be amazing if government has not made good use of them. I have spoken to many of them; they are calling for it, they are asking for engagement. Maybe I am just speaking to some but I would think the ones I speak to should be engaged in this.

On the East Timor side they are starting to organise, forming an association so that the private sector can inform and advise government how to engage China effectively. We should be doing the same. You cannot just throw money around and say we are turbocharging something and not plug that into existing networks that can reach further than any government department. They are the long-term, deep networks that cross culture.

With that, I commend the minister for the initiatives shown. We have some very serious challenges that need to be focussed on. I hope we are able to have more granular consideration of the real challenges. How do we get extra services into the region? What are the niches the Territory can explore? What assets are available to us beyond the department to create new product and have that boldness and confidence that once marked the Northern Territory?

I finish with the importance of Bali in this. Bali has been broadcast quite often on social media. On TripAdvisor, it is the most popular destination in the world. It is not far from us. With its 4.5 million visitors per year—Bali is a unique place. It is important for Darwin to promote itself in Bali, just as East Nusa Tenggara and Timor Leste will begin to market themselves more aggressively in Bali in partnership. If the Territory was part of that and started to present joint product and packages together with our near neighbours, we would have a captive audience of over 4.5 million people—and growing—that visit Bali every year.

This is the sort of fresh thinking we need to consider and I would like to see reports back on those sorts of matters when the minister replies—and going forward.

Ms Nelson (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I talk today about this government’s record support for one of the Territory’s most enduring and vital industries, the tourism industry. I will start with some statistics to put this into perspective. The total number of visitors to the Northern Territory over the 12 months between September 2015 and September 2016 grew by 23% to an estimated 1.8 million visitors. Tourism directly employs 15,500 people, with many more employed in associated service industries. In the 2014–15 financial year tourism contributed $1.92bn in value to the Northern Territory economy and is a major player and key contributor to diversifying our economy.

Our beautiful landscapes and waterfalls, unique arts and cultural offerings, unbeatable recreational fishing opportunities and laid-back Territory charm make a distinct impression on all who visit. Key enablers for attracting more visitors include increasing access through aviation and transport; improving the range and number of accommodation options, tourism products and infrastructure; and increasing the availability of job-ready Territorians.

The tourism industry provides sustained business and employment across all our regions. I want to touch on the critical role it plays in my electorate. While the star attraction is undoubtedly the famous Nitmiluk Gorge, the attractions in my electorate of Katherine and its surrounds include fishing, many hidden natural wonders, and a rich Indigenous and pioneering history.

Katherine is an incredibly diverse community carved out of a breathtaking landscape and moulded by a unique mix of passionate characters. There is unimagined potential and a resolute spirit. It is a melting pot of culture and shared experience. It is a place where personal and professional growth is embraced equally.
by those who were born there and those who came to the Northern Territory for a few weeks and remain decades later. That story is familiar to everyone in this Chamber.

From a humble beginning as an outpost established with the overland telegraph line on the north-south transport route between Darwin and Adelaide, Katherine has grown with the development of local industries; a strategic military function in RAAF Base Tindal; and as a tourism gateway to the attractions of nearby Nitmiluk National Park and its combination of spectacular scenery and timeless history.

Katherine offers a wide range of accommodation, facilities and attractions including museums, art galleries, character-filled pubs and historic sites. The importance of sustainability in the Territory’s tourism cannot be underestimated. I am proud to be part of a government committed to developing new and existing tourism opportunities in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable manner.

Our Chief Minister announced last month that this government is significantly ramping up our investment into Turbocharging Tourism over the next 18 months to two years with an immediate $103m injection into the sector on top of our existing investment. The figures released in December last year showed a decline in international visitors to Darwin and Kakadu, but increases for the Katherine and Daly regions. This is great news for my electorate as Darwin’s loss will be Katherine’s gain.

In my maiden speech on 18 October 2016 I stated that one of my major goals as the Member for Katherine was to facilitate innovative and targeted investment in services and infrastructure by prioritising a consultative approach. This meant every stakeholder was to be consulted and considered when a decision about funding is made, and we have done that. Every Katherine resident can be sure that every dollar committed to the development and betterment of our town is being spent in a responsible, sustainable and ethical way.

One of my first official duties as Member for Katherine was to ask the Chief Minister to refocus the $10m that the previous government committed towards building a skywalk to investigate how that money could be better spent in Katherine, ensuring equity and sustainability. I am proud to say we did that.

Katherine will receive a $5.5m investment into tourism infrastructure to expand walking opportunities in Nitmiluk National Park as part of the record $103m Turbocharging Tourism stimulus package. Nitmiluk is known for its incredible country and walking trails, with people travelling from all over the world to experience the challenge of the 62 kilometre Jatbula Trail. This is on top of the existing $10m the government is investing in Nitmiluk over the next three years to upgrade, refresh and develop tourism infrastructure in the park. That came from the redirected funding of the skywalk bridge.

The Territory Labor government and the Jawoyn traditional owners will be working closely with this investment to expand the walking experience in the park and develop new multi-day walking experiences that combine Aboriginal culture and nature. Visitors will be able to immerse themselves in the unique sandstone and river landscape of the park and experience Jawoyn culture. This investment will bring more tourists and visitors to the park in my electorate of Katherine and provide jobs and training for the people of our community.

The government is funding $1.9m to make the NT a pilgrimage destination for Australian military history. Visitors to the Northern Territory will find many sites of military heritage throughout the Territory, including the Katherine Museum which was a former World War II regional air terminal that holds an eclectic collection of artefacts, photographs and memorabilia.

Katherine will also benefit from the new $26.57m funding for smarter and more targeted tourism marketing—the roll out of marketing campaigns with key airlines, targeting niche markets and luring lucrative business events to the Northern Territory. This $26.57m for marketing is expected to generate a $345m return on investment over the next two years—and more long-term—directly into the NT economy. It will support thousands of jobs. This will do great things for Katherine as tourism has been, and will continue to be, an important foundation stone of our economy.

Along with marketing and tourism infrastructure, the third major part of the tourism stimulus package will see almost $21m over two years invested to improve existing festivals, events and experiences to make them more memorable for visitors and locals. The $21m includes $3m for an industry development fund—visitor experience enhancement program to support new experiences. The visitor experience enhancement program will enable the industry to undertake projects to improve tourism experiences, facilities and attractions for visitors and locals.
Eligible projects and activities may include, but are not limited to, infrastructure upgrades which include new walking trails, upgraded or additional accommodation, retrofitting of existing tour buses or cruise festivals; implementation of new technology to improve the tourism experience; development of new visitor experiences to diversify the tourism offering including fishing, bush walking and bird watching; and value adding to existing experiences such as improvements to interpretive or interactive tourism signage.

The fund is another example of how this government is supporting local businesses and growing tourism. I will be encouraging Katherine businesses to take advantage of these funding opportunities. Round one is now open. It provides a funding pool of about $1m for projects to commence before 31 June 2018 with applications closing on 30 April.

There have been a number of other activities this government has driven to support Katherine tourism. One of them includes the Million Dollar Fish international campaign, which ended on 28 February and had large components dedicated to Katherine and the surrounding region. The must-dos, such as Nitmiluk Gorge, continue to feature heavily in campaigns to hook the holiday maker and inspire them to book travel to Katherine.

There have been multiple marketing promotions—with more being planned—for Katherine and the surrounding region. The 2018 drive campaign commenced in February and will feature the experiences and attractions in and around Katherine and Nitmiluk.

There has been and will continue to be considerable public relations activity from publications promoting the region such as the recent Qantas inflight magazine, which features Katherine on the cover and throughout the magazine. The magazine routinely reaches an audience of over 460,000 dedicated travellers.

Conversion campaigns to support other promotional activities featuring Katherine products have run in partnership with Flight Centre, Great Southern Rail, Wotif.com and airlines such as Virgin and Jetstar. These campaigns are in addition to the larger media campaigns promoting all NT destinations, including Katherine. The campaign cost approximately $320,000 from November 2017 to February 2018, with contributions from all participating parties. The largest of Tourism NT’s awareness campaigns, Stop Guessing, Start Doing, featured Katherine and was in the market from 3 September to 28 October 2017.

The most recent and exciting news is the highly anticipated film production, Top End Wedding, starring Miranda Tapsell. It is scheduled to shoot in Katherine this year; I think it will be starting over the next couple of months. The movie will feature the region extensively and showcase it to a global audience. I am super excited to see the filming commence in Katherine.

For Katherine, tourism is more than an economic driver; it plays a critical role in defining and celebrating the best of this beautiful part of the world we call home. It lets us showcase our breathtaking landscapes, unique history, ever-welcoming community and Territory spirit. Katherine has all of this—and more—to offer visitors. I am proud of the work this government has undertaken to showcase Katherine not just to the Northern Territory, but to the rest of the world.

I commend the minister’s statement.

Mr McConnell (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the minister’s statement on the important tourism investment of $103m.

I will start with a bit of history. I was a ranger for 10 years, from 1985 to 1995. I recall what happened in the Northern Territory tourism industry post-Crocodile Dundee and the Stuart Highway being sealed bituminised. It fundamentally changed the tourism landscape in Central Australia. National parks in the West MacDonnell Ranges went from next to no visitations to 40,000 and then 60,000 visitors per year. That is because you used to have to rattle up and down the dirt south road from Coober Pedy to the Northern Territory-South Australia border. It caused a real growth in tourism.

Any snapshot at that time—you have to invest more to continue that growth. By the 1990s, the Conservation Commission—later known as Parks and Wildlife and other organisations—was well aware that to keep ahead of the curve in Tourism you need new products. Some of the developments in South Australia during that time were the Desert Park, which was developed to try to keep people in Alice Springs for an extra day, and the Simpsons Gap bike path, a sealed bike path from the outskirts of Alice Springs at Flynn’s grave through to Simpsons Gap. It is about 15 kilometres long and is an excellent ride. I encourage anyone to do it if they are into a bit of light bike-riding.
That is when we developed the first thing in the Northern Territory and Central Australia that can truly be called iconic, the Larapinta Trail. The Larapinta Trail is a 225 kilometre long multi-day walking trail. It goes from the Telegraph Station—also known as The Bungalow to the north of Alice Springs, which is a national park—all the way through the West MacDonnell National Park and Mount Sonder. It is an incredible walk.

I have done a lot of walking around the world—the Grand Canyon, Grand Teton National Park and a lot of other places in the US. I walked the Hoh River Trail in the Olympic National Park, Washington. It is incredible. It goes from wet rainforest-type country to an active volcano that has an incredible glacier in it.

We have two walks in the Northern Territory which compare with that. One of them was mentioned by the Member for Katherine—the Jabulpa Trail, which is a walk I have done. It is an incredible walk. There were a number of people talking about walking the Jabulpa Trail last year, including my electorate officer, Helen Lee. I believe they started it and are intending to complete the rest this year sometime. I look forward to them doing that. I encourage them to walk the Jabulpa Trail as soon as it opens after the Wet Season. It is an incredible experience.

The other incredible experience—back to the great electorate of Stuart and partly Namatjira—is the Larapinta Trail. The Larapinta Trail was established by the Conservation Commission in consultation with the walking people in Alice Springs and the existing walking industries in Australia and around the world. There were some real naysayers, ‘This is ridiculous. It is too far. It is not interesting enough. This will never work.’

One of the most important pieces of tourism infrastructure in Central Australia is the Larapinta Trail. Most people walk the whole trail of 225 kilometres and most complete it in about 14 days. It is incredible that people are coming to see the environment in Central Australia, committing two weeks of their holiday—plus probably a bit of mobilisation time either end—to go on a multi-day walk. We have incredible landscapes.

What has been the value add from that? We now have a specialised walking shop in Alice Springs called Lone Dingo which is an incredibly good shop selling all the things long-distance walkers need. It is important for visitors but also for local people. I shop there regularly. These things start to grow.

We wanted to have ranger-guided tours along the walking trails. They were not established, so they tasked the park rangers—including me at the time—to develop those tours on the Larapinta Trail. In the late 1990s, I was doing ranger-guided tours on the Larapinta Trail. We went from the Telegraph Station, where I was stationed, and walked to the first overnight stop, camped overnight and then walked through to Simpson’s Gap. I have done numerous tours. I still remember those tours well.

There were the naysayers who said that it was not worthwhile and questioned why we were committing public servants’ time to guide the trail. Now there are at least two or three concessionaires running the trails and camping events for a long season every year. One of them is World Expeditions, which is a well-known international company that runs walking tours all over the world. One of World Expeditions’ most popular tours is the Larapinta Trail.

If we did not have that visionary focus in the late 1980s this never would have happened. We have to continue developing the Northern Territory’s tourism product.

If people spend time in the West MacDonnell National Park or Tjoritja National Park they will find a couple of interesting things. We have all heard about Glen Helen, which is owned by the Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation—which I give a shout out to, because I am the previous CEO. The corporation has owned Glen Helen for nearly 25 years.

The original owner of Glen Helen—it was run as a pastoral property—was a man called Mr Bowman. One of his major investors in the early 1950s—a little before my time, so forgive me if I am misleading the House with the dates. Who was one of his major investors? Ansett Airlines. Why was Ansett Airlines investing in a remote tourism enterprise? TAA also invested in similar Central Australian product. Why? Because they wanted to develop the product so they had somewhere for tourists to go on their flights to Alice Springs.

All these things link together. If we want better flights in Alice Springs we need to develop a better product. This government is doing that. This government is making these strategic investments across the Territory, in Nitmiluk, areas around Darwin, the West MacDonnell Ranges and other places. You have to make that sort of strategic investment.

Of interest is that, due to the great work of the Clare Martin Labor government, nearly all national parks in the Northern Territory have been handed back to traditional owners. Nearly all national parks in the Northern Territory are under joint management. That is a real progression and real change from when I started as a
ranger in the 80s. Investment in parks not only benefits the mainstream tourism industry and has conservation value benefits, but it also has benefits for traditional owners—Aboriginal people—who are a big part of the future of the Northern Territory.

Turning my attention to the recent announcement of the mountain bike track. Earlier I referred to some questions about the multi-day Larapinta Trail and whether it was worth doing. I am sure there will be some who wonder about the investment in the mountain bike track all the way out to Glen Helen and beyond. There will be those who wonder about this investment, but it is an important investment. It will develop flow-on industry as the Larapinta Trail did. I am looking forward to it and have been excited about this for a long time.

In 1996, I was the local host for an American TV adventure show called Trailside: Make Your Own Adventure. There was this rama rama from America who needed a local guide. That was me, another rama rama. We did a multi-day mountain bike ride through the West MacDonnell ranges. When were we talking about this? We were talking about it in 1996. I am excited that now we have a government and a minister with the vision to develop and deliver this product that has been talked about for a long time.

I am also familiar with a similar product being developed in the US. This is worth Googling. The San Juan Hut trails are a hut to hut adventure. They are multi-day mountain bike tracks in the US, mainly Utah and partly Colorado and some other states. It is worth a look and will give you an idea of the sort of industry that could be developed from the multi-day mountain bike trail. I am really excited about the fact it will be opportunity for traditional owners and tourism operators. There has already been a great deal of interest expressed to the minister for concessionaires on such a trail. There is a way to go, but that sort of interest is developing.

A lot of people in this House know that my partner Kathy is from the US. Happy anniversary for yesterday, Kathy. A lot of people wonder why you are still this mad—to be married to this bloke—but good on you, thanks.

Another place I am very familiar with in the US is Moab, which is the adventure capital of Southern Utah. It is the adventure capital of the US. Moab is an incredible town and an incredible place to look at and compare for the Territory. Moab is a small town, maybe a little bigger than Tennant Creek. It is surrounded by national parks and in red rock country like Alice Springs. Moab has become the adventure capital for that area and perhaps the nation.

This is not just a history lesson. What we are trying to talk about is that you need a visionary government to develop and deliver these types of products. We are doing that.

A major announcement of $103m is not without risk. There will be naysayers and people who wonder about the investments we are making, but those investments are well thought out. They will be the future of the Northern Territory and are important.

I refer back to the Larapinta Trail, Simpsons Gap bike path, Alice Springs Desert Park and the Territory Wildlife Park—all of these things required vision to develop them at the time. We are using that mantra going forward and saying that we want to deliver these products further.

Some of the most exciting places for visitors to see in the Northern Territory are on Aboriginal land: Nitmiluk; Katherine Gorge; Tjoritja/West MacDonnell National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta. Intrinsically, everything we develop in this tourism sector will have an Indigenous component. It will be about Indigenous people and development, and this is what we need to sell to the market and internationally. The Northern Territory is an inherently Indigenous place. Visitors come to this place and experience things with Indigenous people for the economic advantage and future of Indigenous people.

Investment in tourism is critically important and this is an incredibly good initiative. We need to remember that we live in a world with very different communication now because of mobile phones, TripAdvisor and things like that. We have to be on our toes in developing this product. It has to be bespoke, be world best and leading. To do that we have to generate excitement in the community about this product. We have to get the whole community to buy in.

Previously, members have talked about rough edges in the Northern Territory. We need to work on those rough edges and ensure this is the best possible place for the experience of the visitor. That benefits those who live here as well.
National parks are for more than tourism. National parks are important cultural places in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory. They are important cultural places to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. They are important places to protect conservation, biodiversity and scenic beauty. We have to be responsible in the development of this type of product and where we do it.

I get worried when I hear about glass-fronted walkways in Nitmiluk, which I heard about from a previous government. I get concerned about those things because the strength in this place is the connection to the culture, country and environment. We cannot have a built-in environment that makes us look like we are trying to be the Gold Coast or something we are not. This place is about connections, places and people. This tourism investment is about all of those things.

I commend the minister’s statement to the House.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I give my support for the statement by the Minister for Tourism and Culture.

As the minister emphasised tourism is an industry that sustains thousands of jobs and small businesses in the Northern Territory. The announcement of the $103m injection in to the tourism sector has been well received by the industry, so I have heard.

I was fortunate to attend the ‘year ahead’ presentation with Minister Moss in Katherine at Knotts Crossing Resort on Wednesday 28 February. I heard, firsthand, the relief and positive constructive feedback from industry stakeholders.

Earlier that same day, I was proud to stand alongside Minister Moss at Nitmiluk National Park when she announced an extra $5.5m for infrastructure for Nitmiluk to improve walking trails. This is in addition to the current commitment of $10m for the park.

On Saturday I visited Nitmiluk in the electorate of Arnhem, alongside the Katherine electorate officer, Mr Dean Vlassco. We walked from the visitor centre to the Southern Rockhole, which is approximately a 4 kilometre walk.

We trekked the long path and descended to the rock hole. It was stunning. To arrive after the hot sun—we did not walk in the best part of the day. We stepped over the rocks to see the waterfall cascade over the rock face and into the jade green pool at the bottom. It was refreshing, cool, and the water tasted sweet. This is an area of the Arnhem electorate just 30 kilometres from the township of Katherine. It is a natural delight and a hidden gem.

Being a good local member I posted photos of the plunge pool and the walk on my Facebook pages, work and personal. Many people commented and wanted to know how to get there. I hope these friends and contacts as well as other Territorians, interstaters and internationals make the pilgrimage to this beautiful place. Southern Rockhole and the whole of Nitmiluk National Park is truly a spectacular spot that I am privileged to enjoy in my wider back yard as a Katherine resident.

The minister spoke about the economic impact of tourism in the Northern Territory. I am honoured and privileged to represent the Arnhem electorate, which is home to some of the most magnificent, spectacular natural landscapes in the Territory. I am talking about world-renowned tourist attractions such as Kakadu, Nitmiluk and the smaller gems such as Elsey National Park, which is located near Mataranka township. It encompasses the hot springs and my favourite place to swim in the Top End, Bitter Springs.

Yesterday, the Opposition Leader spoke extensively about the need for upgrades of infrastructure for Kakadu National Park. I wholeheartedly agree, not only as the local member but as a Territorian. I remind the Opposition Leader that at the end of 2015, the CLP Treasurer wrote to the Commonwealth Government and wiped their hands clean of any decision-making or commitment to Jabiru and Kakadu National Park. It is a shame that we lost nearly two years of support for the township, the people of Jabiru and the residents of Kakadu outstations who use the township of Jabiru and love the place in which they live. Who would not? They live in a World Heritage listed national park.

The CLP set us back approximately two years in negotiating with the Commonwealth. I am very happy to inform the House that as soon as there was a change in government, Michael Gunner stepped in to say that the Northern Territory is committed to Jabiru and Kakadu. We do not forget our Territorians, no matter where they live. I am proud, as the local member, to say that negotiations for the future and sustainability of Jabiru are well under way.
Despite the two-year setback because of the CLP’s withdrawal of conversations to look after that part of the Territory, we are working very hard to try to catch up on negotiations to improve the infrastructure at Kakadu. The minister is working hard with her federal counterparts to make sure that investing in and supporting places like Kakadu is a priority for the Commonwealth, which will in turn support residents in the park and the township.

Let us not forget the large scale economic importance of tourism. That is of course, jobs. The minister approximated that 17,000 direct or indirect jobs come from tourism in the Northern Territory. The attractions of the Territory appeal to locals as well as interstate and international visitors. The tourism income from locals and visitors drives industry and supports local jobs.

I agree with the minister that we must do more to increase the rate of visitor growth throughout the Northern Territory. I am proud to be part of the Gunner Labor government that is committed to investing in the tourism industry, a driving force in the Northern Territory. We hope to turbocharge that economic vehicle.

I heard my colleagues in the Assembly voice their support for Turbocharging Tourism and the benefits for a place dear to my heart, Litchfield National Park. I lived in Batchelor for the first nine years of my life and have fond memories of spending weekends with my family at Buley Rockhole, Florence Falls, and Wangi Falls on our regular family weekend picnics.

I have a vivid memory of my father taking my sister and me to swim at Tolmer Falls before it was officially closed to the public. We swam to the caves which were home to a rare and protected, highly endangered bat species. Our family were fortunate to enjoy the tranquillity of the area with nobody else around. That memory has stuck with me, more so since the Tolmer Falls plunge pool has been closed to the public.

There is a direct correlation between tourism investment and increased visitation. I support the $103m investment into Turbocharging Tourism. Our Gunner Labor government will provide a much-needed immediate stimulus for the industry and jobs relying on the industry. Over the next two years this funding rollout will impact the industry significantly by marketing the Territory, enhancing our existing tourism products, creating new tourism products and increasing funding into festivals and major events.

If you are travelling to the Arnhem electorate, I give advanced warning of the wonderful festivals we host across the electorate. Starting in May, the Never Never Festival will be brought back to life by the community of Mataranka. Residents are working hard to get in early, at the beginning of the Dry Season, to get the grey nomads coming up the track to stop in Mataranka and spend time in the Never Never region. I will be attending the festival.

One of the highlights of the Never Never Festival will be the Mataranka Rodeo on Saturday 19 May. I have been to two rodeos in my life, both at Mataranka. I attended one during the campaign period and the other last year as the member. I am the person who covers their mouth and closes their eyes when someone falls off a horse or bull. But I am getting used to that type of lifestyle.

The family atmosphere at the Never Never Festival and rodeo last year was fantastic. I believe the gate count was approximately 2000 people. For a small town on the highway that tends to be a whistle stop, that is a fantastic number of attendees. We hope to get more coverage and smash that number this year. I cannot promise I will be one of the people jumping on a horse or bull, but I will be cheering for those who are skilled and brave enough to do that.

That is the first festival for me this year followed by the Barunga Festival, which is always held on the Queen’s Birthday weekend. It is a busy weekend across the Territory, from the Finke Desert Race in the electorate of Namatjira, to the Greek Glenti in Darwin and the Barunga Festival in the Barunga Community on the Central Arnhem Road. There is no chance of anyone saying they are bored at that time of year.

This year is the 30th Anniversary of the historic Barunga Statement. There will be interesting conversations at the festival. The four land councils are planning to have their joint meetings: Central Land Council; Northern Land Council; Tiwi Land Council; and Anindilyakwa Land Council.

It is a big event on the calendar for the Arnhem electorate and for me as the local member. I will be camping in Barunga, which I have done for the last couple of years. I will enjoy the nice, cool Dry Season weather—it is beautiful camping weather—and the festivities such as the sports carnival, cultural and arts activities, shopping, good food stalls and the evening concert. I am sure they will have some ripper artists at the Barunga Festival Queen’s Birthday weekend this year.
There are several smaller community festivals. Communities are starting to open up, especially with the idea of having people travel to their communities, most requiring permits. Having their communities open for a particular weekend or those festival dates—some of those communities include Ngukurr. It has a festival. The last two years it was held in September, which is quite warm, so not as many people camp.

This year Ngukurr is looking to move its festival to June, a couple weeks after the Barunga Festival—have a bit of a break after the big Queen’s Birthday weekend and get people into Ngukurr to support some local ideas of tourism and economic development. Watch out for a confirmed date, but it looks like it will be June this year.

One of the other smaller and growing festivals is the Numburindi Festival based in Numbulwar. The Numburindi Festival is based on culture, language, dancing and song, and enjoying the time that families spend together. It focuses on encouraging youth to hold on to that culture and Wubuy language, and participate in the Wungubal, or the ceremonial dancing.

The last two years the Numburindi Festival has been over three days. People from as far as Gapuwiyak, across the water from Groote and Bickerton, and also from Ngukurr travel to Numbulwar and stay with family or camp. Each year it gets bigger.

Last year I was privileged to have my colleague, the Member for Barkly, travel to Numbulwar for the festival. He was one of the secret judges, alongside me, to pick the youth dancing award. With all the different clan groups and youth dancing in their different clan groups, depending on their ceremonial song it was a hard job. I thank the Minister for Housing and Community Development for traveling to and spending time in Numbulwar, experiencing the work of the committee members that made the festival a reality and an ongoing and sustainable festival.

The Arnhem electorate also has the One People One Voice festival on Groote Eylandt. Unfortunately, last year they did not have the festival due to some issues with a change in the organising committee. They put it on hold. I am assured that they are looking to have the festival again. It should be in August this year. There will be a coin toss between Umbakumba and Angurugu. I wonder which community will win that. Either way, wherever it is, I will be trekking to Groote. The 2016 festival was fantastic, so I really hope they continue to work hard to bring the festival back this year.

The Mahbilil Festival is held in Jabiru and can change between August and September depending on the season. Last year I was very privileged to have the Member for Katherine travel to Jabiru. The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister were also there. Were there any other colleagues, Member for Katherine? Yes, the Member for Arafura. There were five of us, which was wonderful.

As the local member, it was wonderful to have that support in a town on edge with high anxiety for the future, not necessarily knowing what is happening in their community. It was wonderful to see so many leaders from this Assembly take the time out of their own schedules to support the locals in the community and the surrounding region. I thank my colleagues for that.

Hopefully they all enjoyed this cultural, arts, and music festival as well as the sporting festival. The Member for Arafura and I handed out the medals for the winning football and basketball teams. It was good fun watching the grand final that Minjilang won for the fifth year running. Being in the Arafura electorate, they had their local member present the award. There are some good stories at the end of festivals as well—a lot of pride for communities and residents in the region.

Walking with Spirits is a festival held in Beswick, or Wugularr, community on the Central Arnhem Road. It is held every year over a weekend with the beautiful Beswick Falls as the backdrop for that festival. It is a limited event because of space and not wanting to overcrowd that beautiful falls area. Limited tickets are available to purchase. The festival is held in July each year in the beautiful part of the Dry Season. I recommend that anyone thinking about going should buy tickets early because they sell out quickly. That is the Walking with Spirits Festival organised by Djilpin Arts Centre which is based in Beswick and Wugularr.

A festival I have not been to and am hoping will start up again is the Bulman-Weemol festival. In past years, I have heard this festival was a great cultural and music festival. Peter Millar, the famous singer from Blekbala Muijik lives in Bulman. I would love to hear that band rock out again at a festival. Hopefully that one will come back on the radar. I cannot promise anything but would love to see that small community bring in more tourism dollars to be able to support that festival in the future.
An interesting part of Territory history is our wartime history—not a proud history in terms of losing Territorians. It is a sombre and reminding history that war is a time when people pull together. The Member for Nelson mentioned the World War II heritage trail along the Stuart Highway, and I agree that there could be further support for revitalising and energising the history along the Stuart Highway where locals and visitors travel.

A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 43: I request an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: Back to the World War II heritage. I frequently drive from my home in Katherine to Darwin and see the World War II history landmark signage. I admit there are many I have not visited. In terms of the potential of capturing people driving along the highway, particularly those who are not on a time limit, like the grey nomads who spend their money in the Territory and enjoy the Dry Season—it is funny, in America they call them the snowbirds so it is the reverse; northern residents getting out of the snow going south to places like Florida and New Orleans.

We have to come up with a catchy thing but grey nomads tends to be our colloquial term for our retired southern state visitors with time on their hands. We welcome them to the Territory to support our local economy through tourism.

I agree with the Member for Nelson that our World War II sites are a great record of history. It would be great to see a lot more of that highlighted as part of our stimulus package for Turbocharging Tourism.

I diverge slightly and share a story about a holiday I took in June 2015. I drove from Numbulwar to Darwin to pick up friends who had flown in from Brisbane. We went on a two-week long adventure to Western Australia with the goal of travelling to Broome—I had never been there before—and going as far south as Exmouth to visit the famous Ningaloo Marine Park to try our luck diving to find a whale shark.

The reason I share this travel story with the House is to highlight the importance of infrastructure. During this trip I was lucky enough to visit Purnululu National Park—the famous Bungle Bungles—and I admit the 54 kilometres of windy, corrugated road is probably some of the worst I have ever travelled on. From someone who lived in Numbulwar for five years and travelled on a dirt track in and out of the community, that is saying something.

Outside Exmouth in Cape Range National Park there were several unsealed tracks in various sections and it struck me that not all national parks in our country have great roads or infrastructure for travelling. It is something we can be proud of in the Territory. We have good sealed roads and some low and high level bridges in places like Kakadu, Litchfield and Nitmiluk National Parks and, in your electorate Mr Deputy Speaker, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. They all have solid road infrastructure. We are on a winning streak but capitalising on that infrastructure is something we are doing as part of this package.

On that trip I was asked by many people if I was going to drive the Gibb River Road. I thought, ‘It is a four-wheel-drive track and I live on dirt road’, so did not see the immediate attraction to doing that on my holiday which was meant to be a time of relaxation and peace. It did not have the appeal at the time but that is not to say I will not do it another time, maybe another holiday another day. Living with 220 kilometres after the bitumen runs out that takes four hours to drive instead of two, driving on a four-wheel-drive track for a holiday was not appealing to me at the time.

Excitingly, we are investing an extra $5.5m to continue working with Jawoyn traditional owners on key walking tracks linked to the visitor facilities at Nitmiluk National Park which the minister and Member for Katherine spoke about today. This will be a huge boost in the region of Katherine which links in and supports the park, as well as the various activities the Member for Katherine proudly spoke about—it is in her electorate and our bordering electorates. I am sure we will see the benefits of boosting local tourism in that region with this turbocharging and the government’s commitment of $15.5m for upgrades in the park over the next couple of years.

I am doing my bit to boost local tourism. Next week is my birthday weekend and I plan to spend my Saturday night at the award winning Cicada Lodge. I have never stayed there before but I look forward to having a special celebration there, supporting a very successful business in the Arnhem electorate and doing my part to boost the local economy.
It was not until I started this job that I realised the importance of local tourism in terms of Territorians travelling within the Territory and spending tourism dollars. We tend to see and identify outsiders—not to be negative about southerners or international visitors, but we do not tend to think of ourselves as being tourists when we travel the Territory because we like to be proud locals.

It is something which has become quite explicit to me in realising the value and importance of local tourism in the Territory. Something I hope to do this year in the Dry Season is spend a week camping in and around Kakadu National Park and enjoy some of the amazing heritage listed national park I represent. It is a special, beautiful part of the Territory, Australia and the world—doing my bit again to try to spend some of my dollars locally to boost our local economy.

It is great to hear that more Territorians are travelling around the Territory, spending their tourism dollars. Locals do not always want to battle shoulder to shoulder at peak times in the Dry Season with our visitors from the south and overseas, but rather enjoy taking advantage of special Territorian rates and packages during the low season, which tends to be the Wet Season. It is good to hear that people are out and about in the Wet taking advantage of the low season, which will hopefully provide steady progress for our tourism industry so they do not have such huge highs and lows across the seasons.

I take this time to acknowledge some of the smaller tourism businesses operating in the Arnhem electorate and mention some of the potential for economic development in tourism in the electorate. I will have to fly by quite quickly because I did not realise I had spoken that long.

In Gapuwiyak there is the Culture and Arts Centre. They have the talented Bush Miyalk women making wonderful natural products—spritzer sprays for the face to cool you down, lip gloss, jewellery, chest cold and flu medicine made from natural products, oils, hair oils and some wonderful cosmetics. It is all natural products.

Similarly on Groote Eylandt, they have Bush Medijina making bush products to sell, including some wonderful traditionally bush-dyed fabric prints.

Gapuwiyak community is looking at the possibility of bringing tourism into their community. It is a work in progress, but they want to look at what they can offer and how they can benefit from tourism with the goal of looking after homelands, outstations, the people who live there and the kind of economic development opportunities they can support for the men, women and families living in Gapuwiyak outstations.

At Bulman and Weemol there has been a lot of talk and chatter about the possibility of a cafe/art gallery. It should be an excellent resting spot for people travelling along Central Arnhem Road. Similarly, the Mimal rangers are looking to develop Barrapunta or Emu Springs as a caravan park, which the minister and her Chief of Staff visited with me last year. It is a beautiful spot and resting place, strategically situated, smack bang in the middle of Central Arnhem Road.

Mataranka Hot Springs and Bitter Springs have wonderful businesses operating. There is a choice of cabins, caravans, hotel rooms—you name it, they have it. Get down to Mataranka, especially for the Never Never Festival. There are plenty of options.

Numbulwar is establishing the Numburind Arts retail store—which will be quite exciting—selling baskets and local art. Also, there are options to develop the southeast Arnhem Land road as far as places like Walker River and getting some tourism ventures there.

Ngukurr has the already established Darlala Motel. They are also looking at the possibility of establishing tours on the Roper River for fishing et cetera. Ngukurr Arts sells beautiful local work.

There are many more places that I do not have time to spruik, but I very much thank the minister for the statement she brought to the House and support the minister and our government’s Turbocharging Tourism in the NT.

Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, listening to all the people talking about tourism and what they have in their electorates, I thought I would join in and say something about my electorate.

In Arnhem Land there are many small businesses in the tourism industry. I welcome the government’s support for these small businesses as they are an important part of our independent economic future. Apart from economic benefit, I see opportunity for us to share our rich culture with fellow Australians and
international travellers. I encourage the deep learning and understanding of our culture as we are able to impart our skills of hunting, survival and law about respect for land, water and people.

We have heard many negative stories of Aboriginal communities over the past few weeks. These stories are easily accepted because people do not have an experience of our culture, the depth of our law and the generosity with which we welcome guests to our country. Tourism—particularly regulated tourism that is authorised by elders and leaders and comes out of Yolngu controlled business—is a way to break down many of the stereotypes and barriers to our culture that outsiders have.

Well-regulated tourism through permits and Yolngu-led programs creates a gentle form of tourism whereby our land, sea and people benefit from outsiders coming to our country as guests. We benefit from a growing understanding of who we are and how we live—our knowledge, wisdom, history, and the challenges we face today.

To build this industry and support existing businesses, we need government to invest in our roads, air travel and barge access. This will allow landowners to create a sustainable tourism industry on homelands. It exists now, but road access can become so poor that residents of homelands struggle to maintain their own supplies, never mind tourists being able to arrive at their destinations.

All government departments need to come together and work on this to create a pathway. The departments of Infrastructure, Business, Tourism and Aboriginal Affairs need to work together to create a sustainable future for homelands and landowners. Through sustainable business on homelands Yolngu can regain independence. I am not sure if our governments want this or if they want to continue to control Aboriginal people. If we work together elders can bring families home to country, away from alcohol and other influences. Schools can grow and we can gain health and harmony. We do not want to be dependent on government. I want Yolngu to forge our own path.

I listened to the Chief Minister talk about the importance of sporting facilities. When I see the sporting facilities of Darwin I realise how our communities can benefit from supporting resources—well-lit ovals, basketball courts that are covered et cetera. In Yurrwi and Ramingining we are bringing our law and raypirri—discipline—respect to the football field. We are working to create a Yolngu way of playing and participating in football. This does not cause ongoing conflict it is how we can bring two cultures together for a good outcome.

Our old people and senior elders are very involved with the young people to make sure the footy or basketball games and festivals are running under the leadership of our elders. We try to do that so no violence, break-ins, petrol snifferers or whatever come to, or are created by, the communities.

Many Yolngu are strong athletes and it is important for the physical and emotional health of our children that they have opportunities all year round for sporting events. There are festivals in our regions, a big one is Garma Festival and the home of the Yothu Yindi band, East Journey, West Wind and many more.

Ramingining Bak’bididi, run by the home of the family who belongs to the Western Arafura Swamp, is where the movie Ten Canoes was filmed. It would be good for people to visit these places when the festivals are on and see the sights around the area the movie was made.

The Gatjirrk Festival in Milingimbi—we were talking about trying to run the festival in Gatjirrk through the Makarrata way so that people can come there to live and work together. Milingimbi has its history as one of the places where conflicts were solved through the Makarrata justice system. It would be good for people to visit Milingimbi when festivals are on.

Gulman, which is on Galiwin’ku, is the home of the Saltwater Band and the late Dr G. He was a great supporter of the festivals in our region.

My main message is to remember that the bush is the bush. As you create these policies do not just remember us, come and talk to us and create a pathway for Yolngu to work toward economic independence for Yolngu control and our own business models. It does not need to be big, it needs to be sustainable.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): I fully support the Minister for Tourism and all tourism in the Northern Territory.

Ms Nelson: Hear, hear!

Mr SIEVERS: Hear, hear! I hear over here. Thank you, Member for Katherine.
Tourism in the Northern Territory is the backbone of hundreds of local businesses and thousands of local jobs. This government has announced its new package, Turbocharging Tourism, an immediate and extra investment of a whopping $103m! Yes, $103m into turbocharging our Northern Territory tourism sector, which is in addition to this Labor government’s commitment to tourism in the Northern Territory. This is a turbocharging, substantial investment into the local economy and tourism industry.

The NT is still the wild frontier of Australia. We have the big crocodiles; a rich, unique culture; beautiful, iconic landscapes; deep history in Defence services; wilderness; beautiful waterways; traditional artwork; and a magnificent multi-cultural society. Of course, we have the best fishing.

Ms Uibo: Hear, hear!

Mr SIEVERS: Hear, hear! Thank you, Member for Arnhem.

Ms Uibo: You are welcome to fish in the Arnhem electorate.

Mr SIEVERS: I will be fishing in your electorate. I love fishing and will definitely go there.

People across Australia and the world want to come here for these treasures and the lifestyle. There is no better time than now. The NT is on the world map with the recent American Super Bowl Crocodile Dundee media coverage. Someone stated on my Facebook page that I could be the next Crocodile Dundee. Who knows? The coverage reached millions of viewers across the world and the New York Times reported that the NT is one of the top destinations to visit.

Our Labor government is turbocharging tourism with a massive $103m injection. The NT has talented icons. I could name a few in the House. I will go with the worldwide ones, including our lovely and hard-working Jessica Mauboy. What a wonderful representative for the Northern Territory. She is a down-to-Earth, Territory girl. She lived in Wulagi; I lived in Wulagi too. She lived around the corner from me. Jessica worked with us in the Health department many years ago on the Smarter than Smoking campaign. She is a great singer as well. My daughter loves her; she is an idol to my daughter.

Our croc wrestler, Mr Matt Wright, is famous for the crocodile videos and clips of what he does around Australia and the world, promoting the NT. These two great Territorians alone have boosted the NT’s image across Australia and the world.

The Territory is a great place. We are best placed to attract tourists from around the world and be the first port of call when any plane or ship enters Australia. We are the gateway to Australia and we are capitalising on our wonderful attributes by showing them to the world.

The lovely Minister Moss—she is quite famous as well—stated that in 2017 there were 1.8 million visitors to the NT. The figures show that these visitors inject up to $2.4bn into our local economy each year. That is a massive amount.

We have heard our minister advise parliament that this supports around 17 000 jobs. These are jobs for Territorians. This is a significant industry which relies on people coming to the NT. This is the definite direction that our minister and this government is taking to support our local businesses and the tourism industry. We are listening, and we are turbocharging tourism.

When people come to the Territory they spend on other things and support a variety of businesses, such as the local coffee shop. People like to get a morning coffee no matter where they are, especially while on holiday. After a day of seeing great things around the Territory there is nothing better than coming back to have a cold, quiet beer at a local bar.

There is so much more to see in the Territory and many more events to attend, including charity runs and functions to raise money for local events. This is happening all the time. The additional spends help so many in the Territory, including our local businesses and families.

The international market for tourism is very competitive. If we attract people from some of the more lucrative countries to the Northern Territory—they spend a significant amount of money per day. This can amount to thousands of dollars per day from international tourists.

3384
Many come here to learn and experience our rich Northern Territory culture. Our local Aboriginal culture and arts are very popular to national and international visitors. International tourists will spend big if we attract them here and are able to provide an experience they cannot get anywhere else in the world.

I am proud to say that this is what Minister Moss is working toward and what this government is focusing on. That is why we are driving tourism. We are exposing the Territory to the world and investing in tourist attractions across the Territory as tourists want different experiences. They want more than they can experience in a week.

We want them to return again and again. We must provide different experiences for our tourism market to ensure they come back and that they promote the Territory when they return home. They will say what a wonderful experience they had. They will also say, 'I would have loved to go to Alice Springs or Kakadu, and next year that is what I would love to do and will plan to do as a family'.

Those sorts of experiences and stories go around the world. I spoke earlier about how positive stories can change the whole meaning of the issue. That is what we need to be doing in parliament. We need to be promoting the Territory, each other, and the good things that happen. There are a lot of hard-working small businesses trying to do the same, and we must support them.

The new experience or adventure could be Kakadu, Uluru or Kings Canyon. I love Kings Canyon. I went there many years ago and had a great experience—helicopter ride, walked the trail. It was fantastic.

The military history is so deep. As a young man, I knew nothing about the bombing of Darwin. It was only when I came to Darwin that I learned about the bombing of Darwin. Many people around the world know nothing of our connection with the Americans and the bombing of Darwin. We must tell that story; it is part of our history.

We have an abundance of talented Aboriginal painters and screen printers in the NT. We need to capture that and promote the artists and the things they do and make. People around the world want to take those things home with them. They want a genuine piece of Aboriginal artwork. It is the first thing they look for when they come to the Northern Territory. ‘Was this done by an Aboriginal artist?’ That is what they want and what we want to give them.

We want tourists to want more from the Northern Territory. We must be able to attract them and give them more choices in our attractions across the Territory. We want them to go back and tell their friends about the great adventure and experience they had in the NT. We want them to tell people about the barramundi they caught; even the one that got away is a good story.

We have magnificent sunsets. We can sit on the beach and watch those beautiful sunsets. Many visitors say what a great place it is and that they love the laid-back attitude of the people who are welcoming and willing to help. People wave to you up here! One of my first experiences in the Northern Territory was the amount of people that waved to me on the Stuart Highway. I did not know these people but they all waved to me. My arm got sore in the car from waving to so many people—people I had never met. What a great place to come!

People also come to the Territory for their first croc sighting. The list goes on, but we know we must provide more so that our tourism survives and grows, and people continue to return and spend their dollars in our economy.

We are in stark contrast to the CLP. I am proud of saying that. The CLP were about selling off the NT, basically to any bidder, and that did that.

I sat here yesterday and listened to the CLP advise how and what we should do and how they could do it better. I say, they had four years to do it, and what did they do? They did nothing. They did nothing except bicker, infight and blame each other or others for their incapabilities. They were flat out holding a Cabinet let alone running the Territory.

The Labor government is about investing in the Northern Territory. Whether through tourism, jobs, housing, infrastructure or schools, our Labor government is about putting Territorians first. Any investment we make is for Territorians, first and foremost.

This government is already making significant monetary investments into local communities including:

- $90m for a national Aboriginal art gallery in Alice Springs
• $100m into the Darwin CBD including the State Square development, Myilly Point and the Myilly Point cultural precinct

• $13m for Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land for gallery extensions

• $10m into visitor facilities at Nitmiluk National Park over four years.

This government is also investing in cruise ships and adventure tourism activities like mountain biking and hiking. We heard other members speak about them today.

On top of this, we are turbocharging tourism further. We will deliver $10.85m on cooperative marketing with our airline partners.

Mr KIRBY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I request an extension of time for the member.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SIEVERS: I will have to start at the top again.

Ms Nelson interjecting.

Mr SIEVERS: Not right at the top, Member for Katherine.

• $1.6m will go to boost the domestic and global appeal of the Northern Territory

• $2.35m will help us promote our unique attributes, including natural encounters

• $1.9m will go towards promoting Darwin and the Northern Territory as a destination for Australian military history

• $1.63m will go to further developing and promoting our rich arts and cultural attractions and experiences

• $2.33m to attract more national and international business events to the Territory, including sectors where we have a comparative advantage like health, primary industries, mining, oil and gas, renewable energy, education and Defence

• $2.12m in promoting our existing and iconic festivals and events.

I have had shopping lists shorter than this. There is so much investment in tourism. It is great. I had five kids, so that was a long shopping list:

• $12m to the Red Centre as a global mountain biking destination

• $12.1m to open five new tourist spots in Litchfield National Park and it is great because this will fill motels and help our economy

• $9.9m to improve event facilities and establish a visitor and event centre at George Brown Botanical Gardens

• $5.5m to expand key walking tracks and link visitor facilities in Nitmiluk National Park

• $5.5m to revitalise and improve the visitor experience in Tennant Creek and share the story of Tennant Creek’s social and mining histories which are deep and very rich

• $3m to the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct

• a further $20.78m invested into enhancing existing tourist attractions.

The list goes on but I am running out of time. The list includes the $50m spend in recreational fishing and further infrastructure investments. What is clear is that our government is very progressive and we plan everything together as a team. We work across the departments, in collaboration, to turbocharge tourism
and our economy. We are not the CLP and do not waste time or taxpayers’ dollars infighting or having insecurity issues resulting in Cabinet reshuffles.

We will be rolling out tourism marketing investment with key partners including Webjet, Qantas, Virgin, Sunlover, Expedia, Territory Discoveries and the Shenzhen-based Donghai Airlines. This will make our investments go even further. This Labor government is listening to Territorians and businesses. We are about investing in our own people and our own services. We are working collaboratively across our departments in the best interests of the Territory’s future.

I could go into all the sports and local events, including what we have heard today such as the Masters Games and sporting events in the Territory. We are bringing back the Arafura Games and I am so proud and pleased to hear that. It is like our mini Olympics and it helps many of our athletes take the next step to the Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

Fishing for the Million Dollar Barra—what a great incentive by the previous government. That was one of their ticks in the box—we have to give them that—but we have continued that and are driving it and making it bigger and better. The Bombing of Darwin and the V8 Supercars, even the cricketers came to Darwin, the Superbikes came—Troy Bayliss, what a star he is. I went for a hot lap around Hidden Valley on the back of his bike. Oh my God, I have never held on so tight in my life but that is another story.

The rugby union club, the Palmerston Crocs, draw players from all around Australia who live and play here. The Palmerston Magpies—we did not do too well this year as we finished on the bottom of the ladder but next year look out.

Ms Fyles: Go the Tigers.

Mr SIEVERS: Look out Tigers. The Member for Nightcliff is yelling out, ‘Go the Tigers’.

Ms Lawler: Go Buffaloes.

Ms Fyles: It is over now. It is the Buffs.

Mr SIEVERS: The Buffs are up and the Members for Drysdale and Karama are very passionate. It will be a big weekend. The athletic clubs—Roger and Leanne Chin do so much for athletics for the Northern Territory. They are volunteers and help so many of our children develop and go onto the next stage. The Hottest 7s in the World and the Eels and Cowboy game—it goes on and on.

We are turbocharging tourism and the NT economy. We are not resting there, as there is more to do. As these developments transpire, they will grow further opportunities for Territorians and local businesses. They will create more investment in the Territory, attract more people and rebuild the Territory as the number one, must-see attraction in Australia.

I commend Minister Moss, her staff and the department. I commend everyone on all sides of government who gets behind this—every Territorian and every Territory business to get the NT back on the world map and promote the NT in a positive way. I thank the government, the minister and all departments for the huge amount of work they must have done to pull this together. They would have been working with our hard-working Treasurer, who does a fantastic job. We will put the NT as number one on every tourist’s list.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about our amazing tourism industry and the Turbocharging Tourism initiative Minister Moss announced—the $103m strategic investment and immediate stimulus packages that comes with that. It will create jobs and return money to the Northern Territory like no other package has.

The longer we can keep people here, the more money they will spend and tip into our economy. The tourism industry is an investment. The figures are being quoted at around $37 returned for every $1 spent. It is amazing. Tourism is the foundation of the Northern Territory. We have some amazing products and destinations. There have been some fantastic advertising campaigns over the years and there is no doubt that some of the global campaigns over the last couple of months have helped shine the light on the Northern Territory. We look forward to taking advantage of those.

The increased activation in and around our parks, the experiences people will be able to have across the Territory—in cementing and improving our festival experiences for people. As the Member for Port Darwin, I am extremely proud to have the Darwin Festival in my beautiful electorate in August. There was a host of
work done late last year with the Shenzhen-based Donghai Airlines to make a public commitment to direct flights to Darwin.

As people would know, it is not just a matter of getting the flights to Darwin and the people here, but the ability to get produce back to China and Asian capitals. There are things we do well that they cannot. We struggle to compete with the Chinese labour markets and the like, but our fresh barramundi, mango and produce cannot be created there. I have no doubt some of our markets—some of those planes will go back with a very full underbelly so we make the most of those direct flights.

Last year I spoke in House about having Lily Ji, a famous Chinese actress, here for an advertising stint with Tourism. It was fantastic to see her here and spend time with her. Her next major movie, Pacific Rim starts in a few weeks’ time. I look forward to seeing Lily on the big screen. The Northern Territory is never far from her mind; we keep in touch and she will take any opportunity she can to get back to the Northern Territory and sell the amazing land and tourism experiences we have.

One of the projects she has spoken about is Mt Borradaile. Unfortunately Max Davidson, who ran the tourism projects there, sadly passed away last year. But they will push ahead with the projects they have in the pipeline. They will advertise some of the Chinese history and influence in that region, which dates back as evidenced through rock art paintings of ancient Chinese boats. There is a long history of Chinese visitors in Arnhem Land and that side of Australia. There is no doubt that once Chinese tourists find out more about it they will aim to get there in droves.

I applaud the Paspaley family for getting involved. They have some Mallard flying boats—sea planes—used to transport their workers in the Top End and north west to the pearl farms. They have refitted the boats to be used for joy flights in and around Darwin. I had the opportunity to do a quick flight with them a few weeks ago and I applaud them for coming into the tourism market with a product like that. There will be a couple of instalments this year and in the following years. When we have major cruise ships docked, the flying boats will land in the harbour alongside the ships.

International tourists will be able to get on a flying boat, do a quick trip around the Top End and have a look at our beautiful peninsula, city, northern suburbs, beaches and waterways from the air. They will then be able to step back onto dry land and decide which tourism operator to hop on with and see some of those tourism ventures from the ground. That is a fantastic initiative.

Our government has put money aside for a feasibility study for a water theme park in the CBD, showing the vision this government has. It shows how keen we are to work with private investors and consortiums to help set up such a theme park. I hope we are able to get that off the ground in the near future.

Student hubs in the city for international students came up at the first City of Darwin summit many months ago. I am proud to be involved with the Chief Minister in opening up a student hub in the mall for international students to have a space to go. They can get free Wi-Fi in air-conditioned comfort and decide which parts of the Territory they would like to see in their time in Darwin.

Since becoming the Member for Port Darwin I have had the opportunity to meet people who were on Darwin Harbour on 19 February 1942, that fateful day when it was first bombed. It still makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up when I recall the discussions I had with them. They were just kids working on the harbour that day, seeing the planes fly in, initially thinking they were our planes, then seeing shiny things dropping from the underbelly and realising they were being bombed. It is obviously a day that changed the Top End forever.

The Member for Brennan hinted that not many of us knew much about it when we were growing up. It was not something learned where I went to school in South Australia. I was pleased to have the opportunity to learn more about it. That is a market we can develop.

We have some unique opportunities with people already in that market from oil tunnels to different military tours. I am sure that is something we can do more with. Globally, there is a much bigger understanding around the nation of the historical significance of those events.

Last year the minister and I spoke to a number of tourism businesses about how they were tracking. They understood—and we understood in speaking with them—that things are tight. People might be surprised to know this is another area where the federal government has not been a great deal of help. The people who run backpacker businesses have good intelligence interstate and overseas. They know backpackers are
heading to Canada and New Zealand. They are steering clear of the Top End because of some of the constrictions the federal government has put upon us. If we could get help at any stage, it would be fantastic.

I had the pleasure of standing with the Lambridge people recently as they unveiled the next installation of design for the beautiful luxury hotel that we look forward to seeing. There will be some ground works happening this year if it goes through the planning processes without too many hiccups. They have taken people’s advice on board and made sure there is complete foreshore access, not just for residents of the hotel but anybody else who wants to be on the waterfront area. It will be a beautiful addition to the waterfront area and is something we will be able to proudly sell as an international destination in its own right.

We have an amazing story to tell. I did an adjournment last night on the Chung Wah Society and the beautiful contribution of the Chinese to the Northern Territory’s history. It is not just the Chinese—Indigenous people as well. I am so proud that our government and Chief Minister has offered space at the Myilly Point precinct for the Stolen Generation to make sure there is finally some healing for their people.

The Greek history through the Top End is extremely strong as well. We will all see the Glenti in a few months, with the beautiful celebrations the Greek bring to the Top End. We very much look forward to being a big part of that as well.

As the Member for Port Darwin, I am extremely blessed to have fishing charters at each end of my electorate. The amount of fish that come into the Duck Pond area and the people who run charters from there—the amount of money the Duck Pond area consistently pushes into the Northern Territory economy is amazing. Most people know someone who has done a fishing charter or tour from Cullen Bay. It is a beautiful day on the water around the harbour and waterways.

In promoting ourselves and our product, a lot of what we are doing is similar to what Tasmania has done. Tasmania would be extremely happy with the investments it has made into its tourism industry. Its industry has grown around 90% over the last few years. We would be extremely happy if we could replicate some of those gains.

A lot of people who have spoken today highlighted some of the commitments been made under this tourism initiative and by this government overall. Just to recap a few of the things we have committed to, like the $90m in Alice Springs including the national Aboriginal art gallery; the $100m in my electorate, into the Darwin CBD, including the State Square development …

Ms Nelson: Darwin gets everything.

Mr Kirby: It rightfully should get everything, too.

The Myilly Point cultural precinct—there is $30m for gallery extensions in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land. Ten million dollars into visitor facilities in the Nitmiluk Park will be a fantastic addition to that.

There is $5m worth of investment into demand in emerging markets in China with a focus investment into high yielding niche sector markets—cruise ships, mountain biking and hiking—to make the very best of people’s wants and passions for those. It will be fantastic to see how these investments in our new tourism products play out over the years. We look forward to having many more visitors throughout the Northern Territory because of these beautiful initiatives.

There will be over $2m to attract more national and international business events to the Northern Territory. Working closely with the people of the Waterfront and the Convention Centre is something they work very hard on—to strive to invite business people to the Territory. If we get a delegation of hundreds of businessmen to the Territory it pays dividends to have them here for a week or so. If this investment attracts some large delegations to Darwin it would be well worth our while.

We play to our strengths in the Northern Territory. I will not rattle back over all the sporting initiatives that already bring fantastic numbers to the Territory but I really enjoy getting involved in as many of those as I can. Promoting our existing and iconic festivals is something I am extremely keen on.

For this government to show the foresight and initiative that we have—where the Darwin Festival was at a couple of years ago, struggling for its very existence. Warm regards to Ian Kew and his hardworking staff who get involved to make sure the festival is a fantastic event and a lovely way to round out the Dry Season. We look forward to having people back in the Top End for that over the next few months.
State Square will be a beautiful green area in a few years’ time. The size of the events we will be able to have in a space like State Square! I am very much looking forward to that.

Brown’s Mart already does a fantastic job with the events and lovely attractions it puts on. How a place like Brown’s Mart works in with a much bigger and broader initiative around State Square—I look forward to seeing how they grow.

Our pubs and clubs in the CBD have fantastic initiatives to draw people here all year round. In the last few years a higher emphasis has been placed on extending the shoulder of the tourist season and offering local packages for Territorians to visit Darwin during the Wet Season to have a ‘stay local’ type of holiday, doing things in the CBD that they would not normally have the opportunity to do.

I am extremely proud to work with the minister and Chief Minister to make sure the boutique markets that have been locked in by the City of Darwin—and tomorrow night there is another laneway event. I encourage everybody to come into the mall tomorrow night. There will be food vans and a range of different cultural experiences. I believe this week we have different dancers from different corners of the globe putting on some fantastic events. I look forward to that and I am very proud of our government for locking into that.

The beautiful Esplanade is a destination on its own. I am fortunate to be there every weekend doing bits and pieces. I look forward to working closely with the City of Darwin. It has clean-up proposals and fantastic smart lighting proposals that will make the area a more useable space.

The Bush Traders have an event tomorrow at 10.30 am or 11 am. Call in to the Bush Traders and look at what it has on offer. The headquarters of tourism are in the CBD as are a lot of tourism operators. It was a great pleasure to walk the streets with the Minister for Tourism and Culture last year and speak face-to-face with a number of the operators to find how we can help.

The Waterfront does an amazing job. The Darwin Convention Centre is often full and we are fortunate to go there for events such as the Solar Car Challenge a few months ago.

A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Under Standing Order 43 I request an extension of time.

Leave granted.

Mr KIRBY: The wharf area—and the Royal Flying Doctor Service centre which has the amazing video simulation about what it was like at the end of the wharf when the bombs hit. The virtual reality goggles give a good insight. I enjoy taking visitors there whenever I can. Outback Floatplane Adventures will be docked there as well. It will encompass and grow the experience for our international visitors.

The Darwin tours start from the same area as the tourism centre. It is heartening to see people walk around Darwin and look at our beautiful city. It is always enjoyable to see people on the top deck of the double-decker bus, cruising around with the breeze in their hair. I congratulate those operators. They work very hard. They are there early in the morning and through the heat of the day making sure tourists have the best opportunities to get around.

Over the last few years we have had a few fantastic initiatives. Not many weeks go by where my partner does not talk about Matt Wright, his Floatplane Adventures, and how much she would enjoy doing one, hoping I will shout her one in the near future.

Crocosaurus Cove is also a beautiful initiative in the heart of Darwin where people can get the kind of Australian experience that tourists crave—also to get packages for schools and their own kids to experience those adventures and events at a reasonable cost. It is a fantastic initiative.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Darwin Entertainment Centre’s contribution to tourism and bringing people to town. Alan James and his crew do an amazing job. I am looking forward to seeing the Green Day experience in the not-too-distant future. A number in the House saw Queens of the Stone Age last year. For a small entity like Alan James and the entertainment centre to be able to pull off a gig like that—there was some envy between some of the ministers with Josh Homme rocking out on the stage and us being a few yards away from him. It was a lovely evening.

The events that are part of the Territory’s social fabric—the Darwin Cup Carnival, V8s, the Darwin Festival and the hundreds of thousands of people who come through the Territory in those few months. I have no doubt that in the future, the Darwin Street Art Festival and Laneway Series will stand on their own and be
included in those iconic Darwin events. They will become destinations of their own. We look forward to those initiatives growing in their own right.

I look forward to seeing the millions of dollars invested into the George Brown Botanical Gardens. It is a beautiful area. I look forward to taking Layla for walks there whenever I can and see investment in the infrastructure which will be amazing and is well overdue.

People have spoken at length about our mountain bike tracks and the things on offer in Central Australia so I will not go back over them. Of all the amazing places and events—some have been in the Territory for a long time and some are starting—our best attraction is our people. The more we get behind these initiatives and sell them—I know we are committed to them. When you go to other capital cities around the world, one of the things highlighted from the moment you land is how good the people are at selling their products and how happy they are to live in that city.

We have a way to go yet but will continue to put new initiatives on the table to make sure Territorians are proud and talk up tourism when we have events and visitors. We will have pride in our capital. As the Member for Port Darwin, I already do.

I commend our Chief Minister and the Minister for Tourism and Culture for the initiative and drive they have shown to get on the front foot and make sure we give people a pleasurable experience when they come to the Northern Territory.

I commend the statement to the House.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Minister for Tourism and Culture’s statement on tourism in the Northern Territory. We heard from a number of members who shared their stories and the tourism stories of their electorate.

The Northern Territory has unique attractions from the red centre of Central Australia to the Top End. The experiences you can have range from a family holiday to an adventure to a fine dining experience and a glitz and glamour weekend.

Within my portfolio there are a number of areas on which I want to speak. The Health portfolio provides services for not only Territorians but those visiting. As the minister for racing and licensing, I comment on the hard-working people in the racing industry who promote and drive tourism.

I commend the minister and Chief Minister on the announcements we have seen over the past months. The minister has done a great deal of hard work. It has been grinding hard work talking to industry and small businesses who are working hard and engaging with the government on ideas to help drive tourism.

It is an opportunity to sell the Territory. I love the Territory. I love camping and fishing. I am still trying to get the Treasurer to join me on a camping trip. We are getting closer. She is acknowledging this.

Ms Manison interjecting.

Ms FYLES: She just interjected and said she will have a crack. Her tourism experience in the Territory—she would prefer a motel bed.

Some of the unique opportunities—I have been very privileged because people across the Territory have welcomed me and my family to their country over many decades. One of my earliest experiences was when it took us a week to drive to Nhulunbuy. My parents were teachers. We had permission to camp near some communities along the way. We took big bags of fruit to say thank you for allowing us to share their country on our camping trip.

Then we headed to Groote Eylandt where I needed to experience the local health clinic because I put a fishing hook through my finger, probably when I was told to not play with that lure. The opportunities in the Territory are vast and varied. It is wonderful to see a government investing in—one of the most exciting announcements has been the expansion and improvements to Litchfield National Park, a place I love and love taking my children to.

I have been talking to the minister many times about Litchfield and the opportunities and improvements I would like to see. It is wonderful to see those coming through with the announcements in recent weeks.
I have been going to Litchfield my whole life, even before it was a national park. Knowing the owners of the property at Wangi Falls, we were able to gain access and camp there for a weekend. Driving from the bottom of Buley Rockhole to the top pools was not a particularly fun four-wheel drive experience but the reward was worth it when we arrived—as a kid jumping into those rock pools swimming and having fun. It is now something I get to share with my children. I am very excited for the expansions there.

Recently, on social media there have been posts regarding the campground hosts that Parks and Wildlife are looking for. This is for those who would like to camp for two weeks at one of our great national park campgrounds to participate as a campground host. This is an exciting opportunity for Territorians and visitors alike. It is something unique that will provide a different insight to our parks.

As the Minister for Health—most of the 1.8 million visitors to the Territory each year enjoy the sights and experiences we have to offer. Occasionally things do not go to plan and people find themselves ill or injured and in need of medical assistance. Quite often these unplanned hiccups occur outside our major centres. We have a number of providers that support Territorians and tourists. It is important to note the hard work of St John, Royal Flying Doctors and CareFlight, which provide medical assistance, particularly off the beaten track. They work with our primary healthcare clinics which provide healthcare to Territorians day-in, day-out and provide care to tourists who have been in unfortunate situations.

That is really important when looking at a tourist destination, particularly for the elderly or those traveling with young children. It is great to go off the beaten track but you become mindful of that care being available quickly if you need it. In the Territory we can provide that off the beaten track adventure, which is so different from the east coast, and people still have easy access to medical support if they need it. We do not wish that upon people but it is something we can provide.

Tourists visiting the Territory getting assistance from our remote health clinics—they are often the first response in an emergency situation. They range from people needing urgent medical care to simply becoming unwell or something not going to plan with illnesses they know about. The staff at our remote clinics say that they deal with Territorians but also tourists who have called in need of help.

It is not just our remote health clinics that help people if they are in the unfortunate position of falling ill or injuring themselves while visiting the Territory. In 2017, hospitals across the Territory saw 5500 non-Territorians—people from interstate and overseas. That is a significant number. When people choose their travels and adventures—knowing they can have access to first-class medical services reassures them when coming to the Territory.

We have spoken about the investment in tourism. For every dollar the government invests we get a return of about $37 into the Territory economy and the pockets of Territorians. As a government, we have been driving that. It is about small businesses such as the fishing charters mentioned by the Member for Port Darwin with the opportunities for fishing in the beautiful harbour and offshore.

The Million Dollar Fish was a fantastic tourism campaign that also engaged locals to get on the waterways to find that illusive fish. I congratulate the minister for fisheries and the Minister for Tourism on that event and hope there are plans of it returning in the future. It was a very creative idea and I acknowledge the previous government that started it. It is something this government has kept going because we know how important it is.

The Darwin Cup Carnival is a fabulous racing carnival. It is not just the Darwin Cup Carnival but the racing events—we have the Shenannigans’ St Patrick’s Race Day this Saturday at the Darwin Turf Club. I have interstate friends who come here for racing events and make a weekend or a holiday of it. They extend it longer and often bring friends with them. When I leave the Nightcliff area and go to Parap Markets I see people who have clearly come to Darwin to make a week of it, heading to the markets and other tourist attractions, enjoying the Darwin Cup Carnival.

The Darwin Cup weekend sees thousands of tourists and locals attend the event. It is events like these which are important for supporting the local industry. Those visitors go out for breakfast, lunch and dinner, do some shopping and visit other attractions. This all puts money into businesses in the Territory.

Something unique for the Territory—the idea itself is not unique—is business and conference events. They are an opportunity because we have experts in a number of tropical diseases and illnesses that are prevalent throughout other countries. We have that expertise within our health system and the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre. Health and business conferences around those events is a wonderful opportunity. There many each year and we have facilities to offer the full conference experience, allowing
experts in fields—for me, as the Health minister and the medical field—to come together and also enjoy a holiday, as they bring family with them. It is something unique because of our proximity to Asia and some of the tropical illnesses we see here correlate. That is an exciting and not so traditional area of tourism.

One of the members was talking about Tasmania and some of the ideas we have. Tasmania took the opportunity—I was lucky enough to meet Alan Joyce when he was in Darwin recently; the Chief Minister had a number of conversations with him. He was speaking about Tasmania at an event. He spoke of the investments and steps they took many years ago which is now paying dividends. My parents have been there about three times in the last couple of years. They just got back from another holiday there.

For a relatively small state—my parents keep going back and there is more to do. This highlights that we need longer-term thinking. We need to provide infrastructure that has liveable, cooler cities which provide opportunities for people who live here and attracts tourists and repeat tourists, who will come back after they have done the traditional things like seeing a crocodile and going to national parks.

My parents, who keep travelling—I remind them that they need to be here to help with the grandchildren—went to Central Australia last September–October. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be very pleased. They made sure it was not during sittings. They went to Uluru and Alice Springs. They were travelling to Adelaide and stopped in. That was their 10-day holiday. They had been there previously but very much wanted to experience the cultural aspects and really enjoyed their time. I think they are planning to return. I have to remind them that they need to stop at home for a little bit and help us out.

It highlights that even intra-Territory tourism is important. It was a little bit of work for me, but last year we took a road trip through the Litchfield area and to Katherine for the school holidays. I will certainly be doing some more travel. It is obviously important for me with my portfolios but it is great fun getting the kids out in the Territory.

I was talking to friends who are heading to Alice Springs for Easter for the mountain biking event. The Minister for Tourism would know that well.

This is about putting long-term infrastructure in place and providing support to business here and now. We have spoken today about Wet Season tourism. I love the Wet Season as much as the Dry Season. It can be hot and humid but when you fly into Central Australia with the green and the red—the colours. Even up here the storms are simply amazing. When you plan a trip around the weather it certainly offers a different element to the traditional Dry Season visit.

As a government we are focussed on supporting—through the Dry Season months it is very busy. It is also about attracting people to visit in the shoulder months and out of season. It can be a very enjoyable holiday. I encourage people to not think only about the Top End and Central Australia or only the Dry Season. Also consider the Wet Season.

We have unique locations. As members of this parliament and Territorians we are very privileged to visit places like Coburg Peninsula, Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt in Arnhem Land. We can offer many opportunities for people to experience something amazing here in the Territory.

In my own electorate we have the Seabreeze Festival each Dry Season. It is a wonderful arts and music festival. We have the Darwin Festival and lots of other different festivals around the Territory. For people travelling, using that festival as a catalyst is important.

We have our markets. The Member for Port Darwin was talking about the Darwin City Boutique markets—pop up markets. The wonderful Nightcliff markets are held in my electorate every Sunday morning. Almost every Sunday a tourist will chat with me. They often come in asking what an ‘MLA’ is. I was talking to a couple from New Zealand in the last week or so. They were here as tourists—not visiting family—outside tourist season.

Festivals and markets provide an opportunity and you see the numbers of tourists coming through there. In terms of Darwin and Alice Springs—Tennant Creek has a fabulous Chinese restaurant and I ate beautiful food when I was in Katherine. I have been lucky to travel to many places in Australia and internationally. In the Territory we have dining experiences I would rate just as good as some of those overseas. We have such variety.

Not only the food but the locations—whether you have a wonderful dinner at Pee Wee’s, the Waterfront, a Mitchell Street restaurant or in the suburbs of Darwin, Palmerston or venues down the track, the dining
experience in the Territory is something we showcase. Airline crews land around lunch time and have an
evening meal. They are always excited at the opportunities. These are people who live on the Eastern sea
board.

We know the importance of investing in tourism and we have a lot to celebrate already. As the Minister for
Justice and responsible for licensing it is part of my role to work with the hospitality and entertainment
industries as this is a key part of the Territory’s tourism offerings. Also the great venues up and down the
length of the Stuart Highway. I have not covered them all. It is not only the hospitality venues within the
regions and towns but on the highway itself.

It is tough in the hospitality industry. We appreciate and continue to support the excellent restaurants and
vibrant venues in our CBD. The hospitality sector is one of our largest industries, employing up to 10 000
people. This makes a significant contribution not only to tourism but also the Territory economy.

The tourism industry spans the length and breadth of the Territory and we need to listen to the industry and
help it grow. As the minister responsible for alcohol policy and licencing, I meet with and listen to industry to
ensure we are putting in place strong compliance measures as it is a vital part of our hospitality sector.

The work we are doing to turbocharge tourism is vital. It will draw more people to the Territory and they will
spend more time here which will help the thousands of workers and business owners in the hospitality
industry.

The hospitality industry relies on effective and measured alcohol policy and that is why we are listening to
the community on those measures. We have a clear road map for alcohol reform and will continue to work
on implementation of that with industry. I have had a number of meetings to ensure we work with the
hospitality sector to navigate a path to implement the essence of the Riley review’s recommendations. I look
forward to continuing that work with the hospitality industry so we can deliver safe communities and high
quality visitor experiences.

We have a wonderful story to tell. We need to keep sharing our story. That is why the government’s
investment in the tourism industry is so important.

I commend the Chief Minister and the Minister for Tourism for her drive. It has been hard work. This is
something she has been working on over many months, since she was first given the portfolio—travelling
across to Territory, meeting with the tourism industry, hearing their concerns, listening to their ideas and
implementing them.

It has been wonderful to hear the stories from across the Territory. I am sure we will speak more about
tourism. It is an important part of the Territory and is driving the economy. That investment of $1 reaping the
benefits of $37.

I commend the statement and the minister.

Ms MOSS (Tourism and Culture): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank all members for their contributions to this
statement on the government’s unprecedented support for our important tourism industry. The best part is
people are feeling energised and enthused, both in the Chamber and most importantly, outside in our tourism
businesses and associated sectors. Everyone has ideas and is feeling enthusiastic.

It is important to note the intention is not that government stands alone in this. Local businesses will be able
to leverage off this investment and others can look at ways to invest in their businesses and make the most
of the benefits that come from this package.

I am a realist about this. I do not think 100% of everything we do will work or will be the most incredible thing
ever, but I will drive this all the way to make sure we see every success we can. We will be evaluating what
we do through the $103m and the rest of the activities the department delivers on a day-to-day basis to make
sure the money we spend is producing benefits for the Territory.

There are a range of different things to respond to. I apologise ahead of time because I do not think I will
have the time tonight to respond to every question and point, but I look forward to getting around and talking
more about this.

My first point is that we should stop calling it the low season and start calling it the lush season or the green
season. I encourage everyone to read Sue Moffitt’s book, *Darwin in the Wet*. I was privileged to launch that
book. She has an incredible way with words and a great way of encapsulating the Wet in Darwin and what it means to locals, our environment, bird life, storms and colours. All the things we love about this place. I know it is a sentiment shared throughout the sector. We need to start looking at this differently and talking about it differently. It is a spectacular time to visit the Territory.

The fact we have shared value on this sector across parliament is really heartening. We have received positive feedback from industry and businesses about this package. During his recent visit to the Territory, Qantas CEO, Alan Joyce, said the initiative was an important step and is what we need to be doing to drive demand.

The CEO of Tourism Central Australia, Stephen Schwer is incredibly passionate about tourism in the Red Centre, so much that he dyed his hair red for our delegation to Perth for the national awards. He was wearing is pride on his head. He had said, ‘It is excellent that the voices of the NT Tourism industry are being heard and I thank the Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, and the Minister for Tourism and Culture, Lauren Moss, for listening. We applaud this fantastic initiative that will revitalise the industry.’

Greg Bicknell, the NT Chamber of Commerce CEO said, ‘We are very happy to see the government having a focus on tourism which represents a great opportunity as the construction phase of INPEX draws to a close. Tourism has always been an important industry for the Territory across the board for a number of years. Every tourism dollar earned in the Territory impacts a wide cross-section of the business community and can help drive employment across a number of sectors like transport, meals, wholesaling and hospitality training.’

David Malone, Executive Director of Master Builders Northern Territory, said that government and businesses alike expect the $103m boost to tourism to increase the number of visitors and drive investment in new facilities, which can only be a good thing for the economy and for our industry.

That is heartening. We have a shared vision and collective view in going forward with this.

I pick up on what the Member for Fong Lim said. It is no wonder that the Leader of the Opposition is insinuating or trying to claim some credit for the unprecedented $103m investment in tourism over two years. The Leader of the Opposition tabled a motion in the House in February talking about tourism. I was very happy about that because I knew I would have the opportunity to talk about this package. I take those attempts as a sign of his support for this important investment.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that tourism has been front and centre for this government from day one. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that this government welcomes his motion because it presents us with another opportunity to speak about the value we place on this important sector.

I have the great privilege of being the Minister for Tourism and Culture. It brings together many important and intrinsically linked areas within government to ensure they are better working together and leveraging off of each other—tourism, the arts, sports, parks and wildlife, heritage, NT libraries, Screen Territory and major events. We have done this because, as a government, we firmly believe these areas do three things: underpin vibrant, active communities which we must not forget; provide economic opportunities to Territorians across regions; and contribute to making the Territory a great place to visit and share.

We felt that throughout the debate, especially when the Members for Namatjira, Katherine, Stuart and Fong Lim talked on a local level about regions, their electorates and the character of the Northern Territory. They talked about the smaller events that are loved by locals and drawcards for visitors. It is the importance of community, relationships and experiences. I appreciate those insights because that is what this is about.

While some may have their doubts, it has been an important strategic move to put a tourism lens over our sports events, arts and cultural scene, major events, parks and heritage. That unprecedented strategic focus is starting to pay dividends. We are starting to see some exciting and energised collaborations between Tourism and Parks and Wildlife staff within the department, which will lead to better tourism offerings that will no doubt be loved and well-patronised by locals.

We will be having conversations about the new spots opening up. We will hear the next Member for Nightcliff many decades later talk about how they have loved visiting those spots with their family—as we have heard from the camping-loving Member for Nightcliff today. It is about community as well as visitation.

The department is leveraging tourism potential from our major sports and arts events and festivals. This is exciting because it will mean more people coming from interstate, as well as our neighbours from northern Asia, to experience things like the Darwin Festival that the Member for Port Darwin spoke about.
The Member for Nightcliff discussed the Darwin Cup Carnival Ball, Partijima and the Big Bash League in Alice Springs, which I went to with the Member for Bratling. The Member for Namatjira has a great interest in cricket in that part of the world as well. It was a massive event in the shoulder season of January that extended the Territory’s season.

Turbocharging Tourism means we have more than a catchy name for this initiative. It means we have more money to market iconic events to bring more people to visit them. It means we can put a strong focus on marketing and promoting our incredible arts and cultural offerings. It dedicates $1.63m to market our arts trail and position the NT as a world-class arts and cultural destination by promoting our existing art galleries, museums, and keeping places as we realise our investment in major new assets.

The Northern Territory should be the arts and culture mecca in Australia, not Sydney or Melbourne. It is the great artists of the Territory such as Albert Namatjira and the Papunya Tula Artists, who are renowned for their work. We are home to so many incredible art movements that have influenced how we see the world, influenced new generations of artists and created a world of beauty, exploration and wonder that has a language of its own.

Over Christmas, I visited two exhibitions in other jurisdictions that featured Territory art. One was Balnhdhurr—A Lasting Impression at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. It is a collaboration between Artback NT and the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre showcasing 20 years of screen printing by 50 artists in Yirrkala. It was beautiful.

The second was the National Gallery of Victoria’s Triennial, which in prominent places featured two spectacular collaborations with the Northern Territory artists. The first was Victoria Amazonica; it was a sculptural work in the entrance of the National Gallery of Victoria. When I went, people were walking around it, sitting under it, interacting with it and children were there. It was beautiful. It is a woven felt depiction of the story of water in our desert. It is a collaboration between Brazilian designers Fernando and Humberto Campana, with Yarrenyty Artiere artists from Central Australia, the Centre for Appropriate Technology, and Central Australian designers Elliot Rich and James Young. It is incredible.

Upstairs is a magnificent weaving incorporating PET lamps. It is a collaboration between the PET lamp project founder Alvaro Catalan de Ocon, and weavers at the Bula’bula Arts centre in Ramingining.

I mention these because I had a similar experience to the one the Treasurer spoke of. It was wonderful to see people mesmerised by and interacting with these incredible artworks from remote areas of the Northern Territory. We want people to know there is so much more to the Northern Territory than crocs. You can experience the rock but there is so much more to experience.

We want them to experience walking into art centres in our regions and meeting our talented artists as they create their art works. We want them to hear directly from the artists about the stories and country that has inspired their work. It is what resonates with people. These are the memories and deep cultural experiences they take away to share with their families and friends. We offer these experiences in the Territory.

That is why I am proud of the significant investment the Territory Labor government is making to extend our art galleries in the regions, providing stimulus programs across our smaller galleries and committing to bold cultural institutions.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to switch off whenever this vision is shared, but it is a vision for arts and tourism. Tourism is about so much more than just sightseeing; it is about the experiences and showcasing what makes us unique.

We have an incredible opportunity in sports tourism. We are not interested in just talking about the potential of sports tourism; we are interested in taking advantage of it. This is why sport sits alongside tourism. The divisions are working hand-in-hand to enhance the visitor potential of our major sporting events. The Member for Sanderson spoke of these opportunities and some of the events coming to the Territory. When we negotiate arrangements for major events and visiting games I look at the visitor potential for those events. I have been clear that this is a key consideration.

Watching a major sporting event in the Territory is a unique and exciting experience that offers a great opportunity for us to market ourselves, particularly to interstate visitors. Things like the Big Bash in 2018—it was a fantastic game between the Scorchers and the Strikers in front of the MacDonnell Ranges broadcast across the country and around the world. When it returns in 2019 it will improve.
The Arafura Games will be back in 2019. This major event has the potential to grow and evolve and has always had immense community support and involvement. Throughout their chaotic term the CLP government scrapped the Arafura Games, like so many other positive initiatives. I look forward to the return of the Arafura Games and our ability to use the games to showcase the sporting talent in our region and our multicultural community arts and culture.

It is important we remember the chaos of the former government and how it impacted all areas of policy. We had seven sports ministers in four years. For the opposition to suggest their eyes were firmly on what could be delivered for Territorians is a joke.

We are delivering on major sporting infrastructure that will underpin and host more events and support visitation. For example the netball stadium will have the capacity to televise international matches, which has been met with enthusiasm from Netball NT. The community benefits from that fantastic support.

The Leader of the Opposition and others talked about the need for investment in Kakadu. It is pleasing that the Leader of the Opposition has finally woken up to this important issue. The Member for Arnhem talked about this in her contribution but it might be the first time the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned Kakadu in this House in a tourism capacity since becoming the Leader of the Opposition, perhaps even in the 12th Assembly. I could not find anything; I think his first press release on Kakadu was released yesterday.

As I have said many times here, in meetings and in media, we need the federal government to urgently invest in Kakadu. It is the federal government’s park and responsibility. It has not made any significant investment in the park for many years.

A member: Do they even know where it is?

Ms MOSS: I hope they do. The Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that sometimes Kakadu is only open for 10 weeks of the year. This is why the Chief Minister, the Treasurer and I regularly raise the issue of Kakadu investment with the federal government—from the Prime Minister to the roads minister, the regional development, parks, tourism and assistant ministers for trade and tourism and anyone else whose ears we can chew off.

We ask the federal government to invest in roads and opening access with new and improved tourism infrastructure. We have repeatedly asked Senator Scullion and CLP members to help us lobby their federal colleagues about this because it is critical to boosting Top End visitation. Thank you, Leader of the Opposition, for finally recognising this issue, particularly after the former CLP government walked away from conversations about the future of Jabiru.

I address a number of issues raised by the Member for Araluen in her response to the statement. She made some interesting points about the visitation statistics for Central Australia over the last 20 years. When looking at these figures there is no doubt there have been significant fluctuations but tourism remains a critical industry for the Red Centre. When it comes to visitation it is important to look at trends over time. We keep a close eye on those figures because they provide a guide for tracking visitor trends.

There are many factors that impact on trends over time: changes in methodology for data collection, which has happened in this case; changes in global travel trends and traveller demographics; and changes in the global economy. The global financial crisis had a huge impact on tourism around the world as well as the level of investment into tourism marketing.

The figures released yesterday show year-on-year growth for Central Australia. That is great news but the Member for Araluen is correct when she says that we should not be spruiking these figures; we should keep our foot firmly on the pedal to ensure we continue to build and grow visitor numbers and our share of the visitor market. The statistics are merely a guide as we continue to build on those efforts—look at growing our existing markets and possible emerging markets.

A number of members touched on the high cost of airfares. It is a long-standing issue for Territorians, as I recognised in my statement.

Mr SIEVERS: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I request an extension of time for the member, pursuant to Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.
Ms MOSS: Thank you, Member for Brennan.

As the Member for Araluen knows there are a number of factors beyond our control when it comes to the cost of airfares. The most notable is that we are a huge yet sparsely populated jurisdiction. It means there is less demand for air services compared to our east coast counterparts, with added fuel costs to cover greater travel distances. These factors impact on the cost of services.

It does not mean that we throw our hands up when it comes to airfares, we regularly meet with airlines at the highest levels and the cost of airfares is always firmly on the agenda at these meetings.

We know that the more we drive demand the more downward pressure we can put on airfares. That is why it is critical we continue to invest in new tourism offerings and tourism marketing to attract more visitors onto planes and bring airfares down in a sustainable way. The Member for Blain made a number of comments in relation to that. The department is always at different conferences and forums across the world that bring together airlines, airports and departments to talk about routes. We work very hard to establish new airline services to the Territory.

One of the opportunities we are aware of is the hubbing at Singapore under Qantas. Not only because of the networks for people coming through Singapore from Europe—we have to market so that people can and will come to the Territory for our events and business.

We need to make sure we are looking at those opportunities. I can assure members that the department is doing that. We have talked to different airlines and are looking at opportunities to promote Darwin as an add-on for those who travel to Bali. It is an incredibly popular destination and we are very close. People travel long distances to Bali and could include Australia in their trip without adding a large amount of travel time.

These are opportunities we are looking at. There is also involvement at the community level in regard to drawing in new airlines. I am pleased at the work happening in the Territory’s Chinese community, which has been fundamental to the development of Darwin. We have rich Chinese history and this is something I discuss with airlines and stakeholders in China. Tourism representatives attended the Chung Wah Chinese New Year celebrations. We have worked with them on different activations we can do. I appreciate those community members and business leaders who have been part of welcoming delegations to the Territory, because government cannot do this alone.

We are always looking at ways to involve different people; the offer is always open. If you think there are people who should be involved please feel free to have a discussion with me as we are always looking at ways to make sure this is a combined effort. We want airlines and partners to know the Territory’s businesses and community welcomes them. We are looking at those opportunities through a diverse lens.

It is a conversation I have had previously with the Indian community in terms of building our relationships in India. I agree with the Member for Blain that existing communities are often the best way to understand what opportunities exist and if there are things we have not thought about.

We often have visiting friends and family. We need to encourage them to visit and should look at different ways to facilitate that.

In her response, the Member for Araluen acknowledged that the government’s investments into arts and culture, including the cultural centre in Alice Springs—she claimed this is a continuation of a commitment by the former CLP government. My advice was there was an initial commitment of $20m by the former CLP government for a cultural centre placed on the 2018–19 forward works program in 2015. It appears to be a short-lived commitment from a dysfunctional government as it was removed from the forward works program in 2016. Perhaps that is a question better put to the Leader of the Opposition about what happened to the former government’s commitment.

There are no disappearing tricks here. These complex projects will go ahead. We are doing the hard yards to get there.

The Member for Nelson spoke about mountain biking trails and network building in the Top End. I assure him that we want to continue to deliver better mountain biking trails—better connected trails—in the Top End. This package for those initiatives will deliver—that benefit in a short amount of time, the highest potential visitation. Creating a multi-day ride experience with 200 kilometres of track in the Red Centre is an important opportunity.
These are not projects we have made out of thin air. These are experienced and strategic plans created with stakeholders over long periods of time that we are investing in to make sure they happen.

He also talked about opportunities that exist on privately-owned land. I hope we see businesses leverage this package and, hopefully, the greater visitation it will bring. Birding is a niche market for the Territory. We have 400 species of birds in the NT—spectacular birds. It is an area that will continue to be developed. We have a birding map that came out last year. We will continue to work on that because there are fantastic spots across our regions for spotting rare and unique birds. People will travel far and wide to do that.

As always, I appreciate the insight and passion the Member for Nelson has for heritage and some of the sport and rec opportunities that exist for the benefit of visitors and locals.

I will leave it there for this evening, noting there are a range of things I need to follow up with various members. Overall, I thank members for their contribution to this important motion. The tourism sector and the economy are going through a challenging time. This initiative is a clear message from government to tourism and associated industries that we are 100% behind them. We believe there is enormous potential to grow and support thousands of businesses and jobs for Territorians.

We will work with them to get through this difficult time and provide a more solid and sustainable foundation for the ongoing and stable prosperity of the Northern Territory.

Thank you very much. I look forward to the ongoing conversations with members about this really important industry.

Motion agreed to; statement noted.

PAPERS TABLED

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the report be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later time.

Leave granted.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE AND AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

The Auditor-General for the Northern Territory report to the Legislative Assembly, August 2017—motion to note—deferred.

Public Account Committee Inquiry into Taxi Licensing and Subleasing Report—motion to note—deferred.

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory November 2017 Report to the Legislative Assembly—motion to note—deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was in Central Australia last week and it was my pleasure to co-host the official opening of the palliative care facility in Alice Springs with Senator Nigel Scullion—something you are particularly passionate about as a local member in Alice Springs.
This new facility is named Ampere Amantye-Akeme, which is the Arrernte word for ‘comfort house’. It is an appropriate name. It was a very important occasion for the people of Central Australia. The healing centre welcomed guests with a traditional smoking ceremony as they arrived. I was pleased to officially open this facility, which delivers on a key election commitment for the people of Alice Springs to have a dedicated palliative care unit.

Special guests included representatives from Territory Palliative Care, Ms Sandra Clyne and Ms Mary Miles, who have advocated for many years to bring this service to Central Australia. It is important to note that under the previous government this was to be a multi-purpose facility that would provide different services. One of the first meetings I had in Central Australia after becoming the Health Minister was to listen to the members for Namatjira, Braitling and Stuart as Centralian residents on the importance of Central Australia having a specific stand-alone palliative care facility.

End-of-life care is a difficult conversation but when you speak to those going through that tragic time—a stand-alone palliative care facility and hospice environment is so important. To us, as a government, it was important to have that facility. It is a very different delivery of clinical care in a hospice situation and it is extremely important to bring this level of comfort to residents.

I acknowledge Sandra, Mary and everyone from Territory Palliative Care in the Centralian community who raised this issue and lobbied. The government decided to make it a stand-alone palliative care unit. I acknowledge the Member for Araluen who was at the event with me. She started the ball rolling and once she left, the previous government decided to change it to a multi-purpose facility. She was adamant it should be a stand-alone facility.

This wonderful facility was funded through a joint commitment by the Australian Government of $5.3m and the Northern Territory Government provided an additional $1m. The palliative care facility will offer improved service delivery to all Central Australian palliative care patients in a peaceful environment that is not part of a busy medical ward.

Services will be provided on a 24-hour basis and be accessible to family members. The 10-bed overnight accommodation and day respite facility has been designed to be culturally sensitive and has bush medicine gardens. It is wonderful. Each room has access to the outdoors with a veranda. It is a very important piece of medical infrastructure for the Central Australian community. Residents of Alice Springs and the broader Central Australian community will benefit from this.

They will provide high-quality palliative care responding to the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of patients with life-limiting diagnoses in the last months, weeks and days of their lives. The establishment of the facility will enhance the strong and trusting relationships with urban and remote Aboriginal communities. I congratulate the community. It was a delight to join the community for the opening of the facility.

The Machado-Joseph Disease Foundation was established in Groote Eylandt in 2008 to support people with Machado-Joseph Disease. On Friday 2 March, I attended the MJD Foundation’s 10th birthday celebrations. The Member for Stuart joined me at their premises in Coconut Grove.

Sadly, MJD is a hereditary neurodegenerative condition. Each child of a person who carries the defective gene has a 50% chance of developing the disease. In addition, the mutation is typically expanded when passed to the next generation, meaning the symptoms of the disease appear eight to 10 years earlier and, tragically, are more severe.

There is no known cure; however, the work of the foundation is providing hope for the future. From humble beginnings on Groote Eylandt, the MJD Foundation has expanded and now provides support to people living in remote and urban communities throughout the Northern Territory and into far north Queensland.

The focus of the foundation is not only supporting people living with the disease, but also providing education to health professionals and others who support Territorians with MJD. It supports vital research into the disease and work collaboratively with researchers in Australia and other countries. The origins of this is a tragic but fascinating story.

The MJD Foundation recognises the far-reaching effects of the disease across a person’s life. It provides practical support and interventions that not only aim to improve the quality of life for people living with the disease, but enable the person to live in their community.
It was an absolute privilege to join a number of stakeholders and traditional owners from various parts of the Territory to celebrate the foundation’s 10th birthday, but at the same time it was devastating. I was touched by meeting people who have MJD—listening to their stories and seeing people who were fit, healthy Territorians not so long ago and the impact it has on them. They are extremely brave and it was a wonderful celebration because we were able to acknowledge the people in the room living every day with MJD. They bravely shared their stories with the large group.

Ten years might not seem like a long time but the contribution the foundation has made to Territorians living with MJD is significant. I acknowledge the interjection from the Member for Arnhem, who was not able to be there that day. Her sister was there, which was lovely.

Sadly, it is prevalent in her electorate and extends into Central Australia and other places—a very important foundation to support. I acknowledge the events of that day and the opening of the palliative care facility in Alice Springs.

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the teachers and community for their efforts during the recent floods across the Adelaide River floodplains. While floods in other areas of the Top End gained a large level of publicity the flooding of the Adelaide River floodplains did not rank nearly as much attention, despite the floods causing severe hardship to many residents at Marrakai and surrounding localities, and disruption to businesses and properties.

Members will recall the flooding of the roads and floodplains. Even the road near the Window on the Wetlands was impacted and closed for a short period of time. The floods closed the jumping crocodile tours and Window on the Wetlands, completely locked in the Humpty Doo barramundi business, and restricted travel for all manner of business people who provide valuable services to the domestic residents, commercial businesses and nearby cattle stations.

When the roads first closed I was concerned for residents and in particular the students who would not be able to get to school. Mind you, I do not think the students minded having to stay at home. School is a requirement, so I contacted the minister’s office to see if arrangements were in place, as we had done previously, to have the verandah school set up in the tavern.

Thank you, Minister for Education; school took place once all approvals went through. Teachers available on that side of the river were found. There were 57 students attending what is now called the flood school.

The schools and students affected were: Taminmin, 26 students; Middle Point, 11 students; Humpty Doo Primary School, 13 students; Girraween, three students; St Francis, one student; Good Shepherd, one student; and Mackillop, one student.

Their families were impacted as well. Many of them could not get to work unless they took the long road trip via Pine Creek, which many did not do because it was pointless given the time it takes to go that way.

The wonderful teachers who were available to teach the students were Marjorie Saunders and Morgan Cameron from Taminmin; Susan Latimer and Myrna Stoddard from St Francis; Lynne Spencer from Forest Parade; and Gucki Reissenberger, who is not attached to a school.

They gave their time and sorted themselves out to teach the students. These teachers came from different teaching levels, schools, with different skill sets and proven areas of work. All combined to make the ‘flood school’, as it is now called, a remarkable achievement. There was no getting away from school work for these students.

Students were well supported by work sent either directly via email to students or to staff, for those students who did not have electronic devices. Taminmin College, Middle Point and Humpty Doo sent pre-printed work to students via the boat and one delivery was via a helicopter by Marjorie Saunders’ helpful son. This was extremely helpful as resources were limited on the Marrakai side of the flood waters. All students received school work to continue their learning. This was much appreciated by students and staff.

To compliment student learning and social interaction the teachers trialled a buddy system in the last sessions for the day. This involved senior students choosing a buddy from the primary school students who were not already buddies or relatives. The students worked well and enjoyed the task. They read books together, painted and drew, made Play-Doh models and interacted with ball games. It was deemed by the teachers to be highly successful. Senior students made a poster and primary students voted on their favourite. This task was also reversed and the outcome was very successful.
The Corroboree Tavern owners, Linda and Peter Shappert, provided assistance by offering refreshments for students and assisted with equipment such as tables, chairs and the like; nothing was too much trouble for them. I extend a big thank you for their dedication and commitment to their local community.

Another big thank you goes to the Marrakai Progress Association which pitched in on many fronts to help the community organise care and medicine for frail people, had Woolworths provide food vouchers—big thank you to Woolies—made sure everyone knew what was happening, and helped co-ordinate the boat that went to and fro to move goods and families and help businesses in need. The gentleman who did that—I do not know his name—did it at no charge. I am sure there were many lessons learned from the floods this year and measures put in place to respond quickly when such an event occurs in the future.

A big thank you to the teachers who helped. A big thank you to the students for being the kind of students they are—which we would expect from rural kids—and the Marrakai community for helping everyone in need. Thank you to the students who participated in the flood school with such enthusiasm and openness.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I place my congratulations on the record to students from the Wanguri electorate who put their hand up to be in student leadership roles this year. I congratulate them for their success on being elected by their peers as student leaders. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to grow and develop leadership skills.

Firstly, I congratulate the students from Leanyer Primary School. The school captains are Darshi Pandithage, Kallopi Gikas, Jordan Lefebvre, Gerry Koukouvas and Samuel Kelly. Well done on being the school captains, you have been doing a great job with the assemblies.

Congratulations to the SRC Year 6 representatives Kyra Catis and Kyran Porter; the SRC Year 5 representatives Maria Koukouvas, Halle Daun, Ciabel Khyra Sarmiento and Lochan Baral; and the SRC Year 4 representatives Elena Lewis, Kira Hourdas, Sam Reader and Charli Hale. The art captains are a very special initiative by Leanyer school. Well done to Ariele Deeks and Maddy Bates, and the music captains Tamika Tonson and Tully Zich. What a great achievement.

For Uluru, the house captains this year are Iraklis Gikas and Sophia Christensen. The vice captains are Grant Murphy and George Glynatis. The Litchfield house captains are Kitt Coughlan and Manolis Hourdas and the vice captains are Eva Newell and Lucia Novelly. The Kakadu house captains this year are Katerina Halkitis and Janelle The, and the vice captains are Artemis Kalikatzaros and Illiana Roditis. The Coburg house captains are Brady Lewis and Joey Lewis, and the vice captains are Chloe Reader and Gabby Kosmidis. Well done everybody at Leanyer school and your great work there. I look forward to seeing you at work this year.

At Wanguri school a range of students also put their hand up for leadership roles. Wanguri is a wonderful school in the electorate. I congratulate the school captains Marsia Lay and Nathaniel Freeland; the SRC representatives from Year 3/4 Oscar Simonetti and Chaelah Mc Dowall; the SRC Year 4/5 representatives Gabby Wilks and Brendan Reynoso; the SRC year 4/5 representatives Max Knight and Kalliesha Shadforth-Bedford; the SRC Year 5/6 representatives Pryha Allen-Bell, Nomikos Reisis, Marsia Lay; and the SRC Year 5/6 representatives Aspa Pastrikos and Nathaniel Freeland.

Well done, Nathaniel, for putting your hand up for multiple roles this year.

The Dundas house captains this year are Aspa Pastrikos and Darisu Pastrikos. The Dundas vice captains are Dani Limerick and Brian Ramsamy. The Victoria House captains are Billy Page and Lucy Smyth, and the Victoria vice captains are Zoe Conroy and Shontoya Naroldol.

The Wellington House captains are Royston Whitham and Honey Chastain. The Wellington vice captains are Bonnie-Lee Stoddart and Jaden Stoddart, and the Palmerston House captains are Aariah Tuhakaraina and Ben Flevelle. The Palmerston vice captains are Oscar Roberts and Lilli Robinson. It is great to see you all working hard down there at Wanguri school, and I cannot wait to see you at the school assemblies and the sports day.

At Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, a very special school in the electorate and I am proud to say one of my former schools, congratulations to school captains Aiden Ellision De Castro and Ava Stieber. The vice captains this year are Brendan Ammerlaan and Raquel Caldwell.
Gsell house captains are Hugo O'Connor and Jade Seiler, and the Angelo house captains are Pania Maika and Taylor Kasie. The Strele sport captains are Xavier Chandler and Montanna Chandler, and the McAuley sport captains are Reuben Thomas and Ella Johnstone. Fantastic work.

I would also like to put my congratulations on the record to the Good Shepherd Lutheran College Leaneyer Campus school captains and house leaders for 2018. The school captains this year are Les Harris and Daisy Yannakourous. The house leaders for Fenton are Connor Beechey and Jorja Goody; for Livingstone are Liam Harvey and Seth Sommerville; for Hughes are Lexee Lavens and Daniel Espuis; and for Strauss are Tianne Vladcoff and Anna Tuthill.

Well done everybody at all of the wonderful local schools in the Wanguri electorate. This will be a fantastic year for you to grow in your leadership skills. We are looking forward to seeing your strong representation at your schools and see you represent your schools in our community. Congratulations to everyone.

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Tonight I speak about the Mimik-Ga centre, a wonderful facility in Wanguri that ensures students with additional needs are given the skills and support to participate effectively in a mainstream school. I had the pleasure of officially opening the centre on 26 February 2018.

The site which previously housed the old Henbury School, was offered the name Mimik-Ga-Guligi from Tibby Quall, elder spokesperson from the Dangalaba clan of Larrakia people. The name means ‘children growing’.

The centre includes a Families as First Teachers program catering for around 60 children and their families. The FaFT program focuses on working with children from zero to three years of age with additional needs. Their siblings are encouraged to be involved as they can serve as role models for other children participating in the program. I have been there a couple of times and it is lovely to see the brothers and sisters playing, painting and doing activities and the mums and grandmothers there as well. It is just a beautiful atmosphere at that FaFT program.

Mimik-Ga also has two autism spectrum disorder intervention programs. Initially students attend the ASD program full-time with the purpose of gaining skills and knowledge to take into a mainstream classroom. The amount of time students attend their mainstream school is gradually increased over time.

One program at Mimik-Ga caters for transition to Year 1 students and these students participate in a 35-week program that includes a staged transition back to their base school. The second program caters for Year 2 to Year 5 students with high-level needs. The length of this program is dependent on the student and in many cases runs longer than 12 months.

There is also a positive learning centre at Mimik-Ga. The PLC is an alternative program for primary school students with increased learning support beyond a mainstream classroom.

The overall aim of the PLC is to reintegrate students into mainstream schooling. Around 50 students are accessing this service at the moment. The PLC activities include a vast range of evidence-based approached to support children, including off-site activities such as working with animals.

Staff at the centre have a background in special needs. They undertake a mentorship program with a peer mentor and the centre director in their first term of employment to ensure they are supported and understand the centre’s approach to education.

I congratulate Greg Robson, the director of Mimik-Ga, who was crucial in making this centre a reality. Greg is a long-term educator in the Northern Territory.

Territory students are our priority. I am confident that students who come to Mimik-Ga will receive enhanced support to maximise their participation and gain the very best education that they deserve. It is fantastic that this facility incorporates specialist amenities and strategies for early intervention to engage students.

Mimik-Ga is one of the things made possible because of our government’s $10m each year in additional investment to support flexible schooling options for children and young people with additional needs including challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental health needs. Through this additional funding we have expanded flexible learning options for students in Palmerston, Tennant Creek and Katherine.

We have established a special education centre at Tennant Creek Primary School, providing specialist support to 10 children with additional needs. We have expanded the ASD programs to Palmerston, Alice Springs and Katherine. We have expanded the support available to schools and families with eight additional
allied health positions in the Department of Education. Last year the first round of scholarships were awarded for 20 teachers to complete a special education qualification.

Our government is working hard to ensure all young Territorians have access to high-quality education delivered in quality learning environments. We are focused on ensuring our education system provides the opportunity for young people to engage in their learning, grow and achieve their full potential. As part of this focus I recently launched a discussion paper to inform a review of policy and practice for students with additional needs. This review will explore how we will continue to provide an inclusive education for all students into the future and achieve the best outcomes for all Territory students.

The review is focused on services for students who attend special schools and those who attend mainstream schools but need additional support. It will include how to create an inclusive education for all students, the diverse learning environments in the NT, how to build on our strengths and engagement with stakeholders to gather feedback.

Consultation will include online surveys, workshops and school visits in Alice Springs, Katherine, Palmerston, Nhulunbuy and Darwin. It is very important that we get as much feedback as possible. I encourage everyone to get involved. To provide feedback visit haveyoursay.nt.gov.au. Consultation closes on 30 March 2018.

We want all children to have access to a quality education. Our government is implementing improvements, such as the Mimik-Ga, that lead our Territory schooling system to be at the forefront of inclusive education.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, tonight I continue my third night of adjournments updating the House on the Arnhem electorate.

I left off on my last day in Gapuwiyak on 21 February, where I visited the school’s FaFT, which was operating in the preschool that day. Thank you to FaFT teacher, Alison Wunungmurra, for her time. It is wonderful to see those little minds learning, having fun and enjoying singing, playing and learning in English and Yolgnu Matha, their traditional language. Seeing those active little learners was a very bright start to the day.

I popped into the ALPA store to say good day and catch up with the managers. I also visited the Gapuwiyak Police Station—thank you to Acting Remote Sergeant Jason Ryan for his time. He has only been there three weeks. He is stationed there for two years, so I will be getting to know Remote Sergeant Ryan and his staff over the next couple of years, which will be great.

My next trip, which was a very exciting day for me, was on 26 February. I had the honour and privilege to represent Minister Manison to open the Yurlhbunji and Warjaja—Roper and Wilton—bridges. It is an amazing set of infrastructure. It was wonderful to be part of the opening smoking ceremony on the Roper bridge, and to see the fantastic turnout.

It was the heat of the day. Ngukurr was the hottest part of the Territory in October and November last year. It did not let us down in terms of the temperature. It was a warm, steamy day but we estimated there were about 150 people at the official opening, which is an astounding number in terms of the location. It is 30 kilometres outside Ngukurr community, so people had to drive. It was a wet, muddy, slippery patch of road between the two bridges and bitumen approaches.

We made it there and it was a fantastic opening ceremony. Thank you to Minister Manison for allowing me the honour as the local member to represent her and officially open those two bridges at that ceremony.

I take a moment to acknowledge Bobby Nunggumajbarr, who was instrumental in making sure the right people were able to speak: traditional owners and family representatives. Thank you, Bobby, for your planning and event management on the day. Thank you to traditional owner, Samuel Ponto, for his welcoming words before the start of the official speeches. It is always great to have local representatives taking part in opening ceremonies on their country.

On Wednesday 28 February Minister Moss travelled to Katherine. It was for the year ahead announcement of Turbocharging Tourism. We have heard about this in depth today and what it means for the Territory as a whole.

This is a $103m stimulus package rolling out over the next two years and I thank Minister Moss. I attended the announcement of the $5.5m extra commitment of funds to Nitmiluk National Park on top of the $10m our government committed for Nitmiluk, which is an amazing landscape just outside Katherine.
It was well received by the tourism industry and good to see the excitement and constructive feedback from those attending the year ahead speech alongside the local Member for Katherine. It was good to see her in her patch representing our community.

On 2 March Minister Wakefield travelled to Katherine. It was great to travel alongside her visiting the Territory Families office, doing a walk-through and meeting some of the staff. The minister did not miss a beat when the power went out and she was talking to her staff in the dark, having a good laugh and chatting on. It did not worry Minister Wakefield at all. That is such a Territory attitude. The building lights have gone out and you can hardly see who you are talking to but you carry on and that is life. It was good to see the resilience of the minister in such circumstances.

Our next visit was to the new youth outreach centre in Katherine East, which is where I live. I walk past that building with my dog every morning and afternoon that I am home. It was exciting. All the scaffolding had come down that morning. It was perfect timing that the construction had been completed. We got to walk through the youth centre and visit some of the staff who are extremely dedicated and already had positive, successful stories about the young people they are engaging with and supporting.

I am looking forward—if I am in Katherine—to attending the opening of the centre with the local member. If not, I will see it in full-flight with youth accessing it as part of their journey, and youth accessing the different spaces they will have available. It will be something positive for them to do after school and an excellent support network for young people of Katherine and their families.

The minister continued with some of her own appointments that day, and I did a walk through the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics Katherine Regional Office, which I had not done before. I have met with the regional director, Phil Harris, a few times. He was at the bridge’s opening and I bump into him at Woolworths and Toy World walking around Katherine on a Saturday. Thank you to Mr Harris for introducing me to some of his staff who do a lot of the work behind the scenes.

It was good to meet some faces. There is a really good team based in Katherine looking after the region. Mr Harris said they look after approximately 7000 kilometres of road. I only drive a small portion of that; they have a lot more to travel around. I appreciate their work in infrastructure and planning, particularly in an electorate like Arnhem.

Minister Wakefield and I attended the Wurli-Wurlinjang Aboriginal Health Service to meet with the CEO, Ms Suzi Berto. Thank you, Ms Berto, for your time. I sprung the appointment on them early in the morning that the Minister for Territory Families would be visiting as well. They were very happy to accommodate us and show us through some of the thoughtful programs they are implementing. They are looking at building the capacity of their staff to support the people of Katherine and those who use their services—some of my constituents use the Wurli-Wurlinjang services. I thank them for their time.

Finishing off with my trip to Ngukurr, which was last week from 5 to 7 March—we met and greeted various stakeholders throughout the electorate. I was able to spend a little time in Urapunga. I thank Aboriginal corporations, Yugul Mangi and Millwarparra Aboriginal Corporations; Linda Pascoe, the principal at the school; the Gulman family learning centre; the Sunrise Health Service; the women’s centre; Outback Store; Roper Gulf Regional Council—there is a new community service manager there, Chris. He was happy to meet with me.

I popped in and said gidday to the police. I am looking forward to building a relationship with the new sergeant, Remote Sergeant Allan Teague. I spent a couple of very busy days in Ngukurr. I visited the school in Urapunga; thank you to the principal, Sam. I also attended a community meeting with the Roper Gulf Regional Council. They had a special meeting in Urapunga to talk about the community priorities.

Thank you for indulging me in my electorate.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I rise to put on public record my unwavering pride in the electorate that I call home and represent. No one in the Chamber—or, dare I say it, the Northern Territory—was more surprised than me that on 9 September 2016 I was declared the winner of the 2016 NT election to represent Katherine.

It is an immense privilege to stand as the elected Member for Katherine—that members of the Katherine community have put their trust in me to represent them. That privilege is doubled as I represent them in government. In my maiden speech, delivered on 18 October, I spoke of my childhood and that, more than
anything, inspires me to improve the everyday lives of the community I represent—and the memories of childhood and parents.

I am passionate about social justice, community development and empowerment, and the environment. These are core values that are the motivation for everything I do. Every child deserves to feel secure and safe, satisfied and confident no matter what adversity they face. In order to achieve that, I continue to advocate tirelessly to ensure the things so many of us take for granted are available to every member of the Katherine community, irrespective of their socioeconomic status or skin colour.

That means access to healthcare, education, long-term employment prospects, sustainable economic growth and a healthy environment. These are the non-negotiable elements every Katherine resident needs in order for all of us to be able to focus on what is great about our community. I made a couple of commitments during my maiden speech that were specific to Katherine: housing; increased and focused youth services; and increased access to support services for the most vulnerable in our community and the general population.

Katherine is ready to have the long and complex conversations about the past and present in relation to crime, land, race, prosperity and leadership. We are ready to put in the foundations for our future. We are ready to lead the Northern Territory response to youth justice.

Katherine is ready to work with the government on the outcomes of the Royal Commission. We are ready for difficult conversations that bring victims of crime together with offenders. We are ready to talk about the Aboriginal justice agreements. We are ready to talk about returning to local decision-making. We are ready to talk about jobs for locals and building local businesses. We are ready and willing to share our learnings with towns and communities across the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory can lead rights-based responses to youth justice issues in Australia, and we are ready to show the country how Katherine gets it done.

For the first time we have a coordinated approach that saw activities and events held throughout the December–January school holiday season. With an investment of $50 000 through a grant from Territory Families, we put into practice our justice reinvestment ethos.

We have a youth justice reinvestment group made up of members of the community, government agencies, NGOs and parents. After years of lobbying and advocating, we have a flexible learning centre focused on supporting children that, for whatever reason, are not well suited to a mainstream school community.

We have a Katherine inter-agency working group that meets regularly to discuss emerging issues and ways in which we, as a community, can mitigate these issues. We have a newly-formed mental health working group called, ‘our wellness network’, whose focus is to coordinate and host events, forums and workshops that address mental health issues in Katherine.

During my maiden speech I committed to lobbying and advocating for Headspace to be established in Katherine and that is happening this year. I look forward to the centre being opened in the near future.

I have sat in this Chamber and over many months heard members speak about increases in crime and alcohol-related violence. Katherine experiences the same social problems as other communities. Nobody wants to see a child in gaol. The fact is some kids respond well to programs like youth diversion and victim conferencing and some kids do not.

Social issues can drive kids to commit crime. Poverty, alcohol and familial violence are huge contributors to youth committing crime. We acknowledge that and are helping support these children and their families.

We can introduce legislation, enforce penalties and restrict access to alcohol, but it is absolutely imperative that communities and individuals take personal responsibility for their choices and behaviours, and work with us to stop the violence and anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol abuse.

While some of those across the room talk about these issues—and trust me I empathise and sympathise with them and the residents of their communities. In Katherine we are far more interested in talking about what we can do as a community to support one another and affect positive change.

We are not waiting to be told, directed or mandated by government—whether it be local, Territory or federal—to assume responsibility of our community and what happens in it. We are doing it as a community, together.
Our Dry Season is just around the corner, and is a perfect time for members of this Chamber and public servants to come to Katherine and start the long conversations required for the community and government to work together to continue growing our town and support it to become the leader in justice reinvestment and making justice practices work.

Our approach will not produce quick or easy resolutions and our conversations could get ugly, but we are ready and invite the Territory to join us on this journey. I am incredibly proud of my community. We have worked hard over the last 18 months to move forward in a positive manner. Over the last two years I have been focusing on using positive language. It is not that we are afraid of having these difficult conversations or talking about what is happening in the communities in regard to crime and alcohol abuse, violence and anti-social behaviour. We have those conversations.

It is also important to remember that our community is not just about that. We are about arts and culture, families supporting their children and kids who make an effort to go to school every day—they might not be high academic achievers but go to school every day and put their best foot forward. We are about parents who volunteer at sporting activities and businesses that support our community members.

I reiterate that I am very proud of the work Katherine has done as a community. I commend community members for that and encourage them to continue supporting each other.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I enjoy this part of the evening to talk about the great events happening in and around Central Australia.

A particular event—not happening in Central Australia, but Central Australians are there representing us—is happening this weekend in Sydney called the Herd of Hope. This is a cattle drive in Sydney to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation and encourage more Australians to become organ donors.

A mix of Australian cattle will be crossing the iconic Bondi Beach. Each of the stockmen have been directly affected or connected to a life-changing organ transplant. The cattle drive will promote organ donation across Australia and support regional transplant care services.

Funds raised through the Herd of Hope will go toward areas identified by the recent studies commissioned by the University of South Australia. These include establishing regional transplant and donor family care nurses, and providing therapy for families and recipients.

The Herd of Hope is an Australian charity and you are able to make donations.

Encourage people to go to www.herdofhope.com.au and make a donation; you can sponsor a cow or a heifer. This is really important. The funds raised will go toward establishing initiatives to support recipients and their families. This is about encouraging all Australians to register to become organ donors by learning more about the process and how it affects people.

I want to mention a few people who are dear to me. They are the relatives of my two nieces who live in South Australia. One of the ladies is Megan McLoughlin. She started this movement. She received a double transplant, kidney and pancreas, in 2010. A month later she met her husband, Mark, and now they have two beautiful children, Sam and Ella.

Megan understands life in the bush. She comes from a cattle station and is very connected to South Australia. She wanted to use this to show and promote the positive effects that organ and tissue donation can have in Australia. She is passionate about making sure there is a strong awareness throughout the country of this important discussion that we need to have.

Jim Willoughby is Megan McLoughlin father. I hope this is okay for parliament, but Jim Willoughby is a bloody good bloke. He is a true blue Australian, an excellent cattleman, horse rider and stunt double. You may have seen some of the very tactful moves in Sweet Country. Those moves are thanks to Jim Willoughby and his son, Tom Willoughby. Their horses were used in the movie.

Jim is very passionate about organ and tissue donation and transplants—Megan being his daughter—and has a strong connection to this movement, Jim has been there every step of the way with Megan to make sure this can become a reality.

Gina Howard is another deadly Territorian. She is known more around Central Australia and the Top End and works with young fellas through the Indigenous land councils. She knows first-hand the benefits of
remote and regional health and is a strong advocate for this. She is a very good woman on the land. She knows the land and how to work cattle and pastoral properties so it is fantastic that she can be there with them all.

Shane Muldoon is another very strong advocate for rural and remote health in the Northern Territory. He has been a good advocate and lobbyist for improved health services in and around Central Australia and he has met with our Minister for Health a few times.

I must not forget two very important people: Benny and Nicole Hayes from Undoolya Station. They are bloody top people from the electorate of Namatjira. They know how to run a cattle property and are extremely passionate people about this. So passionate that they have shipped the heifers to New South Wales so that we have quality Central Australian cattle marching on Bondi Beach. That is amazing and I am very happy…

Ms Uibo: Cattle of Namatjira on Bondi beach.

Mr PAECH: Cattle of Namatjira on Bondi beach. Bloody good cattle there, I tell you.

This is really important and shows, firsthand, just how important this issue is and how much it affects the lives of people throughout the Northern Territory. I encourage everyone to talk to your families and consider becoming an organ donor. It is hard for people in remote and regional areas.

This is a great event and I wish I could be there with them all but I cannot, unfortunately, so best of luck. If you have time and some extra cash, jump on Herd of Hope and sponsor a cow or a heifer. That would be truly great.

I have a few minutes left so I want to touch on something a bit better and I know the Member for Braitling will be here every step of the way. We talk about a lot of iconic things in this Chamber and the importance they play. I want to talk about a very iconic person tonight and that is Kay Eade. She is an iconic Central Australian and I am very happy to be talking about her tonight. On Tuesday, Kay Eade made an announcement that she would be stepping down from the helm at the Chamber of Commerce as the Executive Officer in Alice Springs. Kay has been there for nine years and has been a treasure to Central Australia. She has been there to coach and mentor developing businesses through the complex environments over the last nine years.

She has lobbied hard for services and investments in Central Australia. She has stood up for Central Australians time and again over successive governments, talking about the need for investment in Central Australia and how we can stimulate the business economy.

She has attended and participated on many panels, providing valuable insight into Central Australian businesses on what we need, the growing demands and the changing environment.

Kay has been instrumental in making sure young people in Central Australia are encouraged to consider business ventures and becoming a business owner. She was active in starting up the local Young Professionals network in Central Australia. She is a gem. You could not ask for a better person.

Kay has been featured at many Business at Sunset events making sure everyone is happy, delivering great speeches, talking to everyone.

Kay has not said where she is going yet. She said she will take up knitting, so I will be sure to buy her some wool. I know she is not going to stop at that. Kay is passionate about Central Australia. She is passionate about growing our great region.

I am looking forward to having many cups of coffee with Kay Eade and will continue to get sage advice from her about what we need to make Central Australia bigger and better. I am sure my colleague, the Member for Braitling, will be there every step of the way when I say best of luck to Kay Eade at the Chamber of Commerce. We are looking forward to seeing you around the community and taking a much-needed break because nine years nonstop is a long time. You deserve this round of long-service leave. Congratulations on your time at the Chamber of Commerce. We will miss you but best of luck with your future endeavours.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I will use this wonderful time this evening to highlight the achievements of a young person in Sanderson. It is nice if you lay it down now that their journey so far—perhaps some time in the future we will see them in their journey, and their journeys need to be celebrated. We hear so many negative things about young people that I think it is so important to highlight those who are on the right track.
Tonight I am speaking about a young man, Chris Teng, and some members of this parliament may have come across him. I asked him to give me a few words on his background. It is quite short given Chris’ attitude to life and the fact he is extremely humble.

He has told me that he was born in Darwin in 1996, so he is a very young man. He has lived in the Territory all his life. He studied preschool at Leanyer. He is now in his fourth year as a student for a Bachelor of Arts and Law at CDU.

Many of us know his mum and dad, Stephanie Lin and Kim Teng. They managed and operated the Northlakes Chinese restaurant at the old golf club site from 1995 to 2013—great local business owners. The restaurant was in many ways, as Chris described to me, like his second home. He grew up there with his younger brother Calvin. They did their school work surrounded by family, friends, strong role models and, probably, customers.

Outside of his studies Chris is working as a law clerk at Ward Keller. I met him during my campaign in rather unusual circumstances. He asked me for an appointment, so I visited his home. He then wanted to know what I stood for and what my values were. It was quite confronting but very refreshing to hear that from a young community person.

Very quickly after winning the seat I met him again. We started to form a friendship. He has quickly become my go-to person for advice on young people. I take everything he tells me on board.

He is very well connected across the community, particularly the multicultural community. He is a really strong advocate for youth leadership. He is the UN Youth NT outgoing Chair. Chris first got involved with the UN Youth as a Year 12 student in 2014 when he registered simply to participate in the Territory Conference.

I am pleased to say that I was lucky enough to deliver a keynote speech last year at a conference being well run by Chris. He felt that his attendance at the conference was a great experience. He told me that, looking back, it changed his high school education for the better.

He continued to stay involved with UN Youth, and when he started his first year at CDU he also joined the UN Youth NT Executive. He feels he has been very fortunate to serve as a director of operations in 2015, and then the director of communications in 2016 and, of course, divisional president this and last year.

2017 was an exciting year but also difficult for the organisation as it faced considerable structural challenges that posed serious questions to the viability of the organisation. Many of us have been in that situation with community organisations as adults let alone as young people.

Student participation at events was at a steady decline in the two years prior to his Chair tenure. The effects of burnout had a detrimental impact on their volunteers and executive members, and the organisation faced some administrative and financial difficulty. It is an all too familiar story.

In 2016 the division lost its charity status with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. But the executive including Chris approached these challenges at the very start with new energy and set about turning the fortunes of UN Youth Northern Territory around.

Chris worked closely with their national director of finance and their national secretary to restore the process and stability within the Territory’s division across administrative and financial operations.

This effort and collaboration proved successful in April when UN Youth NT regained its charitable status. Similarly, in 2017, UN Youth NT experienced encouraging and strong growth with student participation at its educational programs. Its two flagship programs, the Territory Conference and Evatt NT, saw a 50% increase in total students attending, and Chris was particularly encouraged to see more students participate from Palmerston and the rural area. We know how challenging it is to bring people together across fairly expansive areas.

This increasing engagement allowed the group to grow its educational program line up and human resource capacity. In September last year the UN Youth NT held its space summit. This was its first one day summit in the Northern Territory in over two years.

The UN Youth NT’s recovery last year was reflected in its finances. The surplus for last year was nearly seven times larger than the previous year and the gross revenue increased for $1374 in 2016 to $11,952 in 2017. That is as 770% growth.
This encouraging uptick in the financial operations was made possible by increased student registrations at events and the generous financial support from the Office of Youth Affairs, the office of the Chief Minister and the Rotary Club of Litchfield/Palmerston. This placed UN Youth in a strong position for future years and will ensure it can grow and reach more Territory students into the future.

Chris was no doubt a massive part of this. His efforts were recently rewarded in Canberra when UN Youth NT awarded the Kate Longhurst Award for the Best Division of the Year during UN Youth Australia’s National Council Awards. This recognition was a tribute to all the hard work and dedication of not just Chris, but all the members and supporters.

Chris is very humble and never claims anything for himself. He was honoured to be awarded the Trevor McLeod Award for the most outstanding contribution to UN Youth Australia in the past 12 months. As with my earlier comments, I believe Chris has a bright future. He has a strong community mind and I will carefully watch and continue to support him in years to come as he takes on more leadership roles.

Chris has been nominated for a Northern Territory Young Achiever Award. Sadly, I will not be there on the night, otherwise I would have been there to support him. It is super that he has been nominated. He is excited, although very humble about it.

I thank Chris for his contribution not just to UN Youth, but to me as the local member with his time, knowledge and insights. His contributions so far have been immense to make the Territory a more inclusive and great place to live.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned.