

Madam Speaker, Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Woodroffe Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 6 students from Woodroffe Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Allison Stewart, Toni Taylor, Rebecca Wissink-Parkes and Bernie Trouw. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

LOCAL COURT AMENDMENT (JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS) BILL

Continued from 24 October 2018.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, before I move the bill, I acknowledge those students and welcome them to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, local judges perform a vital role in our justice system. It was the Country Liberals that pioneered the modernisation of the court system in the Territory by, amongst other things, creating the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal, redefining the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and consolidating the Magistrates Court and the Local Court.

Part of the reforms introduced by the CLP was a requirement under section 53 of the *Local Court Act* that the appointment of a Chief Judge, Deputy Chief Judge or Local Court Judge be appointed by the Administrator by *Gazette* notice. This process was not followed and the appointment of a number of judges was not gazetted. This is, essentially, an administrative oversight which, while regrettable, was not intentional and should not affect either the otherwise valid appointment, the jurisdiction of the Local Court or the binding nature of the judgments rendered by those judges.

A number of learned judges whose appointments were inadvertently left un-gazetted have been acting judges for a period of time, the Deputy Chief Judge has been a member of the court for years, and all are highly respected jurists who are, without question, more than qualified to sit on the bench.

The legislative validation of the jurisdiction of the Local Court and decisions made by these jurists is a safeguard and will add certainty to judgments for litigants, lawyers and the public.

Clauses 6 and 7 which inserts new section 67A, 81A, 81B and 81C into the *Local Court Act* express affirm the validity of the appointments that were not gazetted and will ensure that this situation never arises again by making clear that an administrative or clerical error will not have any impact on the exercise of the duties of a sitting judge or the jurisdiction of the Local Court.

Similarly, clause 4 makes clear that appointment of a judge may be made by instrument rather than by *Gazette* notice, removing some administrative burden from the process.

Madam Speaker, I am glad the government has moved quickly to address this issue and ensure it will not interfere with the function of the Local Court and the judicial process in the Territory, either now or into the future, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, first I thank the minister for allowing us a briefing on what is an important bill. Obviously, if this had been administrative errors, you would hope that they would not cause issues retrospectively. I have been guaranteed during the briefing that will not be the case.

I was interested in getting a response to my question regarding the principle under which you can say decisions made by judges who were not fully or properly installed would still be upheld. I was informed of something I had never heard of before. It is called the de facto officer doctrine. It says:

This confers validity upon acts performed by a person acting under the colour of official title even though it is later discovered the legality of that person's appointment or election to office is deficient.

When wrapping up it may be worth giving us a bit of an understanding about where that doctrine has come from and to some extent—the from the status of legality—what makes that doctrine a doctrine that we can rely on to override the issue of whether a judge or magistrate who has not been legally appointed at one time makes sure that all those decisions that that judge or magistrate made at that time are perfectly okay.

Mr GUNNER: Do you miss Elferink's history lesson?

Mr WOOD: I do, yes, but if we had to go back to John Elferink's history lesson we would probably be back Aristotle's days. We do not have to go back that far but it is an interesting issue because this is a piece of legislation that has theoretically caused the problem.

I am not saying who is at fault but it is important that we know that there is a way around this issue and that is the use of what they call the de facto officer doctrine or de facto officer principle.

I thank the legal people for their briefing and for the bit of education I got in the process, but in all seriousness, it is important to know how this issue has been attended to in order to make everything right again.

Ms FYLES: Madam Speaker, I thank the members for their contribution to debate and for their indication of support and their support of the urgency.

This bill as we have spoken about in both my introduction but also by the other members validates the appointment of certain local court judges, the local court deputy chief judge and local court acting judges and any judicial acts and decisions made by those judges.

The bill will remove the requirement for these judges to be appointed by gazette notice and instead appoint my instrument, which is a technical process for those people perhaps listening in today.

The bill provides certainty to the local court for other circumstances where there may be a defect in constitution. It came to my attention that a number of appointments to the local court were not gazetted as required under the *Local Court Act*. The acting chief executive of the Department of Attorney-General and Justice undertook immediate audits of these matters, and this bill is very important in maintaining the upstanding nature of our judicial system.

As the Member for Spillett, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, said these were significant changes made by the previous Attorney-General and I remember attending some the ceremony around these changes when I was an Opposition member.

The *Local Court Act* came in to force on 1 May 2016 and that act contains provisions about the appointment of a judge. Under section 53(1) of the act, the Administrator may by gazette notice appoint a person to be a judge.

Under section 61 of the act the Administrator of minister may by gazette notice appoint a person to be an acting judge.

There are transitional provisions in part 8 to the *Local Court Act* which automatically deem office holders under the repealed *Magistrates Act* to hold a corresponding office under the *Local Court Act*—they were the transitionally provisions with the bill.

Local court judges were previously referred to as magistrates. Since 1 May 2016, except for the appointment of local court Judge Austin, have not been made by notice in the gazette rather appointments have been made by instrument of appointment by the Administrator or the minister in the place of acting judges.

Accordingly, there has only been partial compliance with the requirements of section 53(1) and 61 of the *Local Court Act* since May 2016.

This issue affects both civil and criminal matters in various jurisdictions of the local court. The jurisdictions includes the work health court, the Youth Justice Court, care and protection of children matters and domestic violence matters.

There is considerable public interest in upholding the validity of the appointment of local court judge despite a defect in the process of appointment.

It is certainly preferred not to cast doubt on the judicial conduct of the decision-making of the judge and consequently to undermine public confidence in the local court as a whole.

These were errors that were made when the new act was put in place and when we became aware of it we sought immediate steps to audit and rectify it, and that is why this bill has been brought before the House on urgency.

I gave notice and introduced this bill last week. Department officials kindly made themselves available to brief Opposition and Independent members and I thank them for taking up the offers of those briefings during particularly busy sittings period, and as I indicated last week, I would wait until today, the last sitting day of this sittings to bring the bill back for debate.

The bill makes amendments to the *Local Court Act* sections 53 and 60 which will be amended by replacing the words Gazette Notice with Instrument. This means the appointment of local court judges will take place by instrument rather than publication of a notice in the Gazette.

The amendment to remove Appointment by Gazette will bring consistency between the Local Court and the Supreme Court, where judges are appointed by commission with no requirements to gazette. Traditionally, the appointment of both Supreme Court and Local Court judges is a matter which receives publicity in the press, the legal profession and the community generally. It is not anticipated that will change with the removal of the appointment by Gazette. An Appointment by Instrument is more an administratively efficient process and a process that officiates the appointment.

The majority of other jurisdictions do not specify the Instrument of Appointment required for the appointment of Lower Court judges. They instead, detail the terms and conditions to be contained in the Instrument. In Western Australia and New South Wales the appointment of a magistrate is by commission under the public seal of the state. The appointment of a federal magistrate is to be appointed by the Governor-General by commission. Magistrates are generally appointed by the Governor in other jurisdictions with the exception of the ACT, where magistrates are appointed by the executive. Other jurisdictions do not require a gazette notice to appoint a magistrate.

Section 67a will insert into the *Local Court Act*, which provides that the court's exercise of its jurisdiction is not affected only by reason of a defect in the appointment of the judge or acting judge. This amendment ensures that any decisions made by Local Court judges does not become invalid due to this administrative oversight. This is an important aspect of the bill, to provide the community with assurance that decisions made by the Local Court will be upheld.

A new section Part 7A will be inserted which consists of new sections 81A–81C. New section 81A identifies a particular judicial appointments to which the validation applies. New section 81B validates the appointments themselves and section 81C together with section 67A, validates all acts, judgements or exercises of power made under those particular judicial appointments.

The new part will validate both the appointment and the actions of the affected local court judges, in particular section 81C, together with section 67A, will confirm the validity of all acts, judgements or exercise the powers made under the powers made under those particular judicial appointments.

The legislation will provide certainty for the Local Court judges and the people affected by their decisions. There is no (inaudible) equivalent of the proposed amendment of part 7A of the *Local Court Act*.

It should be noted that the bill does not interfere with the right to a fair and public criminal trial or hearing of a civil proceeding matter. The bill does not affect the right of review. A person's right of review remains applicable where there is a question of the legal soundness of judgment.

The legislation will commence on the day on which the Administrator's assent is declared. We are debating this bill on urgency and I thank the Parliament for allowing that. The timing is urgent to effect the validity of the decisions of several Local Court judges since May 2016, when the legislation was passed by the previous government.

The Local Court judges, deputy chief judge and acting judges affected by the issue, but unaware of it, have to otherwise taken the oaths they require to which is: the promise or swear to well and truly serve in office. They have held themselves out and were held out by the institution of the Local Court as judges. They have carried out the daily proceedings in which a judge sits and acts with its associated ceremony and traditions

visible to litigants and the public. They have delivered justice to Territorians and have served our community well.

Passage of the bill will give certainty to the legal decision-making processes in the Northern Territory and maintain a public confidence in the Local Court as a whole. The bill gives certainty to the community that the decisions of those judges have been made, will not be set aside or invalidated and it is important that the community has confidence and certainty in our court system and this bill will do that.

I thank the Member for Nelson for his support. He asked a question about the doctrine. It is a common-law principle upheld by Australian courts. I hope that provides further explanation to the question. We cannot speak in debate, unless we want to go to committee stage which I would welcome, but the advice I have got from the legal people supporting me in the Chamber—and also in drafting this bill and bringing this forward to debate—the de fact office, the doctrine is that common-law principle upheld by courts around Australia.

The courts are an important part of our community. Territorians expect and need a judicial system which is operating to best practice. This government is reforming the justice system and we need to ensure that our court decision-makers are appointed in the correct manner.

I acknowledge the staff of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, who have provided me with clear guidance on resolving this outstanding matter from over two years ago. I also thank the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. It is additional pressure when they are asked to prepare a bill to be debated on urgency.

I thank the members who have contributed to debate and fully understood the bill on urgency. They can have confidence in it.

Madam Speaker, 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 that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

PAPER TABLED

Inquiry into Options for the Reform of Political Funding and Donations in the Northern Territory, Final Report, Commissioner John Mansfield, June 2018

Continued from 14 August 2018.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I welcome Commissioner Mansfield's final report on the Inquiry into Options for the Reform of Political Funding and Donations in the Northern Territory. The report is a major milestone in the government's pre-election commitment to restore the trust of the community in our Territory democracy. The findings and recommendations set out in the report will inform debate on reform of the policy and legislative provisions that underpin funding of political parties and candidates, disclosure of donations and regulation of expenditure on election campaigns.

When I moved the motion to establish the inquiry into political funding and donations reform I mentioned four fundamental elements of a democracy functioning in the public interest. These foundation stones are:

1. a universal franchise under which all eligible citizens have the opportunity to enrol and vote
2. fair electoral boundaries based on the principle of one vote, one value, drawn up by an independent redistribution committee free from political influence
3. free and fair elections conducted by impartial and independent electoral officials
4. an open and transparent reporting system for the disclosure of donations to political parties, candidates and associated entities.

All these foundation stones underpin the government's broader electoral reform agenda. The last of the four elements is the essential focus of the report the Assembly is considering today.

An overriding consideration in the government's response to the report is to re-establish public confidence in the electoral process. Community confidence in our institutions and political processes was substantially eroded by the activities of Foundation 51, the only entity found by Commissioner Mansfield to have breached disclosure provisions of the NT *Electoral Act*.

More broadly, the Territory community, political parties and candidates, and even donors themselves have recognised the need for enhanced transparency, accountability and fairness in our political funding and donations legislation. In summary, there is widespread acceptance that the current arrangements for political donations and disclosure are broken and need to be fixed in the public interest.

With respect to consultation of proposed amendments to the *Electoral Act*, the Labor government's approach stands in stark contrast of that of the former CLP government. Honourable members will recall how the CLP rammed legislation through the House based on perceived political advantage to implement optional preferential voting less than six months out from a general election. By contrast, our approach to electoral reform has been consultative and transparent.

In regard to political funding and donation reform, we issued a discussion paper to inform policy debate prior to the last general election. We introduced a motion to appoint a commissioner to inquire into relevant matters with wide terms of reference. The commissioner released a discussion paper on political funding and donations reform, and invited submissions on the key aspects of his inquiry. He also consulted with political parties, Members of the Legislative Assembly, candidates and the general public.

Recent developments in political funding and donation reform and other Australian jurisdictions have also informed Commissioner Mansfield's final report. The commissioner stated in his report that there was a strong trend apparent in Australian jurisdictions to achieve electoral fairness and transparency by a combination of caps on electoral expenditure of political parties and candidates for election; the funding of electoral campaigning by a political party and candidates for election; the regulation of the extent of political donations; and timely transparency in the making of political donations. In my view, this is a very important observation because there is no single solution to the deficiencies inherent in the current legislative regime for political funding and donations.

A combination of interrelated elements will be required to implement fairness, transparency and accountability in the Territory's legislative provisions of political funding and donations. This is the approach adopted in the inquiry's final report, and I now turn the key recommendations set out therein.

Caps on electoral expenditure. In the Northern Territory there are currently no limits imposed spending by parties, candidates or associated entities during election campaigns. One rationale for expenditure caps is that they reduce the reliance of political parties and candidates on private donations, which could potentially influence decision making in public office or create a perception of a nexus between public decision making and donations.

A number of submissions to the inquiry recommended specific caps. The Northern Territory Electoral Commission suggested a cap of \$40 000 per candidate with party pooling available. An additional \$10 000–\$20 000 would be made available in rural and remote electorates.

The inquiry has recommended should introduce a cap on electoral expenditure in elections calculated by an allowance of \$40 000 per endorsed candidate in the case of registered political parties, and fixed at \$40 000 for each unendorsed candidate to be indexed.

Commissioner Mansfield accepted the suggested cap of \$40 000 but instead of additional caps for rural and remote electorates. The commissioner's preferred approach is to exclude the costs incurred for travel during election campaigns from the definition of election expenditure.

The inquiry also recommended that expenditure should be capped at a total of \$1m for parties, with candidates campaigning in all 25 electorates. Electoral expenditure will be capped in election years, provided the parties and candidates have opted to participate in the public funding benefits recommended in the final report.

The government recognises the potential role of spending caps in the reform of provisions for political expenditure and donations, and supports these recommendations in principle. Our final concrete decision on the recommendations will be informed by the contribution of members during this debate.

Recently, there has been considerable disquiet in the Territory about the extent to which parties and candidates rely on private donations to fund election campaigns—this is the next section of Mansfield's report.

This concern was crystallised by the failure of Foundation 51 to comply with mandated disclosure arrangements in relation to donations received totalled hundreds of thousands of dollars. Public funding complements expenditure caps as a key element in reducing the reliance of parties and candidates on corporate and individual donors.

There are no provisions in the NT *Electoral Act* for public funding. With the exception of Tasmania, all other Australian jurisdictions candidates receive some form of public funding.

The inquiry's final report observes that public funding should be a [inaudible] and incentivises parties and candidates to opt-in to the public funding scheme and the complementary expenditure caps. In the government's view, this is a reasonable and balanced approach to the funding model.

Commissioner Mansfield has recommended that registered political parties and unendorsed candidates receive public funding in election years to reimburse them for campaign expenses, provided they submit to the expenditure cap. Consistent with the funding model suggested by NTEC, Commissioner Mansfield recommend a funding level of \$8 per first preference vote. The level of funding should be indexed.

The availability of public funding to each registered political party and to each unendorsed candidate should depend on that party or candidate electing to participate in the public funding of an election. The government accepts the principle that public funding will reduce the reliance of parties or candidates on private donors, enhancing transparency through related reporting arrangements.

In the element of the inquiry's final report that goes to donations to political parties, Commissioner Mansfield states:

...there is a strong case for imposing a cap on political donations. First, despite the fact that I have not found any example of a political donation improperly influencing political policy or administrative decision making, the submissions and interviews show that many reasonable citizens do reasonably suspect that occurs.

When the level of political donations is less controlled, there may be some loss of integrity in the political system. As I said previously, an overriding consideration of the government in responding to the report is to re-establish public confidence in the electoral process.

Commissioner has expressed the view that donations to registered political parties should be capped at \$5000 or \$10 000 per year, and \$2000 for party-endorsed candidates. Independent candidates should be able to receive donations at the level of the cap applied to parties.

Donations to registered political parties and to individual candidates for election should be regularly reported to the Northern Territory Electoral Commission, and be disclosed by the NTEC as soon as practical on receipt of those reports.

The government upholds the view that capping political donations will reduce election expenditure and the reliance of parties and candidates on private donations. We also support more frequent reporting of donations to the NTEC.

We support the inquiry's recommendations on political donations in principle and also agree that there is no need to change the definition of 'associated entity' in the act.

Enforcement of sanctions. Recent experience in relation to Foundation 51 also suggests certain provisions of the *Electoral Act* should be changed to extend the time in which any prosecution for contravention of the act may be instituted and to facilitate the speedy imposition of penalties for contravention of the act by the Electoral Commission.

Contraventions of the electoral act: the inquiry Terms of Reference 7, 8 and 9 required the investigation of past conduct by certain entities possibly constitution contravention of the *Electoral Act* which may have exposed improper influence on the formation of political policy or the making of executive and administrative decisions as identified to the inquiry.

As I mentioned earlier, the only breach of the *Electoral Act* identified by the inquiry concerned the conduct of Foundation 51 in relation to its failure to report its donations, or the value of its donations, to the CLP in the period between 2011 and 2014. Other conduct investigated did not reveal any improper conduct. But, in the final report of ill-conduct which, in the inquiry's view:

... reasonable members of the public could reasonably have attribute to improper influence on the making of political policy or executive and administrative decisions.

In my view, whilst breaches of the *Electoral Act* or other statutes were not identified, such perceptions are inimical to the public confidence in the electoral process and reaffirm the need to reform political funding and disclosure policy and practice.

Next steps: the government has embarked on a reform agenda for political funding and disclosure and we will see it through. The community expects us to do so and it is the right thing to do for our Territory democracy. We are more than prepared to consider the views of members of this Assembly, political parties, candidates and the wider community as we finalise the specific provisions of our political reform agenda.

Next year I will introduce amendments to the *Electoral Act* to enact the key elements of our public funding and disclose reforms. The final report of the inquiry has made an essential and substantial contribution to this process which will restore public confidence in our democratic institutions and their operation.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the government, I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Commissioner Mansfield for the consultations he has undertaken and the findings and recommendations set out in his inquiry's final report. I am all honourable members will join me by extending their appreciation to Commissioner Mansfield.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move that the report be noted.

MOTION

Note Paper – Inquiry into Options for the Reform of Political Funding and Donations in the Northern Territory

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister. The Mansfield inquiry report into the options for the reform of political funding and donations in the Northern Territory includes a total of 31 recommendations. Following tabling of the report, the government announced it accepted, in principle, the five main recommendations of the inquiry.

The inquiry made no concluding findings as to whether particular entities or groups of donors should be banned from making political donations or whether there should be a cap on the level of political donations.

A cap on how much parties and candidates can spend on a campaign: the Mansfield recommendation was the introduction of an index cap on electoral expenditure of \$40 000 per year endorsed or unendorsed candidate. In the NT there are currently no limits imposed on spending by parties, candidates or associated entities during election campaigns. Imposing a limit on spending may lead to a reduced reliance on political donations.

The inquiry found that there is general agreement that there should be a cap on how much parties and candidates can spend on a campaign. The NT government has indicated that it agrees with the intent of the inquiry's recommendation to introduce a cap on electoral expenditure. It should be noted that the cap will need to be determined subject to the definition of the electoral expenditure in section 199 of the *Electoral Act*. As recommended by the inquiry the government has indicated that it will review this definition, taking into consideration whether travel and accommodation expenses that may be incurred by candidates in rural and remote electorates should be excluded or included as an election expense.

The NT government has also indicated that it agrees with the intent of the inquiry's recommendation and access to public funding should be conditional upon compliance with an electoral expenditure cap as well as any requirements regarding electoral donations and disclosure returns.

A cap on political donations: the Mansfield recommendation is to introduce an index cap on political donations of \$5000 or \$10 000 per year. There are currently no caps on monetary donations in the NT, except for those given by anonymous donors.

The inquiry has recommended that the introduction of an index cap on donations to registered political parties and individual candidates. The report proposed \$5000 or \$10 000 per year but described these levels as tentative.

The NT Government has indicated it supports the introduction of an index cap on donations to political parties and candidates and is seeing public comment regarding the appropriate level of such a cap. As an example, New South Wales has annual caps of donations of \$6300 to party and \$2800 to candidates. Earlier this year Victoria introduced a cap on donations of \$4000 per donor for each four-year election period.

In determining the level of any cap on donations, consideration should be given to how the level of political donations may impact on the integrity of the electoral system as well as the reduced need for political donations if public funding is provided.

The third recommendation is regarding partial public funding of political parties and candidates in an election. The provision of a partial public funding on an opt-in basis of political parties and candidates of \$8—to be indexed—per first preference vote received by candidates, provided that the candidates receive at least 4% of the formal first preference votes in the electorate sought to represent and the party and candidates submit to the electoral expenditure cap.

The primary reason for public funding is to reduce the perceived or actual influence of private money on elections and public policy. All other Australian jurisdictions except Tasmania provide a form of public funding to candidates. There is no public funding provided to parties or candidates in the NT.

The inquiry has proposed the introduction of a partial and opt-in public funding model for the NT. Candidates and/or parties would be required to opt in to receive public funding and comply with any electoral expenditure cap. The recommended level of funding is:

\$8 (to be indexed) per first preference vote received by that candidate, provided that the candidate received at least 4% of the formal first preference votes in the electorate which that candidate sought to represent.

The funding would be limited to an amount required to reimburse expenditure only. Recipients would not be able to make a profit from public funding. The proposed 4% qualification threshold is consistent with all other jurisdictions that provide public funding except Queensland, which has a 6% threshold.

The inquiry report notes that public funding is likely to create an expectation by the public that electoral expenditure will be regulated. The report also notes that linking access to these funds to disclosure obligations may increase rates of compliance by candidates and parties with statutory requirements.

The introduction of a partial public funding model, including the use of a qualification threshold to determine eligibility to access funds is supported by the NT Government. The adoption of an opt-in public funding model is also supported by the government with access to funding to be conditional upon compliance with any electoral expenditure cap as well as any requirement regarding electoral donations and disclosure returns.

The inquiry report notes that the NT Electoral Commission suggested the adoption of a public funding model using the ACT level of funding of \$8 per first preference vote. The report also notes that a different level of funding could be applied provided that it is at a level which incentivises the political parties and individual candidates to opt in to the public funding scheme and complementary expenditure cap.

The fourth recommendation is the improvements to reporting requirements and disclosure returns in election years and the lead up to polling day.

The fifth recommendation supported by government is the reforms to ensure compliance of associated entities and third parties with the *Electoral Act*.

A Mansfield recommendation was about increased reporting requirements for disclosure returns in election years in the lead up to the polling day.

I have indicated to the Chief Minister that I am prepared to work through these recommendations with him to achieve the best outcome for all concerned and the best outcome to suit the Northern Territory.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I support tabling Commissioner Mansfield's final report in to the options for reform of political funding and donations in the Northern Territory.

As we have heard from the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, this was an inquiry moved by motion in the House and also this was something that we had as a policy paper before the election and we have since put that in place.

It marks an important election commitment reached by the Territory Labor government around restoring trust to Territorians—a commitment we made before the election.

It is the right and decent thing to do that Territorians are entitled to have confidence that government policy and decisions are in the long-term public interest of the community and are not tainted by secret donations which potentially can mean decisions are made in the private interest of a few.

Equally, building trust in government is critical as we work across this parliament to implement the complex policy changes facing the Northern Territory creating jobs in a difficult economic time, investing in children to delivery health well-educated Territorians and creating a safer community.

These are all the challenges that rely on the trust of the Territorians in their government. That is why from the first moment someone wishes to enter in to this Chamber that they have trust in the processes around that. That is why the motion moved by the Chief Minister to set up the inquiry was so important.

The inquiry examines compliance with the *Northern Territory Electoral Act* of donations made to political parties and candidates over the past 10 years. I encourage people if they wish to should read this report. It is certainly interesting reading and important for our democracy.

The Terms of Reference for the inquiry in to political donations examined:

1. *Should there be a cap on how much parties can spend on a campaign, how it should be calculated and what other details should be considered.*
2. *Whether or not 'full' or 'partial' public funding of political parties and candidates should be provided.*
3. *If a 'partial' public funding scheme is considered preferable, recommendations as to a potential model, the basis upon which such funding is to be provided and whether a threshold for such funding should be adopted ...*
4. *What is the appropriate level to cap the value of political donations to parties, groups, candidates, elected members and third party campaigners; what methodology should be used to determine that cap; what measures should be put in place to ensure that any caps are effective.*
5. *Whether the current donations disclosure requirements are appropriate including potential changes to the method, timing and publication of disclosures.*
6. *What controls should apply to the making of political donations ...*
7. *Whether there have been any breaches of the Northern Territory Electoral Act (NT) (the Act) in relation to donations made to political parties and candidates in the Northern Territory over the last 10 years.*
8. Any legislative or regulatory amendments that could be made to ensure that limits on political donations and disclosure requirements cannot be avoided through the use of third parties, associated entities or other means ...
9. Any other matters relevant to political funding and donations.

The finds and recommendations in Commissioner Mansfield's report will inform the development and reform of policy and legislation that underpin the funding of political parties, candidates and the regulation and expenditure on election campaigns and the disclosure of political donations.

Commissioner Mansfield was comprehensive in his approach to this inquiry—and you can certainly see that reading the report.

Consulting with and interviewing over 35 individuals, examining 14 written submissions and undertaking relevant jurisdictional analysis. He consulted with the members of the Legislative Assembly, political parties, candidates and the public.

Turning to Commissioner Mansfield's report—it provides a series of recommendations—we have accepted the five key recommendations in principle.

A cap on how much political parties and candidates can spend on a campaign, cap on political donations, the partial public funding of political parties and candidates in election, improvements to reporting requirements and disclosure returns in election years and the lead up to polling day. Reforms to ensure compliance with associated entities and third parties with the *Electoral Act*.

There are currently no caps on the amount that a party or a candidate can spend during an election campaign. Commissioner Mansfield recommended that a cap on the electoral expenditure during elections be calculated as an allowance of \$40 000 for each endorsed candidate.

Recognising the remote nature of the Northern Territory electorates, it was recommended that an election expenditure be excluded from this amount. The inquiry also recommended that a total expenditure of \$1m be in place to parties with candidates campaigning in all electorates across the Northern Territory. We accept this recommendation in principle.

In relation to public funding of election campaigns, the enquiry made recommendations because there is no provision for public funding currently in the *Northern Territory Electoral Act*. Interestingly, and the Chief Minister referred to this, with the exception of Tasmania, all other Australian jurisdictions have some form of public funding for candidates.

Commissioner Mansfield has recommended a model that would see registered political parties and unendorsed candidates receive public funding in election years in order to reimburse them for campaign costs, provided it meets the expenditure cap. This model is consistent with the NT Electoral Commission's recommended funding level of \$8 per first preference vote.

Clearly the availability of public funding would reduce the reliance on private donations and increase transparency associated with election campaigns. We have accepted this recommendation in principle.

The enquiry made further recommendations in relation to capping donations made to political parties and candidates. Commissioner Mansfield recommended that donations should be registered to political parties and individual candidates and should be indexed to \$5000 or \$10 000 per year and \$2000 per party endorsed candidates.

The Territory Labor government is of the view that capping political donations will reduce election expenditure and the reliance on parties and candidates on private donations. A measure we believe towards increased transparency. We support further disclosure requirements in respect of donations to the NT Electoral Commission.

A further recommendation in Commissioner Mansfield's report relates to the provisions in the *Northern Territory Electoral Act*.

To extend the time within which any prosecution for contravention of the Act may be instituted and to facilitate the speedy imposition of penalties for contravention of the Act by the Electoral Commission.

The enquiry was tasked to look at past conducted entities which may have breached sections of the *Electoral Act*—either through improper conduct or undue influence. As noted by the Chief Minister, the only *Electoral Act* breaches identified concern of the conduct of Foundation 51, in relation to its failure to report the value of its donations to the CLP between 2011–14.

While the conduct did not disclose improper conduct, the enquiry revealed conduct which a reasonable member of the public could have attributed to improper influence on the making of political policy or administrative decisions.

Electoral reform is not something new—Commissioner Mansfield's report outlined what reforms and enquiries had been undertaken across Australia, at both state and federal level. We have all been through a political campaign and would have different experiences. There are people who have been in this Chamber previously and people who have run for Parliament and have not had the privilege of being elected.

We need resources to share messages, what you represent and who you are. We need to make sure we put in place measures that ensure there is no undue influence. That those decisions are made in the long-term interest of the Northern Territory. Not just the short-term interests of those who are able to potentially make a donation and then influence decision or policy.

As a government, we need to restore trust in government process. We need to look back and learn from what has come before, on all sides of Parliament. We need to rebuild trust and the first step is acknowledging this report's recommendations.

Foundation 51 was set up for the primary purpose of side-stepping the electoral law—that is on the record. Voters want an electoral process that is transparent and stands up to scrutiny of the highest form. A major part of this is how election campaigns are funded. Territorians are entitled to know and have confidence that the public interest is coming first.

We have all accepted donations and we declare those—they might be from family, friends or people that want to support you, believe in the views and want to see those policies. We need to have trust and integrity and openness and accountability are essential for business confidence and the economic certainty to provide the best environment to create jobs.

We had decisions, in the past, that one would question that they were made in the short-term interest of a few and actions which eroded the trust in government. It is no secret that there was a lot of mistrust from the public in how political parties and candidates raised money for election campaigns, in particular Foundation 51.

Foundation 51 was the only entity found by Commissioner Mansfield found to have breached disclosure obligations under the NT *Electoral Act*.

We have always been clear that our decisions will be based on public interest and not on those who have the deepest pockets.

We thank Commissioner Mansfield for his work on this important report and things will certainly follow from the debate today.

We as a government are working to ensure the transparency and fairness that all Territorians expect.

I commend the report to the house.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I will speak on a few things in Mansfield's report.

I think that anyone who looks at the way elections have been held in the Northern Territory over many years would wonder if, at times, we have an open and transparent system to elect members of this parliament. The main concern for many is the influence of political donations, which can apply to both sides of this parliament as well as independents.

I hope from this report that real or perceived influence disappears from our voting system in the Northern Territory. People should know the candidates they elect will not be influenced by donations from various groups, and that they will make decisions based on good governance for the benefit of the people of the Northern Territory. This is what is required when one takes the oath in this parliament.

I do not support the public funding of elections. Though large in electorate area size, the Territory is small relative to the rest of Australia—the populations of our electorates are about 5500.

In my travels to Canada to look at the processes in the North West Territories and Nunavut, I believe the system in there—with large electorates with low populations—where there is a cap on each person standing for election.

The problem I have with the public purse helping people stand in elections is what does that have to do with a person standing for election? If you are going to stand for election then you will know that you will incur costs in that election—you will need to travel, advertise your name, attend meetings and buy equipment. You would hope a person who stood for election would know these things would need to be incurred—like in any other business.

If I want to start up a business, I know that will incur some costs. I do not expect the government to give me money to start up that business. In the same way, if I want to stand for parliament I know there will be costs I have to incur. I am not sure why Territorians have to put in money to assist in that area.

I think the cap of \$40 000 is reasonable. I do not spend anywhere near that amount in an election campaign. Obviously, electorates are different sizes and there are issues in relation to that. I believe in Nunavut, where an electorate has remote communities, they may be able to apply for some extra funding but the cap for all candidates is the same whether they are in a small or large electorate.

I have always been concerned about the influence of certain groups in our community who donate to political parties. When I made my submission to Justice Mansfield, I quoted from the New South Wales *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosure Act* which prohibits land developers or tobacco, alcohol or gambling industries from giving money to election candidates.

People might remember that some years ago that a number of people from the Liberal side of politics who got into some serious trouble for receiving donations either too much above the limit those donations should be, or from people who were not supposed to give donations.

I could say that by having a cap for each person it is less likely you will get that influence, but I am not sure that is the case, especially if money is pooled. Commissioner Mansfield said that, on the other hand, there will be a cap on the size of the donation. That may be enough to allay my fears about certain groups being able to donate to political parties and using that influence later on when decisions are being made by government.

Perhaps the cap on donations would help me overcome my fears about the undue influence there may be on political candidates if they get elected, especially if those people then ask government to make decisions which may influence or help the people who gave donations.

I went through as much as I could last night in regard to the Mansfield report. I read issues regarding Foundation 51. Whether we like it or not, it is history. Nothing will change that. It highlights the fact the whole process of electoral donations—the way parties are supported has to be much more transparent. That applies to the Labor Party, which gets a lot of its funds from the unions. I do not have any idea how much financial influence unions have on the Labor Party.

I get annoyed when I am looking for details on what money was spent to help political parties—those rules are different to someone wanting to find out what donations were given to me. The law is different for political parties than it is for Independents.

Commissioner Mansfield mentions a change in the recommendations, but I believe all people are elected as individuals. The rules of declaring donations, whether it is to the party or themselves, should be on the same basis for all. Some people have said that donations should be put up electronically before the election so people can see then, not after the election, who is donating to that candidate. I think that has merit. The only problem is that today we have early polling. People could donate to you in the last week, therefore some people would not see it. You have to presume that people will be looking to see where those donations are—they might not even be bothered looking.

I thank the government for checking out the issue of political donations in the Northern Territory. Some of this will relate to the electoral reform in the Territory. If you are standing up for an election, you stand on your own two feet. You do not need the public purse to help you do that. I think all candidates should be regarded as equal when it comes to an election. The cap makes that equal, whether you spend that money—that is your business. But if you are standing, you know the total amount of money you can spend, and so be it. Whether you spend \$10 000 or \$20 000 is your business.

I would prefer no public input to the cost of my election. I hope the issue of capping donations is something the government goes ahead with. I hope the recommendation is taken up regarding the capping of how much money a candidate can spend.

I thank Mr Mansfield for his report. That is all I have to say on the issue.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Arafura Games

Mr VOWLES (Arafura Games)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I apologise to the Assembly for the statement not being distributed until later yesterday after 5 pm as specified in Sessional Order 8. Thank you to everyone in the Chamber.

It is an exciting time to speak about the Arafura Games. Bringing back the Arafura Games was a clear commitment. For over two decades, the Arafura Games were part and parcel of the fabric of the Northern Territory. It was something that we, as Territorians, looked forward to every two years.

The Territory Labor government is bringing back the Arafura Games. The Arafura Games, as members would recall, was a multi-sporting event which saw able-bodied and disabled athletes participate across a number of different sports.

My favourite was cricket, for obvious reasons, but there are plenty of other great sports to be played and watched. I particularly enjoyed watching sepak takraw boxing. Many Territorians were also there viewing those fantastic, exciting and quite amazing sports.

Like the Masters Games in Alice Springs, the Arafura Games is an event for all Territorians. The Arafura Games will see people travel from regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory to be part of the games. We are creating opportunity for all Territorians, as well as international competitors to be here to participate. Our government understands the importance of the Arafura Games, not only for sport but also for local jobs and local economic activity.

As the Territory, we are diverse. We have Aboriginal Territorians whose ancestors have been on this country for tens of thousands of years, to the people who have moved interstate, through to the people who come from overseas. We welcome all of you. The Arafura Games celebrates all of us.

I want to give Territorians, particularly those who might not be familiar with the Arafura Games, some background and history of this exciting event. The Arafura Games has a long history in the Northern Territory dating back to when the first games were held in 1991 under the then CLP Chief Minister, Marshall Perron. At the time Chief Minister Marshall Perron was quoted in the media saying:

The festival represents the Territory government's commitment to the development of sport for Territorians and comes from a desire to strengthen ties with our northern neighbours.

As the Minister for the Arafura Games in 2018, I agree with those words.

When the games first started in 1991, they were known as the Arafura Sports Festival before changing in 1997 to what we know it as today, the Arafura Games. The games continued throughout the 1990s and into the turn of the century under Chief Ministers Shane Stone, Denis Burke, Clare Martin and Paul Henderson, with the last instalment of the games being held in 2011.

Many of us on this side of the House were shocked at the time the newly-elected CLP government deferred the Arafura Games just over nine weeks after their election in 2012. This decision coincidentally occurred when the Renewal Management Board had just been appointed by the then Chief Minister, Terry Mills. The games were then put in the 'too-hard basket' and cancelled by former CLP Chief Minister, Adam Giles—a terrible decision. Unfortunately the Arafura Games was just another casualty of that CLP government. I remember, for example, the then minister in a speech saying that not one volunteer had registered. In fact, registrations had not even opened at the time.

Notably, as an opposition we heard the message loud and clear from Territorians—people were unhappy about the decision. We love our great Territory lifestyle and the Arafura Games, which is part of that lifestyle. Very significantly, we heard from the Chamber of Commerce NT that this CLP decision had left a \$10m hole in our local economy. I ask members to reflect on that. Think of the lost jobs, especially in tourism and hospitality. Think of the cost to our economy for hotels, our retail businesses, and more generally across all our outward looking visitor focused sectors.

Soon after the CLP's decision, Territory Labor made the commitment to Territorians that we would bring back the Arafura Games. I stood in front of the media and all Territorians as the shadow minister and said a Territory Labor government would bring back the Arafura Games. As a Government, we are now delivering on that promise.

Government is about teamwork, which was badly lacking under the former CLP government. I am the Minister for the Arafura Games, but I am also part of a team dedicated to delivering on our election commitments. Listening to the community is at the forefront of our work.

As a government, we are doing everything we can to see that the community has input into progressing the Arafura Games. We have undertaken an extensive community consultation process which consisted of an online survey and a number of written submissions

I sincerely thank the Member for Sanderson, the assistant minister for bringing back the Arafura Games for working with the community on bringing back the games.

The survey was open between 10 February and 18 March 2017 and was promoted widely across social media, printed media, radio, flyers and word of mouth. From the survey we received 193 responses—broken down into 143 community responses, nine tourism responses, 29 association or club responses, three arts and culture responses and nine business responses.

Some of the aspects that people liked were that it was an international sporting competition with a variety of sports, it generated community spirit and a multicultural ‘festival’ atmosphere around Darwin. Some of the suggestions of how we can improve the Arafura Games included defining the focus and direction of the games including the level of competition and the countries and sports involved. There have also been some suggestions for some improvements in the scheduling of events. The survey also consisted of questions around which countries to include, the time of year the games should be held, the frequency of the games and obviously which sports to include.

We also called for submissions from sport clubs that wished to be included in the Arafura Games. Through the submissions process and the survey, we identified 16 sports to be included in the games: athletics, table tennis, boxing, football, soccer, badminton, swimming, tennis, muay-thai, sailing, indoor and beach volleyball, weightlifting, basketball, hockey, netball, sepak takraw and dragon boating.

Through this survey process our government has listened to the community to understand their values, issues and vision, which in turn has helped guide the format of the new and improved Arafura Games. In bringing back the Arafura Games we also established the Arafura Games advisory committee.

The members of the advisory committee include:

- Andrew Hopper from the Department of Tourism and Culture as Chair of the committee
- our fantastic assistant minister for the Arafura Games, Kate Worden, as the government representative
- Tim Watsford, General Manager of NT Major Events
- Mark Hunt from Landbridge Australia
- Trevor Cox, General Manager of Tourism Top End
- Louise Partos, Executive Officer at Artback NT
- Stacey Farroway, Director International at Charles Darwin University
- Judith O’Hearn OAM, who has extensive experience throughout sport and education
- Sean Mahoney CEO of the International College of Advanced Education
- Jeannette Button who has extensive experience throughout public relations
- Matt Grassmayr from the City of Darwin
- Mick Hannon who sits as a director on the board of the Hannon Group
- Sam Burke General Manager of the Darwin Waterfront Corporation.

With the array of experience each of these people bring, their responsibility will be to oversee the operational planning of the Arafura Games.

I again thank the hard-working assistant minister for the Arafura Games, the Member for Sanderson, Kate Worden for her hard work. Her role was pivotal in bringing back the Arafura Games through her work the steering committee and now as the government representative on the advisory committee.

The Arafura Games will return on the 26 April with a fantastic opening celebration held at our magnificent Waterfront Precinct. The competition dates are the 27 April to 4 May 2019 with a closing celebration to be held on the evening of 4 May.

We will see 8 days of fantastic competition spread between the Waterfront Precinct, Marrara Sports Precinct, the Parap Pool, and the Darwin Sailing Club in Fannie Bay. There will be 16 sports or 17 disciplines that will be conducted across 11 venues. There will be free entry to all Arafura Games events.

Athlete registration opened last Friday and additional event information became available through the Arafura Games website.

We are currently working on a new and improved design for the Arafura Games mascot, which I hope to be able to reveal in the coming weeks. We have already uploaded the new logo when we relaunched the Arafura Games. The black dots underneath the logo represent the night sky; the blue, our pristine ocean; orange, our sunburnt country; green, our tropical surrounds; and yellow, the endless sunshine we enjoy. A fantastic logo to rebrand the Arafura Games.

We are also working through some challenges. In the eight years that have passed since the last Arafura Games were held and things have moved forward. For example, there is an ever-growing demand for security at large scale events like this. That is just an unfortunate consequence of some of the challenges of our time.

We know that under the former CLP Government our bus services were privatised. This makes transport more challenging and expensive than in previous Arafura Games. Based on participation information from previous games, we estimate we could see over 1500 athletes in Darwin to participate in the Arafura Games.

This comes with significant workforce and volunteer requirement, as we estimate 1200 people will be required to ensure a seamless competition. We call on you if you have any time available in that week, please register as a volunteer for the Arafura Games—a fantastic event to showcase the Top End. Please go to arafuragames.nt.gov.au to register your interest. You will be warmly received and looked after.

As the shadow sports minister when the previous games were scrapped, I was contacted by hundreds of people who had volunteered. This included one gentleman who had volunteered at the first games who told me he would have a stall in the mall and in Casuarina to petition to bring back the Arafura Games. This elderly gentleman did that. This reinforced to me the importance to volunteers of the Arafura Games to showcase the Territory and be involved in something bigger than they are used to.

To date 10 countries who have formally accepted our invitation and intend to send a delegation. These include China, the Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Macau–China, Tuvalu and Vietnam.

In respect of China, we also have competitors coming from at least five provinces. We will have a situation, where we will have athletes representing China and the provinces within China, a fantastic commitment by China.

I want to make a few comments, get some quotes and take the time to acknowledge the incredible hard work of the tourism minister in securing direct flights to the Northern Territory—perfect timing for the Arafura Games.

I was fortunate to be on that flight with the Minister for Tourism and Culture—the excitement of everyone on that flight and the opportunities to have a direct flight from China to the Northern Territory. It will increase our tourism and it is a brilliant announcement in regards to the Arafura Games.

A lot of work into it and I thank the minister, her staff and department—because now people from Hong Kong and China have a direct flight in to the Northern Territory. It will boost the opportunities for people to participate in the Arafura Games—after the games people usually hang around and have an opportunity to see the environment we have to offer in the Northern Territory, especially in the Top End, Kakadu, Buley Rockhole, Litchfield, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Having a direct flight is boosting the opportunities for athletes and for China to participate in the games. Congratulations, well-done. We do not get many thanks in this job, nor should we expect them, we just get on with it. That is a magnificent bit of work Minister for Tourism and Culture.

When we released information about the Arafura Games in China, Austin Chin, president of the Chung Wah Society—Darwin's largest Chinese community—said they are right behind the Arafura Games. Mr Chin said:

The Chung Wah Society is a social and sporting club, and we are pleased to see the Arafura Games return, they are a great community event.

We all are involved in the Arafura Games and it is great to read the Chung Wah Society are looking forward to the games coming back next year.

We also have eight other countries who have provided verbal advice that they intend to participate in the Games. We have had confirmation by most of the states and territory, they will participate. We will have a local, interstate and international content, which is what we are trying to achieve.

I am hoping that over the coming months we can formalise some conversations with other countries that have given verbal advice they will be attending and I will provide an update to the House.

We recently received advice that the International Federation of Muaythai intend to send over 250 athletes and teams from over 30 nations. This is a fantastic announcement and a massive boost to the Arafura Games. The games will be used as a qualifying event for the Muaythai World Championships in Birmingham in 2021. We cannot underestimate what a big announcement and commitment. When you have 250 athletes they all need coaches, support staff and sports trainers, which means more people coming to the Territory, and I thank the Muaythai Federation for their amazing commitment to the Arafura Games.

The Oceania Paralympic Committee advised funding has been achieved to send 35 athletes and team officials from the Oceania region for para athletics.

We have also received feedback from Oceania weightlifting that they intend to send 30 athletes from 18 Oceania nations—it is another fantastic announcement that we are truly becoming the games that we wanted to be with international competition and competitors from all over the world. It is such a good part of the Arafura Games that has developed over many years that we include para events. It is a great opportunity for people to show case their sport and their commitment. For me, it is very inspiring.

In para table tennis, it will be a direct qualifier for the Oceania region to gain their slots for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, further strengthening how important the Arafura Games will play in the sporting landscape of our nation and the world.

Other sports such as weightlifting, wheelchair tennis and para athletics will use the Arafura Games as a pathway event for athletes to gain ranking points, record qualification results or participate in the required number of events to be eligible for Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games—further strengthening the Arafura Games as an international event and I thank the para Olympic committee for their commitment to the Northern Territory and to the Arafura Games.

The Arafura Games has a proud history of supporting athletes with disabilities and it is great to see the level of interest we have received to date from a number of Paralympic committees.

Excitingly, yesterday I had the pleasure of announcing that the final event of the National Basketball League 2019 3x3 Pro Hustle Tour will be held as part of the 2019 Arafura Games. The 3x3 Pro Hustle Tour final will take place at Darwin Convention Centre on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 April.

The event will see the best 3x3 players battling it out for a total prize pool of US\$100 000, split equally across male and female categories. The 3x3 Pro Hustle is the pinnacle of the sport in Australia, and the route for teams to make their way onto the prestigious FIBA World Tour where the prize money exceeds US\$1m.

I did the media event where they asked me to do a dunk—I could not get off the ground and could not get a basket—I tried and I was getting a bit annoyed because I prided myself on being able to do things around sport. I actually practiced last week at my local basketball court—but there must have been some movement in the net because it was just not going in.

There was another guy who was about a foot and a half taller than me slam dunked for the cameras and I did not want to do anything to embarrass myself—but it was and is a magnificent announcement.

There have been two other 3x3 Pro Hustle tour events around the country and to have the final of this prestigious qualifying event in the Northern Territory and in the Arafura Games is a fantastic achievement by Basketball NT, the National Basketball League and everybody else involved, including my department who have worked closely with Basketball NT and NBL.

This is a massive announcement and further strengthens the Arafura Games as an international event. There is also 5x5 happening. I tried to describe the 3x3 Pro Hustle as the 20/20 of basketball. The 3x3 is the 20/20—it is fast, fantastic and exhilarating to watch and it is very physical.

I am sure the sepak takraw, the three-by-three pro hustle, basketball tournament, dragon boating and the para events. I will watching the para table tennis, with its amazing athletes. This will bring people to the games to view these magnificent sports.

I will digress because I have unlimited time, have I not, Madam Speaker?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: It is unlimited, but not that unlimited.

Mr VOWLES: I was asked before if I would compete in the Arafura Games in some events. In my head and ego I was saying, 'Maybe basketball, athletics'. Then I was asked, 'Maybe sepak takraw?' I said, 'No I still have my groins'. I lived in Malaysia for three years and I saw in the mornings and afternoons young children and adults playing sepak takraw. I was there playing cricket professionally. I once said, 'Let me have a crack at this. I want to have a go at this'. I spent three weeks on the sidelines with a torn groin, not very happy with people. But it is such an amazing sport and will add to the viewing pleasure of Territorians and anyone else who wants to go along.

As I said earlier, they are all free events. I loved the Arafura Games every time it was on. I would go with my family and other family members watching these amazing sports and athletes.

I talked about the three-by-three pro hustle tour. All jokes aside, it was a fantastic announcement to have it on board. I thank the NBL and Basketball NT for working very hard to secure this for the Northern Territory. I take the opportunity to thank Andrew Hopper and Tim and his team at Major Events, and Sally for all the hard work they do in getting this together.

The Arafura Games will strengthen our relationships with our Asia-Pacific neighbours. There are huge markets to our north. In my other portfolio of Primary Industry and Resources, I am fully aware—and I have visited there—we have to strengthen and grow those markets. I know, like many Territory businesses, that the value of close relations with our neighbours is worth its weight in gold.

Ours is an economy focused on prospering in what has been called the Asian Century. To do that, we need to get to know our neighbours, understand their cultures and what is important to them and their countries. That learning is then something Territorians can use to look at export opportunities, to build business relationships, or even to attract investment into the Territory. Strong relationships mean more economic opportunities, and more opportunities means more local jobs for Territorians.

An overarching principle of the Arafura Games is to cultivate goodwill, encourage sporting achievements and share cultural awareness in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. In the Territory we have strong connections with many countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and the Arafura Games provides an unparalleled opportunity to build upon those connections and make new relationships.

With all this in mind, throughout my travels on ministerial business, I have been spreading the word about the Arafura Games returning. While in Indonesia and Vietnam in September, I also had meetings about the Arafura Games, as I did when I travelled there in December 2017. In visiting Japan in April this year, I also talked about the Arafura Games. I was also able to incorporate into my trip in late 2016 a visit to Samarinda, the capital of East Kalimantan, to meet with the Northern Territory's sporting competitors at the Brunei Indonesia Malaysia Philippines (or BIMP-EAGA) Friendship Games. That also gave me a great opportunity to talk about our Arafura Games.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Asian Games in Jakarta, which is the biggest multi-sporting event outside the Olympic Games with over 15 000 athletes and officials. With an event like the Asian Games on our doorstep, it provided a significant insight into how a world-class event is structured and organised. The Asian Games also provided a vital opportunity to meet with key officials from the countries attending, to speak with them about the progress being made on the Arafura Games.

I met with a number of officials and athletes who all shared fond memories of the Arafura Games and were really excited to see the Arafura Games returning. After the games were scrapped, the following year, when the games would normally have been on, the Chamber of Commerce NT said there was a \$10m dollar hole in the local economy.

The Arafura Games brings money circulating through our local hospitality, retail and tourism precincts. Right now that is the type of economic activity the Territory wants and needs.

Our government is supporting local jobs and the economy and the Arafura Games is one of many strategies we are delivering to support our economy. Our Buy Local policy is putting local businesses first and we are always looking to contract with local businesses.

I recently announced that two Darwin companies had been awarded the tender to produce the opening and closing celebrations for the Arafura Games next year. Creative Accomplice won the contract. The local company produces quality cultural projects distinct to the NT. It will partner with another Darwin company, Party Passport, which is well-known for producing events that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Guided by the feedback from the survey, we have also changed the format of the Arafura Games for next year, which will see the Waterfront Precinct become one of the two hubs for the games. Utilising the Waterfront Precinct will activate our CBD and will see people spending money throughout our fantastic bars, restaurants and retail stores providing a much needed boost. The facilities at Marrara will also be important.

Another area of our economy that is set to benefit from the return of the games is hotels throughout Darwin. Early numbers based on previous games and current information about athlete participation estimate that we could need as many as 1000 rooms and 10 000 beds to accommodate the athletes, travelling officials and support staff.

We are also working on a business engagement program that will run alongside the games and will be finalised in the coming months. The program will leverage international trade and investment opportunities for the Northern Territory and will be linked to several other international networking events, including the Regional Australia Asia Chambers Forum, and the Conference of Australian and Indonesian Youth.

I note that in previous debates the Member for Blain has asked for some practical steps on how we intend to build upon our relationships with our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region, specifically Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The Arafura Games business engagement opportunities will provide some of these practical steps.

I believe that through the sports competition and our planned business engagement program we can continue to work with our neighbours to secure outcomes that benefit all involved.

What is absolutely crucial for the games to be successful into the future is the support of all members of parliament. Our Territory Labor government is bringing back the Arafura Games and we hope to see those opposite get on board, even if they were part of the CLP government that cut the games.

Our government will ensure the Arafura Games prosper into the future. We invite the opposition and Independents to support the government in ensuring the Arafura Games not only continues into the future but grows as an international sporting event.

Upon the conclusion of the event there will be a post-Arafura Games report which will look at the aspects of the Arafura Games that worked well, the aspects that did not work well and what needs improving.

I look forward to providing further updates to members as they become available. I invite members of parliament to please get in touch if they would like further information on the Arafura Games for their offices.

Before I conclude, I want to say how much the Arafura Games means to me personally. In my younger years I had the privilege of participating as an athlete in the Arafura Games through NT Cricket team. We were lucky enough to win the gold medal after competing against some very good teams.

When I took up a player/coach role in Malaysia, I led a cricket team from Johar, Malaysia to participate in the Arafura Games in later years. My personal involvement in years gone by has motivated me to do everything I can as minister to see the Arafura Games return so today's athletes can have the same opportunities I did through sport.

I want to see new generations of Territorians experience what I was lucky enough to experience by participating, competing, volunteering, supporting and enjoying themselves.

For any Territorians listening in, please go to the website www.arafuragames.nt.gov.au or visit the Arafura Games Facebook page for more information and to stay in touch with their progress.

There are 176 days to go and I for one cannot wait to have the Arafura Games back.

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

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, I rise to support the ministerial statement. I am pleased with the minister's approach to this. It is overdue and the community, which has an expectation about the Arafura Games, was keen to hear more.

I start with some history. Like the minister, I have been personally involved as a host family and a volunteer. I was particularly involved as a school principal, with teams of kids working on floats for opening ceremonies. They were significant events for school engagement. I mention (inaudible) and the excellent work she did in supporting so many young people in the making of quality contributions to welcoming these nations to the Northern Territory.

This started a long time ago and the world was a different place in 1991. Paul Keating changed the national conversation to recognise that Australia was a part of Asia. The Northern Territory was leading this to such a degree that in the early 1990s there was a memorandum of understanding signed between the Indonesian government—President Suharto—and the Northern Territory Government, not the national government. Such was quality of the relationship between the Northern Territory and Indonesia, Canberra was seeking advice from the Northern Territory about accessing Indonesia.

I commend this excellent document to everyone. The words and aspirations described within that document are pertinent today, even though nearly 30 years have transpired. Out of that MOU that was signed between President Suharto and the Northern Territory Government came a number of specific initiatives. Through identifying sports diplomacy as key to building strong relationships, the Arafura Games came into existence.

I came to know both the sons of the Opposition Leader through the Arafura School Games, which was an excellent competition with the 12 to 13 different eastern provinces of Indonesia. The Northern Territory was regarded as one of those provinces. We competed in a number of different places including Mataram, Lombok, Makassar, Kupang, and Manado.

We also hosted the Arafura School Games. Such were those days, out of which also came the student exchange programs. Many schools in Darwin and Palmerston formed deep personal relationships with other schools in the region through visiting each other. Teachers would be exchanged, their children would come to our schools and we would host them in our homes. This was reciprocated.

The Northern Territory led the nation in that important conversation of engaging with our near neighbour in a practical and meaningful way. The Arafura Games was a product of those times.

Over the course of history—it happens with any organisation or anything that is created—some things lost connection to its origins, its roots. Over time, it became an event that some would describe as being more focused on running the event than recognising the purpose of the event—what the event was for. Those close to those early days knew it was specifically about an MOU with a deeper objective about meaningful engagement through sports diplomacy, allowing that people-to-people interaction so that then business could be conducted through those personal relationships which were developed through sports or education.

Then, when it became a successful event, there was that internal discord about what its real purpose was—was it for an event or to achieve something else about deeper connection? That resulted in a number of reviews. An important review was conducted in 2011. I was hoping that the minister may give some reference to this very important review that was conducted in 2011. These are not just my views, but common views of those who deeply support the relationship between the Northern Territory, north Australia and our region.

There are some very important matters that needed to be considered. That review gave us the opportunity to reassess and reset the agenda regarding the Arafura Games. I will go through some of those elements. I trust that the minister, in his reply, may refer to some of these important matters. It is all too easy to make a fairly high-level contribution that grabs too quickly to point scoring against the former administration. But there is a deeper context that I want to refer to that can easily escape those who have a more superficial and political interest in these things like 'We are bring back the Arafura Games. Three cheers for us. We are the good guys, the other guys are the baddies.'

There are some more important matters that need to be considered here. As a point of history—and I congratulate the honesty and graciousness of the minister for at least having the honesty to be able to differentiate between a postponement for a very good reason which I will go into in a moment, and a cancellation. I did not cancel the games. I am deeply committed to those games, obviously. That is why I chose to move to Indonesia and live in Jakarta. I am committed to this relationship through ASEAN and Indonesia and Jakarta being the administrative hub for the secretariat for ASEAN. This is a very strategic opportunity for the Northern Territory to capitalise on. The Arafura Games presents us with an extraordinary opportunity if done well.

That is why I would like us to go back to the review and consider some of the important elements that were described in that review. I trust that the minister will refer to those matters as I raise them. I say again that the decision in 2012 to postpone was because of the review that was conducted by the Labor government. It was an excellent review that captured many of the points we need to consider before chartering our next steps. The postponement was to allow us to weight carefully and realign the games back to its original purpose, or perhaps another purpose, rather than just have a sporting event.

Second, coming to government—believe it or not—there had been no allocation sufficient to the running of the Arafura Games. It was not there, so we had that financial issue to deal with—the allocation for the running of the Arafura Games—but more importantly was the opportunity for us to reset the way we dealt with the Arafura Games. Many of us who are close to and support sports diplomacy as a vehicle to help us achieve our strategic advantage in the region saw this as a great opportunity for some realignment in our Asian engagement strategies, and the recognition of where the linkages are and how we can reinforce them.

I saw that as a good opportunity. I know the people were disappointed, but there was an extraordinary amount of turbulence at the time, not just in the community—which we could deal with—but of a destructive nature behind those endeavouring to cut a new path. That is a point of history.

Back to the review. I want to quote some elements of the review that help illustrate what I am referring to.

The general feedback indicated that the 2011 Arafura Games was successful with many stakeholders considering the games to be a very important event for the Northern Territory. The 2011 Arafura Games hosted 2163 competitors, including 1049 from 39 countries, 552 from interstate and 562 from the Northern Territory competing in 20 sports, which included four Oceania Paralympic championship sports.

There are elements in the current operational model that are not sustainable and pose great future risks in terms of attracting quality athletes, skilled staff and dedicated volunteers on a sustainable basis for the future Arafura Games.

That was a reality:

In 2007 and 2009 reviews of the games, operations were undertaken and several recommendations from these reviews were applied to the 2011 games. Recommendations for the 2011 Arafura Games included:

- *athletes were required to achieve a minimum and not exceed a maximum standard*
- *athletes were required to be appropriately accredited so they could gain points towards ranking*
- *age limits were introduced in a number of sports*
- *sporting facilities were presented at an international level.*

Every effort made in upgrading sporting facilities must be at an international level. It was a coordinated strategy:

The review of the 2011 Arafura Games introduces a survey of 572 people involved in the 2011 games, including competitors, workforce, team officials, heads of delegations, spectators, media and sponsors.

A further 10 broader stakeholders representing different agencies of the Northern Territory Government and private sector were also interviewed to ascertain their views on the future of the games.

All this is contained in the review:

There is agreement with many stakeholders that the games was invaluable and has potential beyond its current scope.

There needed to be some significant change:

The current selection of competitors in some sports is more participation based rather than skills based. There are still competitors in the games who are not emerging champions, and this is affecting the positioning of the games as a semi-elite international sporting event to be a stepping stone for emerging athletes in the Southeast Asian Games, Pacific Games and Asian Games.

There is a risk that if the Arafura Games targets are not clearly defined, the games will eventually lose its reputation, be unable to attract strong interest from the region, and therefore, not contribute to the Territory's overall position in the region. It is very important. Many of us who were close to it were aware of that.

Remember, in 1991 the economy and the position of those in our immediate region to the north was significantly different than it was in 2011. Sporting competitions that were at an earlier stage in 1991 had now matured. The economy of Indonesia and ASEAN had increased. The sophistication and coordination had increased. The games which were once lesser games were not significant games. Southeast Asian games had changed. The level of sporting competition in our region had changed. We needed to respond to that. That is what that is referring to.

The Arafura Games now requires firm decision and action to ensure that it remains sustainable into the future. These were the options presented in the 2011 review:

The games stay as neither defined as a community-based sporting event, nor as a semi-elite event with similar funding and staffing format.

That speaks for itself. Option two:

The games returns to being a community-based sporting event that would have the potential to no longer attract high-quality athletes.

Or Option three:

The Arafura Games ceases to exist.

This was one of the options in the review conducted under the Labor government.

Option four:

The games continue to reposition its status as a niche, semi-elite competition providing a sought-after stepping stone for emerging athletes in the region and provides broader economic and social opportunities that the Northern Territory can better exploit.

Obviously, the fourth option is the one that should be pursued. I agreed, coming to government in 2012, that the fourth option was the one. But that requires some change and work to ensure we achieve that new alignment because of the change in the region and the drift in the way the games were being conducted as just a sporting event more than back to achieving core objectives.

Then, as I stated before, when we looked in the cupboard, the allocation from the outgoing Labor government was not there. We had a fair bit of work to do. Granted, I only had six months to do that. I left it with a postponement so we could work on it. What happened after that was a cancellation.

It goes on to say the fourth option is the one pursued through the review for a number of reasons I fully agree with. That is what I will support the minister in achieving. That is why, earlier on, I wanted more detail on this because I am quite anxious about achieving some of these objectives that have been outlined. I have also been very involved in this. It is not just the games, it is what the games is for, going back into the history.

The reason option four is pursued is because:

1. *To ensure the sustainability of the games for the long-term sporting, social and economic benefits of the Northern Territory ...*

Work involved in that.

2. *Maintain the reputation of the Northern Territory to host international large-scale events.*

That is the background to this. I hope we have some more detail on those specific points so we get stronger alignment and a sense that we are building it towards what was clearly identified through a series of reviews in 2007, 2009 and 2011, culminating in 'that is the way we need to go'. I call on the minister for a review.

I welcomed the approach from the minister to accompany him to Jakarta for the Asian Games. I inquired—not directly of the minister but through his department—as I wanted to know the specific objectives. I do not mind a trip to Jakarta—I visit Jakarta from time to time. But to go to the Asian Games, to be frank, I wanted to know what specific objectives we were wanting to achieve. I have excellent contacts right through Indonesia and the region and I wanted to know how I could be meaningful used. I was unsure what that was, so I chose to let that go. But I would be more than happy to make that kind of contribution if I was engaged at that level. But just to go to the games without being clear about what we were going to do, I would have other things to do. I wish the minister well and I would like to know more about this meetings he had in Jakarta while at the Asian Games.

Maybe I missed it, but what is the budget for the games? I know what was not there before. Okay, well \$4m. More detail on how it aligns with trade and industry—and I know industry has been jostling to get a greater clarity and definition. I know Chamber of Commerce and others are trying to prepare.

This is where the focus should be, as it supports diplomacy in allowing people to come together to talk and then through those relationships business can be done. I would like to hear more about that with some urgency.

I would like clarification and specifics on how the endeavour bringing back the games align with our Asian engagement strategies.

Our opportunity is to identify where we have existing linkages and to target those. I am pleased the minister has visited Samarinda as East Kalimantan is a prime area from we have had some strong investment. Through the Cattlemen's Association and other primary industries can identify where we have strong, meaningful relationships of engagement that the games can be used to reinforce.

The university and schools have existing relationships, and CDU is doing an excellent job along with the Menzies School of Health. As we already have a presence, you can bring in a targeted response with sports diplomacy to bring greater definition to those linkages. I could list range of places and universities where this is occurring, including West Papua. But time is against me.

I am pleased to hear about tourism but would like more detail—including on our deep engagement with Shenzhen through our schools and sporting clubs so that people use the reason of the Arafura Games to travel on that plane. It is good to say that China is involved, but as there are a lot of people in China I would like some specific and detail.

We have had tri-lateral discussions to build linkages between East Timor, East Nusa Tenggara and North Australia to build a commercial case for aviation to support people who want to move between the three places.

Our gas leaves here and it goes to Japan—so Japan is coming. No, let us be specific. A targeted place would be Naoetsu—which is a lovely community. If you were to engage directly with the mayor of that town, it would be a powerful message if there was a team from Naoetsu where the gas arrives.

Smaller places can be very useful in building strong connections.

There are our historical connections between Makassar and the Yolngu. How can we use the Arafura Games to reinforce these connections?

Of course, there is BIMPT-EAGA, the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor Leste—East-ASEAN Growth Area. This is historically a unique space for the Northern Territory because we have been directly involved. Although I do not know about today, we have had a special connection with BIMPT-EAGA—there are the BIMPT-EAGA games. This is a discrete area we have a historical connection to some definition around how that looks for the Arafura Games.

The Games is one thing—the review addresses a number of key issues that need to be responded to and there are some other matters that I am putting before the minister to see whether there has been some thinking around those specific existing linkages on how we can reinforce them.

I commend the minister and I thank him for bringing this before us now because it is at the right time—better late than never.

I am going to be involved. I am a great supporter of this. I will not be playing sport but I am happy to be involved in whatever useful way, but particularly in building those linkages and building that stronger reputation of the Northern Territory and the region.

The Assembly suspended.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Arafura Games

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I speak to this ministerial statement given by the Minister for the Arafura Games. I thank him for that.

First, I need to note the disappointment of the opposition that this statement was not distributed until after 5 pm ...

Ms Fyles: Ah!

Mr HIGGINS: ... but I acknowledge that the Leader of Government Business apologised for that yesterday and the minister apologised today. I acknowledge all of that.

Members interjecting.

Mr HIGGINS: I just hope that the Arafura Games is not delivered late, as this statement was.

Anyway, the Arafura Games was brought back by this government, despite the fact that it was discontinued by the previous government because the benefit did not outweigh the cost. An internal review at the time stated as much, and the numbers were not stacking up.

At its height in the 1990s the games attracted 3000 participants. This figure was progressively falling while the cost in 2011 was \$3.5m for just over 2000 participants.

I pick up on part of the answer the minister gave in Question Time, saying we would need 10 000 beds for competitors and officials who are travelling with them. At its height, if it was 3000 participants, it would seem we will really grow this Arafura Games, based on those figures he provided.

At the time, the number of Asian countries participating had also fallen and the games was not meeting its Asian engagement objectives. It should be manifestly obvious that the gains were not stacking up, by any measure.

The other reality is that this was not, and is not, a world-class international sporting event. It will not attract the best athletes and sports people from across the Asia-Pacific, and on the current model it never will. The CLP opposition supports any event that puts the Northern Territory on the world stage but, sadly, this event is not it.

That is not to say that those athletes competing in next year's games are not dedicated competitors. We are not aiming to denigrate the competitors or the countries coming to town next year. We have no doubt that they are well-skilled and talented and will come to compete with all of their hearts.

We are saying that administratively and technically and against world-standard measures, the Arafura Games is not an elite competition. Your own website admits this reality:

The games will host a range of sporting competition tiers from amateurs through to sub-elite.

I can read it again if they want me to, but obviously they do not.

If the minister has evidence to the contrary, I welcome it. If the minister has a cost-benefit analysis clearly showing a net economic benefit to the Territory, I will happily eat my words. It is not good enough, without any evidence, to simply whinge about the CLP government scrapping the Arafura Games without also acknowledging the reasons for that decision.

The decision to discontinue the games is not negative, in or of itself. The Arafura Games had become irrelevant to the region and therefore, not fit for purpose—that purpose being a direct economic and cultural benefit to both the Territory and the region. The old model of Arafura Games—the model that Labor is now recycling—may have minor cultural benefits but it does not have tangible economic benefits. That is what the Labor government needs to be concerned with, especially in this current day of crippling debt and deficit and a floundering economy.

It is imperative that the government focus on projects that are good bang for buck. That is what the previous CLP government did, and we continue to do. We invested in quality sporting events ...

Members interjecting.

Mr HIGGINS: If you listen! ... such as the Mitchell Street Mile, the Davis Cup, Four Nations Hockey International, first-class cricket, the adoption of the Parramatta Eels and the Melbourne Football Clubs as home Territory teams for NRL and AFL matches in the Territory. That is what the CLP did. All of these events are big events which have marketable quality on the back of which the Territory can be sold to the rest of Australia and the world. This should be the goal when it comes to sporting events in the Territory.

We should look at the history of this project under Labor. This project recycles a tired model of a C-grade event.

First, we saw 12 months of nothing—absolute silence from Labor on one of their key election promises. Between November 2016 to November 2017, the only movement on the Arafura Games was a lame 'have your say' website for feedback. This was an initiative of the assistant minister, the Member for Sanderson.

Finally, in November last year, the Chief Minister appointed the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources as the new Minister for Arafura Games. Has he not taken to this new role with gusto? Since his appointment he has travelled around Australia and Asia signing competitors and countries up to the new Arafura Games.

These participating countries, from an invite list of 30, now number nine: China, the Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vietnam.

A Games Director and an advisory board were appointed in April of this year. In July, the Games Director resigned, a situation the minister described as 'a hiccup'. Good luck to the hardworking organisers, especially those under pressure from the government to make these games a success.

The CLP opposition agrees with the idea of capitalising on the presence of competitors by holding a regional and business conference. This should be a core part of any international sporting festival. However, a number of questions arise.

Who has been invited to such a conference and how certain premium of attendees be guaranteed? After all, it will only be worth running if the conference is mutually beneficial to the Territory and the regional economies.

The only way to ensure that the conference will be attractive for local, national and international business and industry is to ensure that big regional players are involved both in the private and government sectors. This extends to the games themselves, and with this in mind I pose a few questions to the minister.

Which governments are involved? The government has listed nine countries as being involved, but are they sending national delegations to the games? If not, how could we expect that the big players in those countries will come to conference?

Would it not make more sense for the Territory to engage at the sub-national level? That is, to target provinces, states, cities and islands rather than nations. Instead of having nine nations compete, we could have dozens of different teams at the sub-national level. This way, the governments of those sub-national entities would be more likely to attend the conference. These are governments that the Territory government would naturally be signing agreements with and that businesses have the most contact with.

Has the choice of sports has been made strategically to maximise the number of participants and teams? Bearing in mind cultural differences and the ability to forge bonds and share commonalities.

Why was elite competition not sought? This could still be done at a sub-national level and it would a more attractive product to sell to the region. Businesspeople would be happier to travel and support an event which is of an elite standard, has international exposure and the most marketable athletes competing.

By the government's own admission the sporting event will be from the amateur to the sub-elite level. This is hardly inspiring and it is definitely not marketable. The key to ensuring elite competition is to give the event relevance.

I notice that the competition has only one Olympic sport, weightlifting, and three Paralympic sports: wheelchair tennis, para-table tennis and para-athletic, will be given any relevance in terms of qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympiad.

There would be more meaning for athletes if the competition went towards ranking in their chosen sport. I am happy to admit there are positive elements to the Arafura Games. The initiative that both able-bodied and disabled athletes compete concurrently is a very good one, that other major events can learn from,

The government is also on about Boundless Possible. Why not aim big with the Arafura Games, and re-shape and re-create it into something worthy of the world stage. If the government were fair dinkum about marketing the Territory and the Asia-Pacific, this is how to do it. Not with an amateur sporting event.

I thank the minister for bringing this important statement to the House and I note the minister's statement.

Ms MANISON (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to this important statement about bringing back the Arafura Games, that is something we are thrilled about. We are proud that this is happening because the Arafura Games is an iconic event for the Northern Territory and it creates incredible opportunities.

After listening to the Leader of the Opposition, I do not expect to see him at the games, he does not seem supportive. I do not think he will be going there to enjoy the sport. One thing is sure, he has just made it very clear, they do not support bringing back the Arafura Games.

Going back to the last term of the 2012–16 period of the CLP government, I remember the day very well, where we had a surprising announcement that the Arafura Games had been put on hold. The Arafura Games that was scheduled to happen the following year, looked like they were not going to proceed. Territorians were outraged by that government's decision, under the leadership of the Member for Blain—he was the then CLP leader and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory—they scrapped the games. It was a dreadful decision. Volunteers, sporting groups and organisations, hospitality sector and the business community were disappointed, because they saw what an impact the Arafura Games had.

What is so disappointing about what I heard from the Leader of Opposition's contribution is, there seems to be no recognition of what scrapping the Arafura Games actually did. When it comes to its prominence in the sporting calendars of other organisations, of qualifying events, of their plans and tournaments, what they train and prepare for.

Of how long it takes to rebuild those relationships with those key sports, particularly at the elite level. It takes time to be able to get your games into their qualifying calendar. To make sure your games are as relevant to their sport as possible. They see your games as an opportunity for their athletes to get primed and prepared and for that sport to understand who is the best of the current crop. Who is the best to represent the state or the country at that next elite level on the world stage.

When they scrapped the Arafura Games, they threw out all that momentum and established relationships, out the door, gone, done. It was a dreadful thing, not only for those sporting and cultural relationships that we had overseas with many of the regular visiting countries—they have a very proud history of participating—but the expectation for that economic injection.

We have lost eight years of the Arafura Games and that has been disappointing for the Northern Territory. The Arafura Games is a much-loved event in the Northern Territory community, it has had a fantastic history since it first came about. It is going to take time to rebuild the games. We are delighted to be bringing them back because it is what the Territory wants to see and there is good reason why.

It is because it does so much for local sport and economy. It does fantastic things when it comes to those wonderful cross-cultural relationships, trade ties that we have with many of our Asian neighbours to the north.

It is incredibly disappointing that the CLP members still do not seem to recognise what they did when they scrapped the Arafura Games. It is deeply disappointing to hear that contribution. It seems that the CLP will not support the Arafura Games anytime soon and do not see what the benefit will be.

I am glad to see that since we have come to government I have seen the Assistant Minister for the Arafura Games take on that role very early in the piece and run with the ball. She has done a magnificent job because she is a very passionate, committed sporting person with a huge amount of experience in sports administration. She is someone who understands the sporting community of the Northern Territory very well..

To have the expertise and experience at a local club level, through to an elite and international level of the Member for Johnston coming on board as the Minister for the Arafura Games, and someone who knows the sports administration of government and that sector very well was a huge benefit to bringing back the games. He is doing a wonderful job too. The Minister for Tourism and Culture is backing him up with some of their fantastic staff. We have a great team working to bring back the Arafura Games, and have been working incredibly hard with sporting organisation and the work they have done when they have gone overseas to talk to countries about participating and becoming involved.

I was also disappointed with the Leader of the Opposition's contribution when he started speaking about the games had become irrelevant and they were not fit for purpose. You were a new government in 2012 which had an opportunity to put your own mark on it, rebadge the games and look at how you could reinvigorate the games. Instead, they just cut the games. Now, we are having to rebuild.

It is coming back as a modern, contemporary Arafura Games that fits the Territory now and what we are trying to achieve with the economy and our cultural and sporting communities. We are bringing a dynamic, fresh approach to the Arafura Games. It is exciting to see the plans coming together as we get closer, and hear some of the wonderful announcements about what we can expect to see as part of the entertainment for the Arafura Games. Everyone is really excited about it.

For me, as someone who saw the first Arafura Games as a kid and participated, in my much younger days of participating in sport. It was fantastic because the Arafura Games not only benefit our best athletes locally but it also gives the up-and-comers the opportunity to have a look at sport at that next level they are working towards. I remember participating in the Arafura Games in—gosh, when would that have been?—1995 as part of the Northern Territory Under-17 Netball team. For us, it was an important tournament to help us get prepared for nationals and participate at that next level by taking on those teams from overseas. We did not do too well, but I tell you, it was a really good training opportunity for us to compete at that next level. That is an important opportunity for local kids. It is something for local kids to aspire to, to put their head down, do some hard training and have some ambition to compete. It is such a driving force when you are after selection in a team, when there is something you really want to achieve—a huge driving force and motivating factor.

To have another fantastic tournament and event that opens that opportunity for our young kids is such a wonderful thing. It will be wonderful to see that we will have more local competitors. What excites me most about that is more of those junior up-and-coming competitors will take it to the next level and get ready and learn from a few tough experiences about how they go at that next level to prepare them for the hard training

to keep going and get to a more elite level. It is really important. That will be a wonderful experience for so many locals.

For the Northern Territory's volleyball community, the Arafura Games was the peak of competition. The locals really trained hard for and strove to get selected for this competition, as it was the elite next level for the Northern Territory volleyballers. They had the opportunity to play against some fantastic nations—the Australian Defence Force would also send up teams—and it really tested them.

The Arafura Games boosted the standard of competition and participation. I hope that local sports like volleyball will benefit from bringing back the games. If you do not have a high goal or benchmark to work towards, it is not as easy to stay motivated and driven.

Sporting competition is a lot of fun, and it is magnificent to know the Arafura Games will drive motivation. A lot of people are excited to see the games back, knowing that they will get to compete at the next level. We are looking forward to seeing this come to life.

The Arafura games will put Darwin on show. It is bringing people to our wonderful city to see what is so fabulous about it. As Treasurer, I get excited from the flow-through economic benefit.

We are going to have many people coming through the Darwin International Airport. Those people will require transportation to get around, supporting local cabbies, the driver of a Hi Oscar, or our local transport companies. Participants, visitors, staff, volunteers and spectators will need to find accommodation and hotel rooms will be filled across the Top End.

While they are here they will have to purchase meals, and they will have to go to our restaurants and go shopping. They are likely to want to experience Darwin while they are here and they may take some tours to see some of our spectacular tourism experiences in the greater Darwin region—Litchfield and Kakadu. They will make the most of the time they have here.

I suspect many will go out to do shopping, and this supports our retail sector. This is money coming from outside the Northern Territory that will stay in here to support local jobs, business and employment. This is well beyond just the benefit of sport.

The cultural aspect is a wonderful example of how we have refreshed and reinvigorated the Arafura Games. We will ensure our first nations culture is highlighted and displayed. Darwin is strongly multicultural city, and we can showcase the involvement of our Chinese, Greek and growing Indian cultures to name a few. Many of those coming here will not have seen our Aboriginal culture before and...

Mr Vowels: That the opening and closing celebrations will highlight.

Ms MANISON: As the minister has pointed out, this is something the opening and closing ceremonies will highlight.

The opening and closing ceremonies are not events just about the athletes and participants, they are something locals love to get along to support and enjoy. The Arafura Games have a long history of doing a fantastic job and getting some amazing local entertainment involved and it will be a wonderful opportunity for those people to have a look and watch the opening and closing ceremonies of the games.

Trade ties benefits through the games that we have building relationships with our neighbours to the north through sport and cultural ties. It helps open up all sorts of new conversations. It is going to be wonderful to have our businesses looking at how they can engage in conversations and making the most of opportunities for further economic development and building trade relations while we have those visiting countries here. That is another really important element of the Arafura Games.

Something else I want to talk about is the wonderful community spirit that you see during the Arafura Games. The most disappointed group I found last time, when the CLP scrapped the Arafura Games in 2012, was actually the volunteers.

I had so many people walk through the electorate door and we heard from so many people through local media that were disappointed because they had been long serving volunteers of the Arafura Games, and they were very proud Territorians who loved putting the Northern Territory on display, and for doing a bit of community service and feeling like they were doing their bit to make the Arafura Games an even better event. Often you would find a lot of these people were retirees and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

We have a lot of people very excited to know that they will be able to volunteer, and I really encourage other people to put their hand up to participate in whatever capacity that they can and to help showcase Darwin at its very best.

For locals the wonderful thing is just getting to watch the sporting competition. The last Arafura Games we had one of the biggest spectator sports was the magnificent boxing set up. We had some pretty big qualifying bouts at that point and it was a very big deal.

A lot of locals were there because they were seeing some pretty elite competition at a level they had not seen. It was such a dynamic wonderful precinct at Marrara seeing everybody getting around, enjoying the sport watching the Arafura Games and to see something presented locally in sporting competition at that next level.

It is something that locals love and enjoy and a lot of people will be thrilled to see the Arafura Games coming back.

I thank the really hard working team within the public sector and the advisory teams that are doing a lot of work to bring the games back. It is going to be a busy time until the opening ceremony of the games but we have a magnificent team working to bring back the Arafura Games—better than it has ever been and well positioned from the first games.

Remember, we are having to rebuild after the CLP scrapped it—and you are only going to see the Arafura Games continue to get better because people see the effort of bringing them back and how fabulous they are—and we will continue to work with other sporting organisations to make sure that the Arafura Games is built back in to their sporting calendar.

It has been incredibly disappointing to see that the CLP have learnt nothing from scrapping the Arafura Games and they are still not supportive of the games. Despite that we are going to get on with the job because we know it is good for sport, good for our trade ties and cultural ties and it is great for the economy, and we are looking forward to seeing all of the athletes come to the Northern Territory and having a wonderful time—and when they leave, telling their family and friends what a magnificent time they had and that they should come and see the Northern Territory for themselves.

This is what it is all about. Showcasing the very best of the NT and enjoying some wonderful sport along the way.

Well done to the hard working team, the minister and the assistant minister. We are very proud to be bringing back the Arafura Games.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I speak in support of the minister's statement on the Arafura Games, an event that I naturally, as the assistant minister for bringing back the Arafura Games, am very passionate about.

This is interestingly enough, the first opportunity for me in two years to place on the record some of the work done so far. It might give others some comfort in this room that have raved on and on in a negative fashion, although I am pleased to hear the support from the Member for Blain. There are obviously some other things there. It is a real opportunity to thank those that have and continue to contribute.

Delivering the Arafura Games, which will be from 26 April to 4 May 2019 is a massive undertaking. For me, and all of the people involved and the minister, I know it is an absolute labour of love. I am not going to go on and on about who canned and why, only to state that it was at the time, such a shame. We all know that once something like a games is postponed, whether the intentions were to keep it going or review it or any of that stuff, historically it usually means it is being shelved in the long-run. That proved unfortunately in this case to be the truth.

It is a history that Territorians will remember but when we bring back the Arafura Games in April and May next year, we will be providing our community and the games' many participants—athletes, administrators, businesses, officials and volunteers, not to mention the families that will travel with the participants—with new memories that I know will last them a lifetime. We know it will last them a lifetime because people are already telling us about when they participated in previous games, how important that was for them. They are still recalling and sharing those memories.

Just over two years ago, while doorknocking prior to the 2016 election, I had two constituents answer the door in Arafura Games t-shirts. They both had been former participants and lamented, at great length, the loss of the games and the friendships and experiences it provided them with. Along with many others, they raised their voices and we listened so on coming into government, I was appointed to take on the role of bringing back the Arafura Games. We are well on track to do that.

My husband was a previous participant of the games and still has the medals he won in the AFL competition. He is very proud of those. I have also been involved for a long time with the games. In fact, during a previous games, I got to provide an on-the-side coaching session to a visiting Japanese netball team which was a lot of fun given not one member of their team spoke a word of English. I found that sport is a universal unifier.

The Arafura Games brings a strong sense of community pride, not only in the Territory and all we have to offer, but cultural and multicultural pride. Bringing the games back lets us put that all on show and share with our visitors. That is the predominant reason we are bringing the games back. In addition, there are clear jobs and economic drivers—things that members have spoken about today as being of great concern to them. Let me be clear, there are jobs and economic drivers associated with the games. It has been in the forefront of our minds from the very beginning. I will talk about that later.

It is no secret I was a former sports advisor for the Martin Labor government. I had an intimate knowledge of the games, very much like the Minister for the Arafura Games, and was in the room when the first Paralympic involvement agreement was brokered. I am still in touch with the Paralympic representatives to this day. We knew it was a very important decision at the time and one I am glad to see resurrected for this games. They came to the steering committee hearings and presented at that and not one member of the steering committee was left with any doubt that their intention was to come back. The Paralympic officials valued the previous Arafura Games and shared how important it was for their athletes and participants to have these games.

The Paralympics is another layer of the games and an opportunity for inclusion of both athletes with a disability and their able-bodied counterparts. In fact, it is a little known requirement of the Paralympic Committee for them to include a Paralympic sport there must be an able-bodied offering running parallel. That is why you will see on the agenda we will be providing Paralympic competition in the sports of swimming, tennis, table tennis, athletics and netball. I note that there is scope for more of that, I understand, in future games. That is just a starting point—you have to start somewhere. Those are the sports we were looking at that were robust and the Paralympic Committee could tie into on this occasion. I know with certainty that they would be happy for us to welcome a range of other sports at future games.

I will now return to the process so far. Once I was appointed, many will know I was able to pull together a steering committee late in 2016. We deliberately identified stakeholders to participate as we knew we needed to hear from them right from the very start and get some buy-in early from a range of stakeholders. This group included—and I thank them all of their hard work buy-in and commitment to kicking off the process to bring back the games:

- Professor David Price from Charles Darwin University. I am hoping that Charles Darwin University will be a massive partner going forward
- Ms Katrina Fong Lim who was the former Lord Mayor. Obviously if we are showcasing anything in our city then they need to be in on the ground floor
- Mr Andrew Hopper of Major Events—now the games is sitting with Major Events—so they had awareness from the start
- Mr Phillip Lesley of Sport and Recreation who was previously involved with the games and so had a lot of knowledge he shared
- Mr Jeff Stewart and Ms Kate Walker from the Office of International Engagement, Trade and Investment. I will talk a little about that later. Having those people on the ground floor, straightaway identifying potential countries and provinces we can approach was vitally important.
- Mr Brian Gallagher from the Chamber of Commerce.

There was some business nous in the room and some early conversations as far back as immediately in 2016. While members might say, 'Oh, we did not hear anything for a year', I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that we were working ourselves like mad. On reflection, we set a cracking pace. Over a three to

four month period, we determined a path forward to get what we needed in recommendations that we knew were vitally important to be made to Chief Minister and Cabinet.

We quickly set up a website—we knew we needed an interface. You can hop on there anytime. The website has a countdown on it now. The minister is correct. I do not know if it is today, but there is 176 days to go. All a bit frightening really. You can hop on there at any time and see how many days there are to go. We did that quickly and immediately advertised for feedback from sports, businesses and volunteers—anyone who was interested at all—tourism or arts. We even put a button so you could early register as a volunteers or just an interest in the games. That could happen so quickly. This has been ongoing for some two years—nothing not happening. Now with I know many volunteers have already registered and are receiving regular updates. That is one of the important things we had on there. People could just pop on, touch that button and away they could go—and constantly get updates.

As the minister said, we received 193 written responses and then scheduled public interviews with anyone who was interested. We received interest from many sectors including sports—local and national interests. We even had people walking in ready to go, with the full backing of their national sporting body. We had local business owners and the arts sector. We have been clear from the very start that the games needed to showcase our local arts sector—the minister has talked about that, as did our Treasurer—whilst we have a national and international audience.

Very early on, we did a country identification with early invitations going out. How did we do that? We looked at a map, put our arms up in a Y, and anything about that is where we need to head. Who are our closest trading partners?

A full analysis was done and those invitations helped raise awareness immediately while the steering committee was going. Once again, although we may not have been out here shouting about it, all that work was happening.

We focused on our Asian neighbours and we received some good advice, and we sent those letters out to say 'the Arafura Games are coming back—are you interested? If you are interested who do we need to touch base with in your country to make this happen?'

From that process, we were able to make robust and well-founded recommendations to cabinet. This included the need to make as much of the games as local as possible.

An important breakaway from past games was the recommendation to establish two hubs. One in the city, as part of the ongoing revitalisation of the CBD, which will be down at the Waterfront. The other is the traditional hub in the Marrara Sporting Precinct.

We also recommended making the sports schedule to run predominantly in the afternoons and evenings to ensure that working Territorians have either the opportunity to participate or, importantly, spectate after work. Along with being inclusive, this also means that people could volunteer after finishing work, which could not be done before. As the Chief Minister said, we need bums on seats, and is the way we are looking to do it.

Fortunately, cabinet did accept our recommendations—and we were away. At that time we had a new minister appointed, the Honourable Kenny Vowles and it was good to have a minister to report to and work with.

We also recommended and saw the formation of two tiers of governance. It was important not to have not just an organising committee but also an advisory committee, of which I am now part. This looks at the overarching running of the games, asks pertinent questions and can be sought out by the organising committee for advice. The advisory is tasked to ensure the games are delivered on time and meets community expectations.

I will note those with whom I work on the advisory committee. I know the minister has already mentioned them, but it is important that I thank them for their dedication. They ask intelligent questions and they have the best interests of the games to heart.

- our chair is Tim Watsford, the General Manager of NT Major Events
- Mark Hunt from Landbridge
- Trevor Cox is the General Manager of Tourism Top End

- Louise Partos, with whom I have previously worked, was the Executive Officer at Artback NT
- Stacey Farroway is the Director International at Charles Darwin University—some continuity with CDU staying in touch with what we are doing on the games
- Judith O’Hearn is a superb Commonwealth Games Medalist, who I got to know when I was the previous sports advisor. She is a font of knowledge of athletes with a disability, and she has a great passion for the games.
- Sean Mahoney, who came with us last week to Jakarta, is the CEO of the International College of Advanced Education. He is keen to ensure what we are doing with the games is a benefit to Territory businesses.
- Jeannette Button has extensive experience in public relations and is a font of information for artistic and curatorial matters
- Matt Grassmayr from the City of Darwin. We have continuity with the City of Darwin as they are benefitting greatly from this.
- Mick Hannon, who sits as a director on the board of Hannon Group, which is tied up with Transport
- Sam Burke, the General Manager of the Darwin Waterfront Corporation.

Make no mistake, it is a massive undertaking as it is like starting again. There is no corporate knowledge in departments or papers available. We are reinventing and starting again.

Major Events are now in full swing. I suggest to the Opposition Leader, if he is keen to see what is happening, to seek a briefing. Perhaps go with the minister to Major Events to see the staff who are slogging away to make sure we deliver on this commitment.

We originally chose 16 sports to participate. They demonstrated, straight off, a great capacity to participate. They included athletics, table tennis, boxing, soccer, badminton, swimming, tennis, muay thai, sailing, indoor and beach volleyball, weightlifting, basketball and—as we heard yesterday there is a five-by-five competition alongside the amazing pro-hustle, which I might touch on later—hockey and netball.

We originally chose the sports of dragon boating and sepak takraw as demonstration sports, but since that time they demonstrated, with a bit of work and help, greater capability. Anyone who has seen sepak takraw—I think the minister is kidding himself if he thinks he will ever participate in that discipline. I think you need a bit of height. We will leave it those who have been training for years. It is an extraordinary skill, but one of the best spectator sports you could ever watch. It will probably get the most crowds.

It was important we got those across the line. If not in this games then next, I look forward to having a nitro version. I hear that is really exciting and on the rise through Asia. Through this process, sepak takraw in Darwin has gotten itself together. We have said, ‘Here is an opportunity for the games. Let’s have you as a demonstration of the sport.’ They have gotten themselves there. Excitingly, we will bring a great offering to Darwin in that discipline. It has really bolstered the sport locally; the numbers are growing. If that is not a good story from the start, I do not know what is.

We also welcome dragon boating. Everybody loves it. It is a great sport across a range of ages. I do not think any of us would complain about seeing the spectacular sports on offer in this competition.

I will note the emerging sport focus. That was the other strong recommendation we made. It was very difficult for the steering to identify—I will put this out there because it is important for people to understand that what is emerging in one age group is completely different. Women playing netball do not hit their straps until their 20s. It is like the brain and body have to physically and mentally come together. You see the best of our athletes mid- to late-20s, and some in their 30s. It is a phenomenon in that sport.

In boxing, some of the best participants are between the ages of 15 and 19. We identified that emerging sports is where we want to be. This is a pathway; it is not the end for athletes. We want to say to them, ‘What is an emerging sport?’ Basketball has set the bottom age limit at 17. It is important for the sport to determine that and we have allowed them to do it. That is something I am proud of. The sports clubs have had to go amongst themselves and ask where they need the pathway.

In basketball there is no national competition for adults. The under-15, under-17 and under-19 groups can go to nationals, but once you are in that later age group—the Arafura Games is filling a gap at least for basketball and some others. We might see a much younger age group coming through with sports like boxing, which are keen.

Our focus is emerging athletes. You will see some spectacular athletes on show at the games. In years to come you will see more of them in different stages internationally. That happened traditionally with the games and we will see it again. I am confident of that.

All the sports chose to be involved. There were a number we decided not to take forward in 2019. To those sports, make sure you are ready. Following the 2019 games, I want to see more sports ready to take on this challenge and be part of future games. I have been very clear about that with anybody who has chatted with me right from the start.

We have had incredible buy-in from the sports, business the arts and tourism. We are equally excited about what the games will bring for the Territory. All these sectors are equally important in delivering a games that has the real benefit, that I know everybody in this Chamber wants to see.

I said I would come to business and I would like to spend a couple of minutes talking about what that will look like.

Last week in Jakarta, aside from me and our team spruiking the games to anybody who would listen, I touched base with representatives of CAUSINDY which is the Conference of Australian and Indonesian Youth. During the games they are bringing 30 young leaders from Australia and Indonesia for their next conference in Darwin, to coincide with the Arafura Games.

This group, who generally come from affluent families, are seeking to build stronger bi-lateral relationships and it is a great fit for the games.

Mr SIEVERS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move for an extension of time under Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs WORDEN: What are aiming to do? We are leveraging international trade and investment opportunities for the Northern Territory and will be linking to several other international networking events. I want to thank Greg Bicknell and Brian O’Gallagher, who have done some amazing work to date with the Chamber of Commerce event, which will run side by side. They have a vision for the games and they have worked very hard with us along the way. What I anticipate is we will have an international agenda but with a local feel, which is what we need.

I will talk briefly about the multicultural, it is another hat I can sling on now. The minute that we had made our announcement about multicultural, the multicultural communities were so happy. It brought back old connections. They are excited about being reunited with people they hosted in their homes and embraced in their communities. The thought that they can have past participants and see them again is of value.

When we have been overseas, we have had people raise with us how exciting it is that the games are coming back. In my first trip to (inaudible) a minister said, ‘I participated in the games, this is great news’. We have ambassadors for the games over Asia and that is what we are looking to come back.

For our local multicultural community, it is an opportunity for them to showcase their new home, why they came here, what they love about it and show off. We may see the benefit of people bringing new family members into the Territory. They want to show that connection they have with their home. I know we will see of that during the games in the multicultural space. The Territory has provided them with friends, new family and community. Just be able to showcase—I think they are the words being used.

We have had countries who have formally accepted our invitation: China, Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, Marshall Islands, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Macau China, Tuvalu and Vietnam.

I know there are plenty of other countries who have provided verbal advice, but we are seeking written advice but we are not far away, we will have more countries formally coming. Kate Walker in the department is constantly picking up the phone, having conversations with countries, sending emails on a daily basis, to try and get that done.

The most important thing was to get that schedule of sports out and after we did, we had a flurry of countries cementing themselves in. Sally Jarvis in the department, worked hard to make sure that could happen, she did it very quickly on arrival.

The department is also currently having discussions to get businesses involved, that is their next step. The great new branding, our minister spoke about. When they brought that out and showed us, it was clean, simple but representative of us and everybody will be excited when they see our mascot.

This event is currently sitting with NT Major Events. They have cleaned the decks and have had a lot on their agenda. Last week when I was in Jakarta, I spoke to the Secretary-General, and I spoke about it in my adjournment just last night, Eris who has agreed to share information with the Northern Territory. He was the Secretary-General of the recent Asian Games which our minister attended. Things like that are happening.

To say that it has all been quiet and not much is happening is quite astounding to me. We have awarded the contract to Creative Accomplice and Party Passport. That is two local companies. How exciting is that? The fact that has happened and we put out releases and it has been in the paper, I think the Leader of the Opposition might have been asleep lately.

That is what the games are leveraging. There are two part-companies coming together, recognising each other's deficiencies and it is pointing it all in the right direction. Government is facilitating that. I cannot wait for those opening and closing ceremonies because people are going to find that again, that is a differentiating point between the previous games and now. In previous games, they spent a lot of money, rightly or wrongly, on big name acts. That is not what we are going to do. We are going to have an inclusive one that represents the Territory, not just brining in some big name.

It will be an incredible level of competition. The International Muaythai Federation coming on board, that is exciting news. And whilst we only have confirmation from those particular countries at the moment, they are bringing 250 athletes and team officials from over 30 nations. We are going to see athletes outside the official countries that are coming and that is a great thing.

We will have 35 athletes and team officials from the Oceania Paralympic Committee and Oceania Weightlifting have athletes from 18 Oceanic nations. It is growing day by day. We are seeing people buying in. We are seeing qualifiers, people outside—maybe not the Leader of the Opposition—are seeing the benefit of the games and are jumping on board.

Paralympics tying in with weightlifting, wheelchair tennis and para-athletics all as pathways for their athletes. I cannot state enough for that Paralympic partnership. That is what we lost last time around. We might think about saving, maybe a few dollars, but at the end of the day we lost those critical links and pathways and we lost a lot for Territorians.

There is so much more to come. We saw yesterday the announcement about the 3x3 Pro Hustle to get out there and participate. If you saw the minister standing out there in front of the media next to the height of some of those athletes—it is acceptable. The prize money of US\$100 000 is going to be attractive and what we will see as part of the games is some amazing athletes right here in Darwin. People will go out and watch that. I know the minute I know when those are on in the schedule, I will be down there having a look at that.

I want to talk about the value of volunteers. At the end of everything we do, whether we are out spruiking the 3X3 Pro Hustle, we always come back to talking about the importance of volunteers. The value of volunteers in Darwin, we will be able to measure that at these games. I know people have been clicking on the website and taking that opportunity and thinking about being involved. What I say to people is, if you are thinking about being involved, do it now. It might seem like April next year is a long way away, but when we are getting organised, things like uniforms need to be organised, t-shirts, identifiers, logistics, who needs to be where, what roles people can fill, what skills do our volunteers have, we will need to do all of that assessment and that will take some time. If you are thinking about being involved in the games, now is the time. Hop on that website and click that. The Member for Nelson has that up already. Register now.

You can also now register as an athlete. Just last week I think it was, that became live. If you are local and you are wanting to have a go pick your sport and click on to participate. Let us not sit here and speculate about lack of numbers compared to last time—that sort of stuff is just not helpful.

It might be political but it is not helpful. What is helpful is people jumping on and registering.

One last thing is the importance of the games for shared knowledge and I thank sports med who presented to the committee and that they are going to share their knowledge with visiting officials and with other teams and it is really important that that gets done.

It has been done at previous games and visiting athletes really get a lot out of our sports med so I am hoping to see them there providing support to all our officials and athletes.

I am passionate about the Arafura Games as is every member of our team and the Member for Blain is now saying he is excited about it. It has taken him awhile but it is great.

I commend the minister's statement to the House.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I wondered having listened to the minister's speech and his summation of what he thought his speech was like, whether I should have some gentle music to support my contribution to today.

I have the speech here. When you put it in booklet form it is not real big and some of it is not worth talking about and some of it is about let us pat ourselves on the back. Besides that, it is good that we are bringing back the Arafura Games.

I have listened to the more exciting speech from your assistant minister, it is much more to the point.

Mr Vowles: She has the freedom to do that.

Mr WOOD: Very good. I thought it was excellent. I unfortunately had a visitor turn up and I could not hear it all, but I do have a few things to say.

I had the website open that the minister spoke about. You can tell me whether I am being nit-picky, but the Arafura Games site obviously had some connections with the Masters Games because some of the logos look awfully like the Masters Games logo.

I do not know whether you are allowed to share those things.

Mr VOWLES: Same company.

Mr WOOD: That is okay. I did not know if you would get in to problems borrowing other people's logos.

I looked up the athletics website when the assistance minister was telling me but I could not find the 3 kilometre walk, so that might put me out of contention. Not that I had any chance of winning in that area, but I will have another look to see what is on the athletics program.

I am sure plenty of people, especially the Mad Frogs, Darwin athletic runners and walkers and rural athletics club will certainly be looking at the opportunity to join in.

There is still a long way to go. It is great to get the Arafura Games back as you said in your opening statement minister when you quoted from former Chief Minister Marshall Perron about saying the festival represents the Territory government's commitment to the development of sport for Territorians and comes from a desire to strengthen ties with our northern neighbours.

I will be a bit biased—it is either equally as important or even more important, especially in this day and age. Someone said to me, and I will not say who it was, why are we giving money to Sulawesi instead of giving money to our farmers, and I thought, you have to be joking. I said, we do give money to our farmers and the people in Sulawesi are our neighbours and they are not wealthy neighbours they are neighbours that need help.

I thought there is a misunderstanding somewhere that we are the heart of a bigger group of people than just the people that live in Darwin or the Northern Territory. That is not necessary south of us it is the people that are north of us. That, I believe, is a really important reason why we should support the Arafura Game.

I do not want to go in to the history of why it was cut back. Obviously each government has its own view on programs that it operates, whether it is Arafura Games or supporting a new heated swimming pool in Alice Springs or a new swimming pool at Parap—and not supporting one at Freds Pass. All governments make

decisions. Hopefully they will make a decision to fund and operate a recreational facility in the rural area, like the Leanyer recreational facility.

I was interested how this compared with previous games. It has been said there are ten countries who have formally accepted our invitation and eight other countries who have provided verbal advice. Looking over what I could find about the previous Arafura games: there were seven in 1991, 25 in 2001, 30 in 2007 and 2009.

There are still a few days left—if you look on the website you will say 176, four hours, three minutes and 27 seconds. But will there be any change in the number of teams?

The Minister went on about his cricketing expertise—I know this is an opportunity to great to bed missed. I was a bit sad to find cricket does not appear to be on the list.

A member interjecting.

Mr WOOD: I know there were nominations. When I looked at the list from the 2011 games, there were a few things that have not come back: cricket, golf, hockey..

Mrs Worden: Some of them did not apply.

Mr WOOD: I know, but I am just mentioning some issues. Shooting, squash, ten-pin bowling, triathlon and water polo, which used to be...

Mrs Worden: Did not apply!

Mr WOOD: Hopefully, they can still apply.

Mrs Worden: Did you listen to what I had to say?

Mr WOOD: I am sorry, I had an important visitor turn up who I was trying to assist.

Shooting was very popular. Hopefully those sports come back before the 176 days are up.

In my job, and in everyone else's job, you are asked to go to sporting events to give out medals. Since 9/11, places like Robertson Barracks have been closed—it was one of the few swimming pools in my area, a world class swimming pool. I know the water polo teams swam there. Because they had shade-cloth on it, there were complaints it was too cold. Unfortunately now we cannot use that facility.

I presume that finance was one of the reasons the previous Arafura Games was stopped. In the minister's speech, I would have liked to see 'we budgeted \$X amount for the Arafura Games' and 'at this stage we have spent this much money', what we have spent the money on and where the leftover money will be distributed.

Are we funding athletes to come here or accommodation? We need to know these details. People would like to know how much and where money is being spent. By keeping that in the open, you are letting people know that it is value for money, as you have some business connections you are trying to bring in.

It is difficult to put a dollar sign on the connection between us and other people and cultures. This is really important. I remember going to sports like sepak takraw—I might have even given a medal at that event—shooting and boxing. Boxing used to be out on the front lawn. My good friend who passed away, Boyd Scully, used to be one of the judges. The good thing about that is you had people from all over boxing. That attracted a lot of people. I do not know whether boxing will be there again, but I must admit I thought it was a great venue for that. You could walk in, walk out. I have great memories of some of that.

I also enjoy the athletics. I have been going through the google sites and seeing pictures of some of the original opening ceremonies. There have been some spectacular opening ceremonies. Many of the people in my rural area—especially those involved in athletics—I can nearly guarantee they will be involved as volunteers for the athletic program. As the assistant minister spoke about the importance of volunteers, I agree.

It gives a great opportunity to showcase Darwin and the Top End of Australia. They are the other things that you cannot always put a dollar sign on. The Minister for Tourism might say this will bring so many people into the community and maybe you can put dollar signs to that. That is important, but as I said before, the bit I

am interested in is just being able to—in this day and age where we have uncertain times in an uncertain world—bring people together to contribute to a lot more understanding between one another instead of misunderstanding which can occur quite easily. We know that has happened in the past with different countries to our north. It gives an opportunity to bring nations together at the ground level—not at the political level but at the ground level. That is an important reason for having the Arafura Games.

Yes, there might have been issues. We harp on that too much. We have moved on. In the end, when we are finished, the government should bring a report to this parliament on the total cost of the Arafura Games, where the money has been spent, how many people came, give us an idea of the participants, what sports and how many people participated in them—give us a reasonable breakdown of what benefits came from the Arafura Games. Then you can at least make a judgment about whether we should do it again.

We should not say we should do it every years because it is a tradition. We need to look at in financial terms, which makes sense, and then make a judgment on whether it could be improved, whether it should be scrapped—I am not saying it should be scrapped—and whether we should continue doing it. Personally, I hope it continues on. It is great for the Darwin area and the region.

One thing I am sad is missing is Australian Rules. The reason why is this was a great opportunity for countries that would not normally meet. I remember going to matches with Japan. I remember seeing Papua New Guinea winning the Aussie Rules medals—and were they pleased as punch! Countries you would not normally think took much of an interest in Aussie Rules were out on Marrara number one oval playing Aussie Rules ...

Mrs Worden: It did not apply.

Mr WOOD: I know it did not apply. I am just saying—some people can still reminisce. I saw the picture today of the New Guinea team with medals—and were they happy! One country, unfortunately—I am probably to blame too—we do not make enough connection with is New Guinea. I went to a meeting here some years ago of New Guinea women involved in agriculture. It was the best dinner I had ever been to. I ended up having to play act *Once a Jolly Swagman* and they thought it was hilarious. They were great people.

You do not see a great deal of communication these days between the Northern Territory and New Guinea. We used to have direct flight, many years ago, between Darwin and Port Moresby. I do not know whether New Guinea is on our list, but if it is I hope they are coming. If it is not, it might be worth pushing a bit harder to see if we can get some teams here, even Aussie Rules team. I am sure we can find a team to play them at this time of year.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I welcome the statement from the minister—without any music. I forget the bits in the statement that you do not really have to talk about, but naturally in politics you can talk about things to put the other side down. The important thing is we are getting it back. We need to make sure that what we are doing works within a budget, brings benefits to the Territory and people from other parts of the world, and is something we can all get involved in and enjoy.

Ms MOSS (Tourism and Culture): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to support the minister's statement on the Arafura Games. I thank him for bringing this statement to the House because it is exciting. I know the community wants to hear more about the Arafura Games, how they can get involved, and about the work being done by the minister and assistant minister. It has been phenomenal. Also, the work of the Department of Tourism and Culture and NT Major Events is fantastic. They are a fantastic team.

It will be great to see the games come back. Many people know I am a big supporter of the Arafura Games because of what it brings our community and how much people loved being involved. That is a really big element of this for me. It is only one aspect, but for a very long time since its inception in 1991, there has been a very deep connection between the Arafura Games and our community. They have embraced it as volunteers, officials and attachés for visiting teams. That community spirit is something we get to enjoy in the Territory, but it really shines during the Arafura Games.

I worked at the one of the Arafura Games, as have many members of this House at some stage. I was seconded and worked with the accreditation team. It was a fantastic opportunity for a young person in the public sector at the time. It was a fantastic way to see how much people embraced the games and the international teams that passed through the accreditation centre. Teams from Papua New Guinea and beyond would come through and you could see the excitement to compete—and how many people were in the Territory to enjoy the competition and experience the Territory.

We have just seen a wildly successful, bigger and better Masters Games in Alice Springs. There were 3697 registrants. That has increased by 111 registrants on the Masters Games before. It contained two new sports this time around. A total of 54% of the people registered were counted as visitors to Alice Springs. That event still attracts a significant number of new entrants, which is positive.

There is always a buzz around Alice Springs when that event is on. Members of this House were competitors in various sports. I caught up with the Member for Nelson when I went to visit some of the volunteers. He gave me his stories from the walking.

Again, there is a buzz around town. Hotels and accommodation providers are positive at that time. We must not forget how important these events are to our tourism industry, accommodation providers and local business. It is a time when there is a buzz around the Territory.

Events and festivals are so important to our offering here. I am particularly pleased that the Arafura Games is on from the end of April to early May. That time is traditionally quiet in Darwin, so it is a fantastic opportunity for us to extend our calendar of events and encourage people to come to the Territory at a different time of year. We want them frequenting local businesses and supporting our local community.

I know from talking to some of our youth operators around the tourism industry throughout the course of the year that they are looking forward to the Arafura Games coming back and the opportunities that exist for them.

Like many others, when I first heard that the chaotic former CLP government were scrapping the games I was hugely disappointed. I felt that our sport-loving community were deeply disappointed at the loss of the international relationships built over time through this kind of competition.

The Arafura Games were never just about sport. They have been about using sport to celebrate our diversity and fostering ties with our neighbours in Asia. We acknowledge and embrace our position in region, building relationships to our north. We know that we are closer to Asia than many of the other state capitals—certainly closer than we are to Canberra. The games have been an important part of that.

Diversity will be reflected through the games' art and cultural program, including the opening and closing ceremonies. I was pleased to see Creative Accomplice and Party Passport, who were engaged to do the opening and closing ceremonies. Britt Guy and Ben Graetz and their teams are absolutely fantastic and experienced at hosting national and international events. It is going to be a fun showcase of the Territory.

It is good to see local businesspeople and those in the arts getting the go in what will be a major event.

The promotion of the very best aspects of the Territory is an exciting tourism opportunity. We have some fantastic sporting facilities. Anyone who has seen sporting facilities across the country will have seen that ours punch well above their weight. It is a great opportunity to show off the people, arts and culture that exist here to the world.

I know the Member for Blain has kept a keen eye on the return of the games. It is great to take on board his contribution, and to hear his acknowledgement of how great these games are and what opportunity exists in the Territory to grow and evolve the games.

However, it remains that his were the beginning of the moves that led ultimately to the scrapping of the Arafura Games—the government put it in the too hard basket and moved on, leaving the sporting community out. This is a real shame.

There is no better form of soft diplomacy than to host and participate in events such as the Arafura Games. It is well recognised how important sport is to our relationships across the world as a connection mechanism and way to encourage other discussions between countries.

Competitors and teams from the Northern Territory enter the BIMPT-EAGA Games, and I know the Minister referenced and has been to them. These games are important for networking and developing the long-standing sporting ties the Territory benefits from. Our athletes get a lot from these opportunities to compete on the international stage.

As we know, the previous government had several sports ministers. Not a single one of them acknowledged that the Arafura Games were an important part of the sporting fabric of the Northern Territory and should not

have been scrapped. The same goes for tourism ministers who did not take an interest in how the games could grow or acknowledge them as the opportunity they were.

I commend my colleagues, the Minister for the Arafura Games and the assistant minister, who have worked strongly with our local sports. They have been out there for a very long time, working with our local sports community. The feedback I receive is that they cannot wait to be involved with the games again. They are looking forward to it. They are especially active in getting organised.

Every time I go to Marrara and meet with the codes, people are talking about what they are doing to get ready for the Arafura Games. It is really positive out there. It is nice to see how deeply it has been embraced. It is a shame it has to be built up from the beginning. I have no doubt people are doing all the work necessary.

The Minister for Arafura Games has already outlined the countries that have signed up so far. It is fantastic to see that the games are providing participants and officials the opportunity to connect with the Territory on so many important levels. We are looking at between 1000 and 1500 people coming to be part of that. I think the minister said 10 000 bed nights. That is good for our accommodation sector in the Territory. I think people will welcome the opportunity to host teams. That will be fantastic for our local economy.

China was the ninth country to sign up for the games. This is fantastic news alongside the addition of new direct flights to China with Donghai. I cannot remember which member it was, but someone was asking about the meetings held by the Minister for Arafura Games when we were in China. The minister joined me in Shenzhen. We were on that first flight. It was a really exciting time.

When we were there, the minister was talking about the games, giving an overview of the games and how important they could be for our relationship. I believe the minister met with the Municipal Bureau for Sport and Culture when he was there, which is good. It is an important part of our relationship building in Shenzhen, which has over 15 million people. If you look at the greater bay region, we are talking about 36 million people. The relationships we build there are valuable.

We are serious about further developing our trade relations with our biggest international trading partner. I am sure that was one of many discussions the Minister for Arafura Games had when he was there, with his other ministerial hats on as well.

Having those direct flights from China provides us with the important link that, over time, will allow the Arafura Games and other events to be opened up for more Chinese participation.

The Member for Blain referenced an opportunity to be supporting the route both ways—Darwin to Shenzhen, and Shenzhen to Darwin. I could not agree more. Bringing back this international event can and will assist us with raising awareness of Darwin on an international stage, supporting some of those existing international airline routes.

We pride ourselves on how unique our city is. It beggars belief that the previous government did not want to continue the tradition of the Arafura Games or recognise its role in showcasing this spectacular part of the world.

Since coming to government we have looked at those major sporting events we are running as a government, the big events we are putting on across all codes, and how we can use them to drive visitation. They are important to making the Territory a great place to live, making sure Territorians have access to fantastic sporting content. It is really important.

If we can get the fans to follow, athletes to come here and trade partners to travel to the Territory then we are working hard to make sure we have that lens over everything we do. It is an exciting time.

These games will include five sports for athletes with a disability: athletics; swimming; tennis; table tennis; and netball. The Arafura Games will be a potential pathway to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. I do not think it can be understated how phenomenal an opportunity this is. We will be a springboard for many of those athletes who want to come and compete on the international stage and follow a really important pathway to showcase their talent. This is a great opportunity for those athletes. It is an incredible facet of our games and it has always been an important part of our games. I know that Tim Matthews was here with the minister showcasing that aspect of our games. That is something we should be really proud of. We continue to maintain that important pathway. Some of the most engaging and fantastic sport you will see has been in those sports over the years.

I remember—I think it was 2007—when there was powerlifting and it was incredible to see the strength of participants. It was brilliant to watch and everyone was so proud. The talent was immense. I really look forward to that aspect of our games again.

Bringing back the Arafura Games is just one aspect of our commitment to Territory sport. We have been investing in sporting infrastructure that Territorians need and deserve. That is critical to our ability to put on events like the Arafura Games and other top quality events across all of our codes. We have over \$57m going into regenerating the Marrara precinct. That is creating jobs, better facilities, building the capacity of our local sporting organisations, making sport more available for all Territorians including children, women and girls and those living in regional and remote communities and is creating the environment to host these major events. That adds to our liveability and our potential to bring people here to visit. It should not be understated how important this is to keeping people here and providing those great opportunities for people to get active.

The participants and the spectators at the upcoming games will get to see many athletes competing in world-class facilities. They will also be able to see some other facilities that will be close to completion by that time. Hopefully they will leave wanting to come back to see how that whole area evolves.

The netball stadium will be open by that time and I will touch back on that in a moment. The new home for rugby league will be very close to opening at that time. That was another project where we saw the former government completely fail but I am very excited that we will be delivering that home for local rugby league and people will have the opportunity to see how much we value and invest in our sports. The facility is coming out of the ground, the grandstand is looking great and we will be delivering that important project for the future of the code and that will open up new opportunities for us into the future.

On that, the NRL recently announced that the 2019 combined affiliated states rugby league tournament will take place at Warren Park, so we are already seeing games being scheduled here. I hope it will be embraced and supported. I know that the Member for Brennan will be there getting behind great games. It is really fitting that the Titans will get to take on their interstate rivals at a Territory rugby league facility and I hope that the \$25m facility will give them a real home ground advantage.

The new facilities that we are building are primarily about encouraging Territory kids to be more active and get involved in sport. It is about encouraging all Territorians to lead healthy lifestyles and the Arafura Games will really benefit from the investment. We want to see more women and girls getting active in sport so the new indoor netball facility at Marrara will be complete in December. It is a real win for the Arafura Games.

Netball is already immensely popular in the Territory. We know that there are many players in here and the Member for Wanguri, the Treasurer, reflected on her own netball experience. I think if she had the new netball centre, who knows. She could have been a Diamond. It is immensely popular particularly with women. We know that this new world-class facility that will host the Arafura Games netball component will be no less than participants deserve. It will be fantastic. The Arafura Games netballers will be playing in the same facility that will host many other future international games—nothing less than Territorians and our valued Arafura Games participants deserve.

We have invested \$1.2m in resurfacing the hockey pitch at Marrara and improving the lights, which allows Hockey NT to grow the game and keep producing international stars which we are renowned for. Across our sporting codes, we are renowned for the talent we are producing. It will also provide a tremendous facility for the Arafura Games hockey tournament.

We know the Kookaburras recently won the international tournament there. I understand that they were hugely impressed by the hockey facility we have upgraded. I do not think there can really be any better endorsement than that. They played the world number two, Argentina.

I was reflecting on that with Ian Harkness, who was the CEO at time—he has moved over to netball. He could not think of another time where we had hosted world number one and world number two in a sport in the Territory. I cannot either. It is testament to the organisation of that sport and the passion that Territorians have for hockey. Again, with the facilities we have in the Territory, we can host world number one and world number two and give Territorians that experience but have the potential to promote those games across the country.

Our \$57m investment in Marrara is unprecedented in Territory sport history. I am really pleased that this investment will, for the first time, have a focus on the provision of adequate facilities for female participants. Our investment in TIO Stadium and Larrakia Park women's change rooms is a clear demonstration that we

are serious about addressing gender divide in Territory sport. I am sure the Women in Sport committee will also provide us with some useful direction on future infrastructure projects and how we approach events in the future to ensure we are driving our participation numbers for women. That is a great opportunity.

As the Minister for the Arafura Games noted, the games will be a huge boost for the local economy. The CBD and the waterfront will also come alive during this period as participants and spectators will all come along to enjoy all that these games have to offer. These events can stimulate the local economy. We have delivered the Big Bash, AFL games and NRL games and they have all been fantastic for Territory business and the local community. There are great opportunities ahead. This is another way we are using sport to help boost the economy.

There are 16 sports as part of the Arafura Games—athletics, badminton, basketball, boxing, dragon boating, football, soccer, hockey, Muaythai, netball, sailing, sepak takraw, swimming, table tennis, tennis, both indoor and beach volleyball and weightlifting. There will be something for everything, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies and the involvement of the multicultural community. That is fantastic.

Before I finish, I want to also reflect on the volunteers again. I understand there is about 200 registered so far. I am positive we will see many more, because at the last Arafura Games we held, I think there were 1600 athletes and 1000 volunteers. As I said earlier, Territorians get behind the Arafura Games. They love being part of it. We are a community of very generous people who get involved and volunteer. I am looking forward to catching up with some of them throughout April and May and having a chat to them about their experiences of being involved again in the Arafura Games. I am sure we will have lots of repeat volunteers from former years. That is a fantastic component of this.

Every Darwinite has probably had some kind of involvement with the games over the years. Many I have spoken to in my own community are very excited about the 2019 version of the games. They are really glad it is coming back. The Member for Wanguri spoke about that as well. This is something that people in our communities are talking about and are really excited about.

Mr KIRBY: Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, under Standing Order 43, I seek an extension of time.

Extension is granted.

Ms MOSS: I will touch briefly on some of the other investments going in to sports across the Territory, including \$2m going in to an array of sporting facilities at Freds Pass—it is something that is close to the Member for Nelson's heart and it raises these issues when we talk about sport across the Territory—\$2m in to facilities at the reserve.

There is over \$7.4m going in to sporting infrastructure in Katherine, \$6.2m going in to sporting infrastructure in Alice Springs and that is based on priorities that have been identified by that community hand in hand with the Alice Springs Town Council, and we have been able to improve some of those facilities for the Masters Games like the hot new hockey surface.

Over \$13m going in to local motor sports—another really important sport for Territorians but also an important sport that hosts a whole range of really big events that create a much more vibrant community for us to live in.

Over \$10m of investment that is going in to remote sporting infrastructure across the Territory, which is about making sure that we have sporting infrastructure that Territorians need and deserve.

There is the \$9m of sporting infrastructure going in to Purkiss Reserve in Tennant Creek, which is something that will benefit a whole range of sporting and community groups. It is a real hub in Tennant Creek.

This is about a whole range of different aspects of our community. I am really excited and our community is really excited it is coming back. We will ensure as a government that we get the most out of the games that we possibly can and that we are building as many relationships as we can to our north because that is what this is all about, but the games are so important to our sports community, and I am really honoured to be part of a government that is bringing back the Arafura Games.

I would like to thank all of those people who are involved and the immense amount of work of putting together and hosting an event like this.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise in full support of the Arafura Games and thank you to this government for bringing them back. It is a pleasure to stand up in parliament today and speak about the Arafura Games.

It is an event that is close to my heart and close to my family's as one of their most treasured memories.

I thank the minister for bringing this statement to the House as things are heating up, countries are signing up, athletes are now in preparation and the Arafura Games are just around the corner. We are all looking forward to April 2019.

We all know the history of the Arafura Games. They started in 1991 and went through until 2011. Then under the CLP they were shamelessly cancelled. In 2013—shocking—some from the other side of the Chamber try and say, 'oh well, we just deferred them, we postponed them'.

Postpone or defer are words you may use for moving something a few days or a few weeks—not four years. Postpone to me is when the date does not suit or the environment made it impossible to run the event.

The CLP during their whole term of government did not postpone or defer the Arafura Games as the Arafura Games never came back. Even when they had their chance in 2015 to bring them back they did not bring them back. They cancelled them and categorically, the Arafura Games were dead and would remain dead under a CLP government. As we have heard today from the Leader of the Opposition, if they were in government today the Arafura Games would still be dead and always remain dead.

Within two years of the Labor government coming into government, the hard work has been done to bring back the Arafura Games. We are set for a fantastic Arafura Games in April 2019. Many thanks to the minister, assistant minister and the committee of the Arafura Games.

The Arafura Games are so important to the Territory. They engage with so many different countries, other states and territories across Australia and the world. They build positive and respectful relationships. Sport breaks down many barriers in many ways; in communication, understanding each other and build lasting relationships. Relationships that grow and are helpful in future developments between Australia, the Territory and international countries.

I have played a number of sports in my time as the minister for the Arafura Games, a great cricketer in his time. There are great netballers in our team as well. I love all the sports, any new sport I am always looking into it. I love going down as an observer and watching it even though I could still play a few games, as I did in the Masters. I am still a bit sore now.

This is great news for the Territory and our families across the Territory that the Arafura Games are coming back. The Arafura Games give everyone or anyone a chance to become part of them. It is a level playing field, no matter where you came from. If you come from a remote community, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Maningrida or right here in Darwin city, you have a chance at competing with some of the best athletes in Australia and the world.

I do not cop it from the opposition that we will not get to compete with some of the great athletes across the world and I will tell you why soon. The Arafura Games is an amazing window of opportunity for all Territorians to show their skills on a national and international stage. The people that come here, engage, observe or volunteer as a coach in the games, all go home and talk about it. They go back to the countries and communities they come from and talk about it.

A member: What do they say though?

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): I am just about to.

The Arafura Games also brings so much joy to the Territory, families and children who love attending these events. The children love the opening and closing ceremonies. They may have a brother, sister or family member in the games. How great is that? They love getting to the sports they compete in to support them. Why would not families get there? This is a great opportunity for all families to get there and support the Territorians who are competing in the games.

The Arafura Games are our mini Commonwealth Games, or even our Territory 'olympic games'. You heard it here first. That is how important these games are to Territorians.

If you make it to the top of the Arafura Games you are a contender on the Australian stage and the world stage.

The Arafura Games create many jobs and supports our local businesses and economy. Can you imagine how many booster shakes are going to be sold? How many beds and rooms are going to be booked? How many breakfasts, lunches and dinners? It is fantastic. Enjoying our tourism and culture.

There is so much to offer. All of them will go home to talk about how great the Territory is, the experience they had and the friends they made.

The people who come here for the Arafura Games are our guests and we look after them as such—as Territorians do.

This is a huge economic boost for the NT, one which will go on and on.

The Arafura games bring more people here than just the athletes. They bring support staff, including medics—thankyou Australian Sports Medicine for looking after us at the Alice Springs Masters Games. There are the coaches, the parents, the supporters and families brought to the Territory.

These people are important to the athletes, to help get them up and into in their best condition to represent their country or state. There is no greater thing to do than to represent your community, state or country.

Many of these people are great volunteers who also come here, contributing to our economy, making great friends and building relationships that will last forever.

What about the Arafura Games committees and officials. Many are also volunteers. I take my hat off to the committee and all the volunteers. They are so generous in giving up their time to be involved.

Many are qualified to officiate sports, and they provide their hard work and time because they love the sport and the Arafura Games. Form the referees to umpires to water-boys and water-girls. They all should be recognised and celebrated.

With 16 different sports and 30 nations competing in the 2019 Arafura Games, this will be a very competitive and monumental event for Darwin and the Territory. Many of the sports listed are my favourite sports as a retired competitor and an avid observer.

Those sports are: athletics, table tennis, boxing, football—or soccer as the Member for Sanderson calls it, badminton, swimming, tennis, muaythai, sailing, indoor and beach volleyball, weightlifting, basketball, hockey and netball. To get this list of sports down to 16 must have been a very tough decision. There are so many sports clubs in the Territory that would want to be part of this. I am sure that after these games the next games will be bigger and better, especially if Labor is in government. We will support the Arafura Games.

We have heard about the Paralympic athletes and officials attending, and they are competing in swimming, netball, table tennis, tennis and athletics. Wow! How great is this! I am a huge supporter of the Paralympics. I was so pleased Australia hosted the Invictus Games in Sydney this year for Defence personnel. I know the Arafura Games has a proud history of supporting athletes with disabilities and to have these games back in the 2019 Arafura Games is a credit to all involved.

I must mention the basketball and the whopping prize money for three-by-three pro-hustle games, as I know many people in Palmerston love their basketball. We have games going every Saturday nights and in school holiday programs. It is a great game for our youth. I hope to see many of our Palmerston basketballers get involved in the Arafura Games and show what Palmerston has, because we have some great basketballers.

On a personal note the Arafura Games are so very important to me and my family. In the early 1990s I was a young man and a boxer, living in Alice Springs. I did not hear about the Arafura Games until 1993, and the first Arafura Games were in 1991. Sadly, I missed out on the first Arafura Games. Our boxing club was approached to compete in the games in a tournament in Alice Springs to see who would be selected to represent Alice Springs in this sport.

To cut a long story short, we boxed off in Alice Springs between the clubs and I was fortunate enough to be selected with two other boxers to come to Darwin for the Arafura Games. I remember being so honoured to represent Alice Springs, and how excited my family were. At the time, I was a young prison officer. I had to seek some urgent leave because we boxed off the week before the games and we were selected. I had to

approach the then Chief Superintendent Tony Bohning for some urgent leave to come to the games. The Arafura Games was so important to Alice Springs, that the Chief Superintendent had no problem in giving me some leave to come and attend and box at the 1993 games.

At the time, I had never been to Darwin, so I knew it was going to be a great adventure for me. We were lucky enough to get sponsored a car to drive to Darwin and I cannot remember the company that sponsored the car but thank you. It had air conditioning and we jumped in and we drove. We got up very early in the morning and we drove. It was a long trip and we got into Darwin late that afternoon, just before sunset.

In the car was two of my mates, boxers, accompanied by our coach. His name was Willie Riley. Willie Riley in himself was a great Irish boxer in his time in Australia and around the world. He was our coach and we were very lucky to have him as our coach. And he was the coach at the Anzac Hill Boxing Club which held the boxing there at the Masters Games just recently. It brought back some great memories to me to go to the old boxing club and see it has not changed much inside and meet up with a few old friends as well.

Willie Riley was a serious boxer. He boxed around the world, boxed in Sydney. He would only take on four to six boxers at any one time because that is how serious he was about boxing and the sport itself.

Mr KIRBY: A point of order, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 43; I seek an extension of time for the member to complete his remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SIEVERS: Willie Riley, our coach, very serious boxer and coach, would only pick a few to take under his wing. I was lucky enough to be there. Some other greats he took under his wing were the great Jamie Swan, who represented the NT in the Commonwealth Games.

Mrs WORDEN: Now he lives in Anula.

Mr SIEVERS: And now he lives in Anula, Member for Sanderson. We used to box against Jamie, great boxer of his time and a great bloke. The other one we had in our team was Mick Harry. Mick Harry, for those who know around Australia or the NT, was a great boxer of his time as well. He was actually a professional boxer from South Australia and came to the Territory to work and live and raise his family. We were fortunate enough to have him and his experience in our team as well.

Going back to my story, we were in the car and we drove to Darwin all day, got there in the afternoon. We were lucky enough to be sponsored by a Darwin hotel on the esplanade. Some adventures went on in that motel, nothing to do with us but that is a story for another time.

Mr McCARTHY: What is said in the ring, stays in the ring.

Mr SIEVERS: That is right, Member for Barkly. What happens in the ring, stays in the ring. I remember us arriving in Darwin and looking at all the sights in our air conditioned car and I am thinking how great is this? First time to Darwin, how great is this. I remember pulling up in the car, we have our windows up and we pull up to the motel, we finally find it and as I get out, I take a breath of air and I tell you, it was like there was a sock in your mouth. I could not breathe. The humidity I had never experienced before. I could not breathe. I am thinking how the hell are we going to box when I am trying to breathe through a sock?

We spoke to the coach and the coach said you better get used to this weather because you have to box in it, and off he sent us for a run. And off we went on a few kilometres' run. We came back, had a swim in the motel pool, cooled off, showered, had a little feed because the next day was weigh-in.

We got to weigh-in and one of our boxers was overweight, so an old thing we used to do-I am not sure if we still do it today-was to pull on a garbage bag, put three holes in it, put our sweater over the top and go for a run. That would take off a few kilos straight away. We would wipe down the sweat and get through the weigh-in.

We all got through. We were happy with that. Then we went to Casuarina Plaza, a great place, Member for Casuarina. We went there and ate as much pasta as we could. We were that hungry, because we had been starving ourselves, so we ate as much pasta as we could to build up the carbs and get us ready for the next day.

We got to the tournament, we had some wins and losses. We fought well, but the standard was very high. This is why I know these games are a great pathway into our Commonwealth, Olympics, interstate national games, because the standard was very high.

Papua New Guinea have some great boxers. Very fit and good boxers. We had to fight them and they were great fighters.

Our team, Alice Springs, unfortunately did not make the finals, however we were pleased that one of our Central Australian boxers, whom the Member for Barkly knows very well, made the finals. He won his weight division, and we followed him and were happy for him. That was a young Neil Fraser and was over 25 years ago.

We were proud that someone from Central Australia got through the finals and won the final in his weight division. Well done, young Neil Fraser.

It does not matter where you come from, these games give you an opportunity and put you on the world stage. I will not cop the opposition saying anything other than that this gives every kid a chance to make it to the top. And every kid should have a fundamental right for a fair go to have a crack. That is what we are about.

The boxing was held at the old Dolphin Hotel. It was out the back, and the ring was built on top of the swimming pool. So when we got there we thought they do not like swimming pools up here, why else would they do that?

The fun continued after the boxing. We met so many good friends and boxers and we visited as many other sports as we could. It was a memory that will stick in my mind forever. I am still very close to the people I met and boxed with.

Some I even caught up with at the Alice Springs Masters Games, with the Member for Barkly. They came and played touch rugby with us. They did not let the team down when we needed them. They are good friends and it was great to see them again. And that is over 25 years later. The relationships you make will last forever.

We had stories and great memories we all shared with our families. When we had children, I remember taking our very young children to watch the openings and closing of the Arafura Games. We loved the Arafura Games as a family, sitting and watching all the athletes with their banners and flags from so many different countries walking around the Murrumbidgee Oval. It was such a happy time. I know my children still remember these times and will be at the Arafura Games again to watch them.

The Arafura Games are of important cultural significance and rich in goodwill. Anyone competing in it will have a wonderful memory forever.

Before I finish, I must thank again the minister, the committee and the volunteers, but importantly, I thank the Member for Sanderson as the Assistant Minister for the Arafura Games. I know of the hard work the Member for Sanderson does. Kate would put in 120% into bringing back the Arafura Games as she is as passionate as all of us in this House to bring back the Arafura Games.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, our Labor Government cannot wait for the games to come back. I thank the minister for bringing this statement to the House and bringing back the Arafura Games. I commend the statement to the House.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I also speak about the fantastic initiative and commitment from our government to bring back the Arafura Games. I might do it in a slightly different tone to the Member for Brennan but no less passionately, I can assure you. It is fantastic to hear. Part of the discussion I have just written talks about everyone's stories. The Member for Brennan has his stories about what the Arafura Games mean and have meant to him, the friends he has made and the journey he has been on in the Northern Territory. Every person in this House has. Nearly every person in the Darwin community who has been here for a while has a story about their connection with the Arafura Games.

First, I acknowledge the fantastic work that has been done by the minister, the assistant minister, Major Events and all of our hard-working department people who are right behind this to make it happen. It was a commitment from opposition, very early in the piece. We knew people were extremely disappointed when the announcement was made that the games would not go on.

It is disappointing to hear that some of the beliefs of those from the other side of the Chamber have not changed. I will go into that in a little while. It was a commitment that our party made very early in the piece. They could see—and we have heard the stories about bumping into people through the community—that we knew people would be disappointed and gutted that they would not get their opportunity either to take part and play in the game, to watch them, or importantly, to volunteer. There are so many people who are extremely proud—and rightly so—of their efforts to volunteer.

It is extremely sad, as a number of members have mentioned in the last hour or so since the Leader of the Opposition's speech—extremely sad is the only way I can put it—to hear that their position on the games has not changed and that they have not been able to listen and understand what it means to Territorians to cop from them that the games, this time around, will not be in the position they need to be in—they will not be as professional and could be or we will not attract the calibre of performers and sports people. Well, guess what? They do not attract good people when they are not happening—a bit of news for the Leader of the Opposition.

When you restart something you start from ground zero, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are building it from the ground up. All of that ground we had made over all of those years is lost and gone. It will take some time to get all of that back. It just does not happen overnight.

Thankfully, we have some good, hard-working people who are prepared to roll their sleeves up and cop that on the chin, which everyone would love. If the previous administration had supported these games, they would be at a much different level to what we are able to provide now. That is not the case. It will not stop us from doing it, but I find some of the comments this afternoon remarkable.

It will not stop us, slow us down or make us back away from our commitments. We knew it would be a hard slog getting them off the ground again. Sending the assistant minister overseas as soon as we could, virtually straight away, to start rebuilding those relationships show this government's commitment to making these games as successful as possible.

It is probably a sad indictment that the respect or ability through the sporting codes—for Territorians to have a go at these sports, progress and get better, challenge themselves against interstate and overseas visitors and competitors—we have lost all of that over the last few years since they were scrapped. There is a stark correlation in the business world. The business world has lost a lot over the last few years. We are building all of those relationships again, internally, nationally and overseas.

It is a slippery slope once events are scrapped and trust is lost in the sporting, personal or professional world. We are setting about rebuilding that. We wish we were not in this position, but that will not make us back away. You will not hear people on this side of the Chamber talking them down—or on the top of the other side of the Chamber. You will hear people talking them up, because we need to be encouraging people to come to the Territory for the boundless opportunities in the Northern Territory. We know that there are. We see it every day; people rise to the top in the Territory.

We took over the reins when confidence was at an all-time low—confidence in people in the House to operate at a professional level. Our standing suffered so much interstate and overseas. The Territory's affiliation with sport is beautiful. Sport is one of the mechanisms and levers we can use to rebuild confidence around the nation, whether it is through issues with youth, rebuilding our brand and confidence from people here, overseas and interstate.

I believe sport can be a big contributor to programs being restarted and regenerated to encourage young people towards sport rather than to get into trouble. Massive, fantastic stories come from programs like the Clontarf Foundation. There is a reason why basketball and other sports try to replicate programs like Clontarf. It is because they are so successful. Territorians relate so closely with sport. We have the ability to hold fantastic sporting games in the Territory. It brings people together. We would be naïve to not explore that as an opportunity to better ourselves and our relationships internally, with kids and troubled kids, and with our Asia-Pacific neighbours, which is the intent of the Arafura Games.

We have had a very successful Masters Games and the concentrate heavily on sportsmanship and making sure everybody has a go and makes some new friends. It is not quite like junior sports days where every participant gets a medal, but I have to question winning a bronze medal when you do not win a game. Happy days if that is what some members of the Chamber are happy to hang their hat on, good luck to them.

We understand and it is probably a timely reminder that the relationships and friendships that are formed and the bonds that are made through things like the Masters Games will flow over into the Arafura Games. We will be building those relationships through the Northern Territory and overseas.

People have spoken well this afternoon on that necessity to grow those relationships with our neighbours. The Member for Blain put it eloquently about growing those relationships with our Asia-Pacific neighbours and how important that can be. As the Member for Port Darwin, I was happy to find out that the opening and closing ceremonies will be down at the Waterfront. I was proud and happy to be able to attend the announcement of that with the minister very recently.

The last time I was able to play in the Arafura Games—as it does for all of us, as we have mentioned—I have some extremely special memories for me. Whilst we are sharing war and sporting stories I will elaborate. The Member for Nelson eluded to Papua New Guinea playing AFL up here and I was lucky enough to play against them. You are right, Member for Brennan, they are very good boxers. We felt the wrath of that on the footy field, they did not like to come second.

I was lucky enough at a reasonably young age to be asked to compete with the Northern Territory side in the Masters competition. They had a team as the Northern Territory in the Masters group in that AFL comp. We played against Japan and there was a side from a few different communities in regional Western Australia. I am not sure if there might have been a team from New Zealand, but I am not sure that we played.

It was a fantastic few days and pretty heaving going when you are playing that many games in a short amount of time. The people we met and the friends that we made—to be able to do that for me, with some of the friends that I had made already through the Banks Football Club, Lincoln Jenkins and people like that, that we got to play with—was a fantastic time. To be able to play Aussie Rules footy at Marrara Stadium in the dry season as the sun is going down and the lights are lighting up, for an AFL player there is no better place in the nation to play footy. Until we get lights at the Gardens Oval, that will be a beautiful spot to be running around in the evening.

I was extremely fortunate and I did not even realise until the tournament was almost over that they picked a team of the tournament. When you have Japan, they were enthusiastic in the way they approached the game and did not leave anything in the sheds. It was fantastic to be able to play against them. They announced the team of the carnival, I was fortunate to be one of those players in the team of the carnival. Because it was not just teams from Australia, there were teams from overseas that were playing it in, they could not call it an all-Australian team as they would normally do at a carnival like that. They had to call it a 'world team'. I am happy to say that alongside my other old footy jumpers that are hanging up at home, I have a world football jumper.

There would be a lot of players who have played AFL at a high level that would not be able to say they have a world football jumper. I am proud to say I have, and it is from the Arafura Games. I hope many other people get the opportunity to get the same satisfaction I did out of playing in the Arafura Games. Hopefully we will, in years to come, build the interest so we get AFL back in there.

The three by three pro-hustle basketball will be a great addition and it was fantastic to see the minister outside with some very tall friends yesterday afternoon. It will be fantastic to see that growing sport, which will be at the next Olympics as an exhibition sport.

My oldest son Jake has been interested at different times and has played in some tournaments. He has also represented the Territory in the three by three format of the game, which he enjoyed very much.

If it was not for the tyranny of distance, the costs and work that gets in the way of your sporting loves, he would have loved to have been able to go away and play more of that. I will be encouraging him and his teammates from the rebels basketball club to put a team in the pro-hustle and see if they can get themselves further through that competition.

The activation and excitement around the waterfront will be fantastic. I was pleased to attend with the minister the announcement that Creative Accomplice have won the contract to do the opening and closing ceremonies, partnering with another company called Party Passport who are well-known for producing events that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Brett Guy and Ben Greats will put together a stunning opening night celebration for us. It will be a beautiful spot down at the waterfront as the sun goes down for those people coming to the Territory for the first time.

We are talking the Territory up and trying to get advertising out. We had questions today about what we are spending on advertising. I guarantee the best form of advertising is having somebody in your face talking the Territory up, and that will happen after the opening ceremony when people get to see what a beautiful offering the top end of the Territory is.

Ben will take a lot of pride, and with his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, will put together some fantastic displays and programs for people on that night.

The volunteers have been some of the people that feel let down. They have not had an opportunity, for the last few years, to do one of the things they are extremely passionate about. I look forward to encouraging as many people as I can to volunteer.

I have looked through the sporting list and number of sports that are going to be on. We will see if a few of us might be able to put a team together or go into one of the individual sports, if we get the opportunity. If we do not get the opportunity, and have the ability around sittings to volunteer some time to help the athletes and crowds get into and out of games, we will be doing as much as we can.

We heard the assistant minister speak about how much help the major events team have been, the drive they have put into the project and their expertise. It is well thought of and well respected through the Northern Territory. We put on some world-class events, and I know some of those have been listed here today so I will not go back through them again. The team from our major events crew deserve as much thanks and praise as we can give them.

The list of sports we went through earlier is so broad. It will make for such an interesting time. It is worth going through them again. Athletics and track and field is well supported up here. Hopefully we will bring some interstate and overseas competitors who enjoy being here. Basketball, beach volleyball, boxing—I am not sure if we can get the Member for Brennan to tie up his gloves again. He might have hung them up.

We have local dragon boating sides that practise a lot in my electorate. They use my electorate office for their meetings. I will be supporting them as much as I can.

Soccer will be big. It always is.

Mr Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move an extension of time to finish off my remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Mr KIRBY: Soccer is such a big sport. With our ties to the Greek and Italian communities throughout the Top End, it will always be heavily attended.

One thing I look forward to—the minister for sport mentioned that we are getting on with improving sporting facilities in the Territory, not just for kids but for adults to avail themselves of. It is such an important thing for Territorians.

I look forward to the day Warren Park is full of under-18s or under-16s from all over Australia, running a junior competition. They will have access to half a dozen rectangular fields in a small geographical area. That will put us in a position of holding some wonderful tournaments in the future. Soccer might be another thing we can target as well.

Indoor volleyball, muaythai, netball, sailing—I look forward to seeing some of our sailors on the harbour. Sepak takraw, swimming, table tennis, tennis and weightlifting—it is a good, broad start. We will not get to where we would like to be, running the initial games, but we will give it a go. We will have some great offerings and people will find a sport they can get involved in socially. If they are semi-professional and want to have a go, there will be sports people can get their teeth into.

I am extremely proud of this government and how it recognises that sport is such a big part of the fabric of our society in the Northern Territory. You only have to look at some of the families from the Northern Territory and how they perform on the national stage when given the opportunity. Very recently, in the AFL Grand Final—some families from the Northern Territory performed on the biggest stages in the world. They never let us down; they represent us proudly.

That is a big part of why the NT has such a strong affiliation with sport. It is one of the reasons we can use sport to rebuild some of those links with kids who may have lost their way. We can use it as a driver for

tourism and business. More importantly, we can use it as a driver for some civic pride. We are fantastic at digging in behind each other and helping out. Cyclone Marcus was a fantastic example of that. The council, Power and Water, Defence Force people helping out—we love to see that. We do not get the opportunity to do that after crisis every now and again, but we do not get the opportunity to do that very often for a fun reason of inclusion. The Arafura Games will bring that back to the Northern Territory.

People will be surprised by the amount of goodwill and how much people's spirits will be raised in that time. As we have teams competing from all over the Territory, that enthusiasm will spread through the Territory as well. It is something as far as civic pride, personal pride and Territory pride goes, we do not get the opportunity to do enough anymore so it is a very welcome return. I thank the minister for all his hard work. I know he will look forward to the day if they do get cricket included in years to come—I know the minister is proud enough that he will don the pads and still try and have a crack, it does not matter in what form of the game, he would still love to be able to back himself against any bowler that someone puts in front of him and try to put one over the fence.

Our assistant minister and her absolute passion and professionalism for the role, leaving no stone unturned to make sure that these Arafura Games are the best they can be. The Major Events team, their professionalism and how the approach not just this project but every project they take part in in the Northern Territory. Obviously I thank all of the hardworking departmental staff that on a day-to-day basis just rip in and do the best they can. They will also be a big part of this being a huge success throughout the Northern Territory and the Top End in 2019.

I commend this statement to the House.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to talk about the Arafura Games because these games will benefit the whole Territory. It is very important that we focus on that whole benefit and the opportunities it will provide moving forward. It has been great sitting here listening to all of the responses from different perspectives from across the chamber.

I come from Alice Springs and we have just experienced the Masters Games. People have been talking about the benefits of the Masters Games in Alice Springs and the positive impact they had. We have just had another successful games in Alice Springs and there were over 3700 athletes, which in a town of under 25 000 people is a huge growth in the population. We had very full hotels and restaurants and facilities right across the town.

There was a record 231 teams who participated in all kinds of sports and 36 sports were played during that time. That shows you that this is a much smaller program that what we are expecting for the Arafura Games but the impacts on our town—and I would like to back what the Member for Port Darwin was just saying about the impacts on the mood of the community, it was strong.

It is because we had so many people participating in the games, locals and visitors, it really brought an energy to town which we do not often experience. It brings a collegiality and a willingness to participate. It means that wherever you go, people are asking you 'are you participating' and 'what did you go and see.' It brings that sense of competition and community through the whole experience.

We had some very interesting participants and the diversity of participants is very important. The oldest competitor was a woman called Glad Gullock who was 90 years old and she participated in the games. The youngest, which does make me question what masters means, was Taylor Chalker at 25. I really do not know if you qualify as a master at 25. We are in big trouble if you do.

It is about participation and to be a spectator in sport. It is not a surprise to anyone in this Chamber that I am not a sportswoman. I have said loudly that I have not played sport since the 1980s however, I am an enthusiastic spectator.

One of the great things about the Arafura Games from the conversations I have had, is that it is going to be a great spectator special. Some of the sports that are coming over are not seen in Australia very often and not at an elite level. This will be adding to people's ability to drop in to activities after work and do a range of things.

That is what happens during the Masters Games in Alice Springs. People participate in the morning, go to work and then participate the next morning. Often things are done early in the morning to make sure we have the best comfort. The values it adds to the town are very hard to measure. After the Arafura Games have been successfully delivered, we will see what those issues are.

It is important we have positive things to talk about and that the community can participate in. Sometimes people think about why, as a government, are funding some activities. It is important that as part of the Territory lifestyle, people have things to talk about and positively talk about the Northern Territory.

One of the issues that came up in the Boundless Possible research is that people on the east coast and not from the Territory often have a very negative view of the Northern Territory and do not know our true story. That is one of the goals of Boundless Possible.

The Arafura Games gives that different view. Many people I spoke to who were the first time participants at the Masters Games were blown away by Alice Springs. They had heard a certain story about Alice Springs and had seen some of the negativity that is often put up about our town. Yet, they come to an event like the Masters Games and they experience people being friendly, people participating, people going out of their way to make sure they have a good time and welcoming them into social and other events.

It is a fantastic experience to make sure we, as a Territory, put our best foot forward. This is what the advantage of—I think the narrow vision of the CLP in this area shows what a narrow vision they have of the Northern Territory, an old fashioned view of what the Territory is about. This is a part of us being a vibrant, forward thinking and multicultural community.

One of the great privileges of this job is being minister for multicultural affairs. I have met some extraordinary people through the job by going to meet with community members. We have extraordinary community groups in the Northern Territory. In Alice Springs we have a broad range of multicultural groups. Here in Darwin, we do too. I acknowledge not only the work of the Member for Sanderson on the Arafura Games but also her work in the multicultural community as my assistant minister. She attends many events and has her finger on the pulse.

It is important to acknowledge the 10 countries that have formally accepted the invitation. They include China, the Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Macau, Tuvalu and Vietnam. I met the foreign minister of Tuvalu, she is also the fishing minister, at the international global meeting of women. I hope she is part of the delegation because that is exactly the type of relationship that can be strengthened at events like this. People who you have met somewhere else come for an event; you catch up and build on that relationship. That is how successful partnerships, professional relationships and trade ties become stronger. It is through that type of work.

It is also about learning how to work through difficult issues. All those countries are in our region and face a multitude of issues. That type of sharing and opportunities on informal levels can mean that where there are issues that need to be resolved, you have strong relationships to work through this in, as well as to share ideas, knowledge and information.

There are some very exciting aspects to it. Even more exciting, is that people from five provinces in China can come to the NT. It broadens economic opportunities and abilities to build relationships. I was pleased that the Chamber of Commerce has taken on this event and is working on how we can leverage those opportunities to build relationships. For these types of events to be successful we need the whole community to pull together and be part of positively selling the Northern Territory.

That is what happens every year with the Masters Games in Alice Springs. We spend a lot of time preparing, organising, seeing what the opportunities are and making sure people have a great experience and will want to come back.

Those are very important opportunities regarding the games.

People often take the opportunity to take a side trip when they come up for event like the Red CentreNATS, another great event organised by Major Events. A lot of people came to Alice Springs for the Red CentreNATS and then went on to Uluru. They did the road trip in their fantastic cars. There are some clearly some opportunities with the Arafura Games for people to do more. Trips to Uluru are high-profile at the moment. People want to see the Field of Light, which is extraordinary.

Recently I had the opportunity to go to Uluru with the Cabinet and see the Field of Light for the first time. It is indescribable how beautiful it is. It exceeded my expectations and I recommend that people see it. There are opportunities to go to Kakadu, Litchfield and all those amazing places. The flow through from an event like the Arafura Games is extraordinary. We know it works because of things like the Masters Games and the Red CentreNATS.

I had not heard of the basketball game before this; that is how sporty I am. It is very lucky that we have such dedicated sport fanatics in the Cabinet. We all bring strengths. Our diversity is a strength. I was surprised when I moved to Alice Springs because I had no idea how big a game table tennis was. There is a huge club in Alice Springs. Table tennis is a very competitive sport, so it is good to see it on the list.

Boxing is also a very welcome inclusion. The Member for Brennan has already touched on that. Boxing at the Masters Games was another surprise. It was an extraordinary tournament. People were thrilled it was included in the Masters Games. It is great that it is here.

Football will be extraordinary. Badminton, swimming, tennis, muaythai, sailing, indoor and beach volleyball, weightlifting, basketball, hockey, netball and dragon boating. The diversity of sports on offer show this is a games that has something for everyone. It has spectator opportunities. You can go and see a sport you would not normally see and at an extraordinary standard. And people will be able to participate at certain levels, which is important.

We know volunteers are extremely important. Multicultural organisations are run through volunteer boards, many NGOs and small community organisations are run through volunteer boards. Our foster carers volunteer large amounts of their time to provide care to some of our most vulnerable children.

We know the Northern Territory has a strong and proud history of volunteerism and people participating in community events to make sure they happen. In a small jurisdiction, unless you are volunteering, things do not happen. Nothing gets done in Alice Springs either, unless there is a volunteer. There is a strong core of people who do that volunteering.

I take this opportunity to encourage people to volunteer. It is an extraordinary thing to do and the last few years I have volunteered at the Henley on Todd, at the soft drink stand. That is my job, as it turns out I might have it for life now. They ring me every year and ask what time I will be at the soft drink stand. Not, can you, but what time will you be there? Which is exactly what you want to do and is what we want to see from people in Darwin.

One of the things about Darwin is it is not a small town like Katherine or Alice Springs. It is bigger and people are more transient, but this is a great opportunity to be part of the community, grow friendships, meet new people and participate in something that is great for the community.

I encourage people to volunteer. It does not have to be complex. It can be checking tickets at a door or driving a bus with athletes. It can be helping with registration, which is an enormous job. It was impressively done in the Masters Games, they have that down pat. Registering and making sure people have the information they need and being that ambassador.

One of the things we do in the Masters Games is have Masters Games Ambassadors, long term residents who are there to talk to people and make sure they are having a good time and are getting all the information they need and if there is a problem, how to solve it.

It is good this is the final day of sitting because my voice is about to give up.

It is an extraordinary opportunity for people to participate in something positive, to be part of an event which is going to bring so much to Darwin and the whole Territory.

I take this opportunity to thank the minister for bringing this statement. It is important we talk about positive things in this place, the benefits and the options. For me the biggest thing about Arafura Games is linking into our Boundless Possible agenda. We want to make sure people have a different view of the Northern Territory than they have in the past.

It is not about crocodiles and this far-away place where people are not welcome. We know a modern and vibrant Northern Territory is about art and culture, and that will be on full display in the Arafura Games. It is about community participation and belonging to a place, and participating in a community that is supportive, encouraging and inclusive.

It is about adventure and trying things you have never done before. It is also about lifestyle and getting the right balance between work and play, and participating in a range of things you could not easily participate in if you were in a big city. There are extraordinary opportunities.

I thank the minister for his work in this area. I thank the assistant minister, the Member for Sanderson, for her work. We are lucky to have such accomplished sportspeople in charge of the sport activities, making up for those of us who are not. We are supportive, and the benefits of this games goes beyond sport. It is not just about sport; it is about community, the Northern Territory, and it being a better place.

Ms UIBO (Education): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I add my support to the Arafura Games statement. As a born and bred Territorian, like many others, I have very fond memories of the Arafura Games and share the dismay of my fellow Territorians when the games were scrapped amid the chaotic CLP government.

I was just six years old when the Arafura Festival, as it was then called, began in 1991. The games were as much of a fixture throughout my schooling years as all other great sporting events on the calendar, such as the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games. There is a big difference, though. For a kid at school in the Territory throughout those years, these were our games. They belonged to the Territory. They were accessible, and for those of us who loved playing sport, they became something of a bigger challenge. Unlike the far bigger national and international games, they were within reach.

There was the possibility that we might be able to compete one day, which I was fortunate enough to do in 2009 with soccer. There are some personal stories I want to share in my speech today. They go to the heart of what we have heard today from previous speakers in regard to the games. It is about mateship, supporting other people, connecting in community and having a go. They are some of the key things we have heard throughout today. I want to echo those sentiments.

The great thing about the Arafura Games is that it is not just about sport; it is the wonderful sense of community it brings. I have such lovely memories of going to the games as a spectator with my friends in high school, watching players from the Territory and all over Australia, and athletes from overseas take part in the games.

One of my favourite memories is watching a Territory team from Borroloola. It was an all-Aboriginal team playing against teams from across the Asia-Pacific region, which is at the heart of what makes these games so special—very talented footballers, I might add. The Member for Barkly would know how great their uniform is. It is bright red and really stood out on the green field. You could not miss the Borroloola team.

As many would recall, the games were, at their very heart, inclusive and connected. Not only did it give kids from some of the most disadvantaged regional and remote communities across the Territory something to look forward to every couple of years, and a foundation for learning in school all about our northern neighbours, it also gave able-bodied and disabled athletes an opportunity to compete. I am very happy to say it will do again in April 2019.

As Education minister it saddens me that school kids have missed out on attending this event for the past six years. This is an event for all Territorians. I think most people will agree, it certainly resonates with our Territory kids. It is an event that opens up worlds of possibility they may not have even considered by looking at the games.

Perhaps the CLP did not fully understand the sense of community when they made the decision to first shelve the games and then scrap them altogether. Perhaps they did not anticipate the huge backlash from community in making the decision based purely on economics rather than the connection of community and what is best for the Territory.

Our government on the other hand, has listened to Territorians as the Member for Brennan has just echoed. We have overwhelmingly heard is what they want is the Arafura Games returned. We listened and we, the elected government with a promise to bring them back, are putting those promises into action. I thank Minister Vowles for his commitment in delivering this promise that we have made to our fellow Territorians.

Like with everything our government does, we have consulted widely with Territorians to ensure the games we bring back are what they envisage. Territorians deserve a government that listens to them before they take decisive action and this is what we have done in this case.

We consulted widely with hundreds of volunteers, stakeholders, multicultural groups, sporting groups, volunteer groups and community members who have been involved in the games in the past and for those who are interested in being involved in the future. We also undertook an online survey, all of which combined to inform the size, scope and timing of next year's Arafura Games.

The last time the games were held, 1600 athletes and more than 1000 volunteers took part. It is much more than a sporting and cultural event, it also provides opportunities for local jobs, economic activity and opportunities for local businesses. We know that Territorians are doing it tough. This event next year will give our local businesses a welcome boost that they need and deserve.

Two Darwin companies, Creative Accomplice and Party Passport, have been awarded the tender to produce the opening and closing celebrations. Some of the best memories that I have are the opening and closing ceremonies at the Arafura Games. A pretty spectacular sight if you have never seen before. If you have seen them and you have been able to attend these fantastic ceremonies you will attest to the amount of work that goes in to showcase some of our local culture and talent but also to acknowledge our neighbours from far and wide to participate in the games. It is a fantastic way to celebrate Territory achievements in culture and arts and sporting prowess but also to welcome our visitors from interstate and overseas. They are fantastic ceremonies and I look forward to the 2019 ceremonies being of utmost quality and bringing the crowds in to celebrate what is unique about the Territory.

Awarding contracts such as these to local Territorian businesses is one of our government's key priorities. Not only will the celebrations support local jobs and businesses, but they will also ensure that the opening and closing ceremonies celebrate the unique Territory culture. It is equally important to recognise the opportunity that the games provide in building, fostering and strengthening our relationships with our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region.

We know how important trade is with our closest neighbours and the impact it makes on the Northern Territory economy. As the gateway to Asia, here in the Top End of the Northern Territory, we are positioned uniquely to capitalise on that very market. It is vital that we grow and strengthen our relationships with the Asia-Pacific region with events such as the Arafura Games. This is a perfect opportunity to do so.

We know that sport brings people together and what an opportunity we have to capitalise on our sporting relationships but our economic and diplomatic relationships also. These ties can lead to increased investment and exports to the Territory and most importantly, jobs for Territorians.

Many of my colleagues have mentioned the countries that are already locked in to send their athletes to the Arafura Games. I am very excited to see that we have countries of large scale and also small populations that are going to be coming across. It shows the diversity of our region. Inviting small and large neighbours alike, to be able to share in such an event, goes to the heart of what the Territory is about in making connections and providing a sense of community.

The sports to be included in the 2019 Arafura Games have also been echoed by many of my colleagues. My favourite sport—the most popular game in the world—the real football, soccer. I am excited to see this is going to be included again and I have the ambition that the team I am going away with to Brisbane in two weeks' time, to participate and compete in the Aboriginal Indigenous football competition—soccer competition—the NT Yuppies, before our first games in Brisbane in a fortnight's time, we are looking to put in a team in the Arafura Games.

Nearly ten years later since the last time I had the opportunity to compete in the Arafura Games, that I will be one of the veterans on one team. Hopefully one day I end up in the Masters Games as well. I have written to the minister responsible for the Masters Games to ask that soccer is included in the next two years.

I am excited about the Arafura Games and having that opportunity. Local teams, international teams and interstate neighbours will be competing. It will give an extra edge to the competition knowing that it is not people you play against all the time here in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Often there is a lack of opportunity in terms of being able to play against larger teams and more experienced teams. This will add an extra boost to the level of competition that people are exposed to in the Territory.

I am looking forward to that and other girls in the team are excited about not just our Brisbane competition in a fortnight's time, but where we can go from there. I am not sure if I will be able to walk after that but I will give it a crack anyway.

The other sports that have been mentioned such as weightlifting, wheelchair tennis and para-athletics will also use the Arafura Games as a pathway event for athletes to gain ranking points, record qualification records or to participate in the required number of events to be eligible for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

It is exciting and I disagree with the opposition leader who said that this is not a world class sporting event. I disagree with the comments he made today. This highlights that there is opportunity for our athletes intra-Territory, interstate and international to be able to gain further experience in their elite sports and to be able to use their sporting results to boost their opportunity for more opportunities through sporting events such as the Olympic and Paralympic games.

I am personally looking forward to watching sepak takraw which is an extremely athletic sport. It will be a demonstration sport along with dragon boat racing. I have had the privilege to be able to watch this sport here in Darwin through the Arafura Games in past years. The athleticism displayed by those competitors is amazing. I can only dream to be that athletic now. Back when I was younger and fitter, it could have been an opportunity. I more of a realist now, so probably better to sit on the sidelines and watch that demonstration sport.

As mentioned, this unique melting pot of multiculturalism in our regions provides excellent opportunities for our school children, Territory kids and education staff at both the games and associated activities.

Previous games provided a number of benefits to local school communities, including the delivery of specialist sports clinics to children and young people in schools, and sports clubs by visiting players and coaches. School visits and events to promote sport and healthy living are absolutely important, and introduce students to new sports from participating countries, such as sepak takraw.

Students and school staff gain experience competing in the games, and the standard of competition set for the games is emerging athlete, which provides the development opportunity for competitors under the age of 18 years.

An opportunity for remote students at Darwin boarding schools to experience the sports festival, or compete in the games themselves. This is exciting. An opportunity for student participation in the opening and closing ceremonies through performance arts. An opportunity for students to develop citizenship skills by participating in the events as volunteers with other members of their community.

There were approximately 1000 volunteers in the 2011 games, which included some of our Northern Territory students. Secondment opportunities for school staff to participate and volunteer at the games. This is an exciting element for people across the public service, including our teachers and education staff.

The celebration of local and regional diversity through school engagement with the sports festival. I am looking forward to that next year.

As someone who has taken part in the Arafura Games as a participant, and attended as a spectator, I cannot stress enough what a fantastic experience it is. I encourage all Territorians to get on board, whether as competitors, officials, volunteers or spectators. It will be something you will never forget and look forward to every two years. It will be something you, as a Territorian, can share with the rest of the country and the world as a special coming together of people and communities and spirit.

I commend Minister Vowles' statement to the house and thank him, his office and his department for ensuring we have a 2019 Arafura Games. We have listened to Territorians and will be delivering for Territorians. We will ensure Territorians have the opportunity to showcase some of the world-class facilities in the top end and across the rest of the Northern Territory.

As we have heard from the Member for Braitling, the opportunities go beyond the games such as tourism opportunities in the whole of the Territory. As we know, we are unique and have a lot to offer. We have fantastic opportunities in regard to activities in the Territory, beautiful natural landscapes, history and culture thousands of years old we are able to share, as well as our contemporary arts and music.

Nowhere else in Australia can duplicate what we have in the Territory and the best thing to showcase throughout the games is our people. Territorians make things special. Opportunities for locals to showcase what they love about the Territory in their capacity as officials, volunteers and competitors.

As the Member for Braitling mentioned, the engagement people get from volunteering and being part of festivals and sporting events without necessarily having to go through the hard yards of being a competitor. What you gain from being part of such events is extremely fulfilling. It is something I look forward to. I am already trying to plan, I am sure my office will be pulling their hair out at the moment hearing me say this. I am looking forward to spending time in Darwin for the Arafura Games next year, seeing it grow bigger and better and knowing that the Territory Labor government is delivering for Territorians.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you, Minister Vowles, for driving this. He is extremely passionate about it. He always has his countdown clock running so he can tell people exactly how many days, hours and minutes it is until the Arafura Games. The countdown is going quickly. As we draw closer to the event, we will see a lot more work being done, excitement and more visitors to the Territory and Top End to share the excitement of having the 2019 Arafura Games back on the calendar.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to make a correction on an answer in Question Time today.

Leave granted.

Ms MOSS: I want to correct for the record that the amount for the 'NT now' campaign three-month trial was approximately \$530 000. This information was provided earlier this afternoon to the Leader of the Opposition's office.

PAPER TABLED Members' Fuel Transaction Report

Madam ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, following the Auditor-General's report and recommendation into members' fuel card use provided on 18 December 2013, I table information contained in reports in the Assembly each quarter. I table the quarter three 2018 Members' Fuel Transaction Report. I also table the Northern Territory Electoral Commission Annual Report for 2017–18.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Taxi Licensing and Subleasing Report—deferred.

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

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory, March 2018, Report to the Legislative Assembly—deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I conclude the October–November sittings by reflecting on a couple of events, which I will term, 'wellbeing events for Territorians'. The first was Madam Speaker's Mace tour of the Northern Territory. I acknowledge Madam Speaker and the Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Education Services team for their great efforts in travelling with the Mace through the Northern Territory and, importantly, to Tennant Creek.

It was a really good opportunity for the people of Tennant Creek, particularly young people at Tennant Creek Primary School, to engage with education services and fulfil an opening parliament to the people experience with a great lesson at the school. It was the classic mock parliament with all the preparation that goes into it, costumes, props, bills, debates and of course, the division. It was a really good opportunity for not only the students, but the support staff and teachers at the school. It makes parliament real. It is a pragmatic exercise to raise awareness of what we do as legislators, parliamentarians and local members.

The tour of Tennant Creek was one of many as part of that regional focus. They also visited Elliott and I was not able to join them in Elliott but I heard that they were well received and warmly welcomed. It was a road trip so it was a considerable effort to do that and that is what you need to do when you want to travel through the regional areas.

The mace visiting other areas and other towns raises a lot of conversation. For the people in Tennant Creek, it was a welcome home. The mace is very special to the Northern Territory, it has a wonderful history, and part of that history is the stamp that was put on it by the region of Tennant Creek when it had an unexpected

fall and it still wears the scar of that today with pride. That pride is shared by the community of Tennant Creek. There were lots of stories swapped from people at the time who remembered it, some police officers who remember the event, there was some real folklore and legend. Madam Speaker certainly raised the legendary stories of the Northern Territory and particularly Tennant Creek.

In addition to the mace tour in Tennant Creek, it was wonderful to host Madam Speaker, the Clerk and the Parliamentary Education team at the electorate office. The Barkly Electorate Office receiving its upgrade after 30 years, now fully compliant with fire regulations, disability access, safety and security; the amenity of the place is fantastic. The locals have warmly received it and it provided an element of an economic stimulus to a regional town with the creation of jobs in the construction sector.

The job was done very well and Madam Speaker was suitably impressed when she saw the improved amenity and the services available to the people available to the people of Tennant Creek and the Barkly because electorate offices are essentially for the people. It was nice to have the Speaker of the Northern Territory come and visit the Barkly electorate office, meet the staff and meet some constituents. Thank you Madam Speaker, thank you to the Clerk and thank you to the Parliamentary Services Team.

Another important element of the last few months for me was attending and participating in the masters games. I thank the Member for Brennan who coordinated and facilitated the opportunity for the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and myself to join with a distinguished outfit of experienced touch football players from across the Northern Territory and compete. The actual Masters Games was sensational and my previous experience there was as a local member invited there to present medals. This opportunity in terms of participating in a touch football competition was outstanding because it layered up the understandings around this major event in Central Australia, something that is celebrated and worn as a badge of pride for the town and community of Alice Springs.

Not only was I able to participate in the touch football but I was able to have a look at other sports. I will make mention after hearing the Member for Brennan's contribution about the boxing, because it was good to go to the boxing with the Member for Brennan and be introduced to a lot of the boxing community from across the Northern Territory. What I witnessed was superb exposition of Territory sport. For the first time in the Masters Games, I think it is a complete winner and the Alice Springs Masters Games will see boxing continue. Not only was it a brilliant venue, it had the support of Northern Territory boxing with the Darwin rings sent down, it was an outdoor ring which was just sensational at the base of Anzac Hill. It was really well supported by the community and including Paul Hanson, a boxer from Tennant Creek, who I was very honoured to be able to support in his quest.

What it did for me though, it added another layer of understanding about sports competition and the spirit of competition, not so much about winning and losing.

If you want to raise the bar in a sport like boxing, there is a winner and a loser. It is a competitive sport, but it is accepted by the crowd, the supporters, the judges and the boxers themselves. The outcome is defined. Let us face it, in the sport of boxing. What will the loser do? Ask for another chance? That comes around next time. It is something you train and prepare for.

We really need to understand this culture and this level of sporting etiquette so we can have this conversation across the Northern Territory in regard to making sure our sports initiatives are celebrated in regard to participation, the work that goes into getting there, being on the field, in the ring or the court, and being a role model for your family, kids, friends and the spectators. At the end of it all, no matter who wins or loses, everybody celebrates the event. So many times across the Territory these events are causing concern and go wrong.

Well done to the masters. They have a significant benchmark. Everybody across the Northern Territory needs to conform to that.

As I moved around that week and looked at the administration and management of that event, it would be impossible without the depth and breadth of volunteers. I was advised in a few different locations that around 400 volunteers support the Masters Games. If we are to build festivals and sporting events in the bush, not only do we have to be cognisant of good sports and sporting ethics, but also of how these events need a culture of volunteering. It is not good enough to expect to be paid.

It is about the volunteers, good sports administration and management. The Masters Games was a learning curve of how to aspire to that and incorporate it into our bush festivals and regional towns. I liked the Member

for Port Darwin's comment about Warren Park. It is about juniors. If you do not have juniors, you do not have a sport. If you do not have junior sport development then you have no future in your sport.

Thank you to all those who volunteered in the Masters Games. Thank you to the members of the Department of Housing and Community Development who volunteered.

Thank you also to Madam Speaker for the mace tour. You are welcome back in Tennant Creek any time. It was a nice wellbeing factor as well as all the other work we have to do in the Northern Territory.

Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, this evening I am talking about education again. I want to comment on a response to written question 310.

Firstly, I will talk about the RATE program, because the program was a pioneering effort to nurture Aboriginal talent in the important area of education. The Remote Area Teacher Education Program operated from 1975 to 1995 in many remote communities. It produced over 50 local qualified teachers who were bilingual and bicultural. The majority of these teachers taught in their community schools until their retirement or, sadly, until their early deaths. The last of the RATE graduates are still teaching or working in their school in some capacity at Areyonga, Barunga, Milingimbi, Shepherson College, Yirrkala, Yuendumu and Willowra.

Language, land, knowledge practices, cultural authority structures and family connections were all a part of the RATE curriculum. The curriculum had four strands: community studies; languages, which included study of L1 and English as a second language; professional studies; and curriculum studies. At this stage, there is no equivalent to the RATE program in place because the NT education department appears to have moved away from a commitment to local teacher training.

The Catholic Education Office in the Northern Territory, on the other hand, has committed to community-based teacher education through Charles Darwin University since 2009. The program is called Growing Our Own and CDU report 20 local graduates from this program at this juncture.

The education department's initiative 'Teaching - Growing our Future' is a scholarship scheme which has proved inadequate as a strategy for gaining more locally trained teachers in remote communities. It has already failed in several sites including Shepherdson College, leaving students with HECS debts.

A key recommendation from the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative must be adopted.

Recommendation 10. Priority be given to establishing and promoting pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers to transition to careers as teachers and that such pathways be sensitive to the social, cultural and financial support required for success.

The way forward is clear. A recommitment from the NT education department, the NT government and the Commonwealth to the redevelopment of a stronger two-way approach to remote teacher education that is specifically focused on two-way education for remote communities.

Thank you.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Before I begin my adjournment, I acknowledge the comments by the Member for Nhulunbuy. I assure him and those listening that the NT Labor government is committed to improving and increasing the numbers of Aboriginal here in the Territory. I would be happy, Member for Nhulunbuy, to sit down with you and hear some of your ideas. You are quite passionate about education, particularly in your region and electorate that you represent.

I know people who have been through the RATE program and some of the teachers you talk about who are still teaching here in the Territory. They have been through that program, have been successful and are great leaders in their community. I appreciate the comments and understand the concern. It is something we are working hard with at the education department here in the Territory, to increase those numbers in growing their own, you acknowledged that program in your adjournment Member for Nhulunbuy.

I would be very happy to hear more of your ideas and sit down with you because you are very passionate about education. Thank you for those comments tonight and for sharing your concerns.

Tonight I adjourn about a fantastic day last Friday in recognising the accomplishments, commitment and dedication of our teachers in the Territory, at our World Teachers Day. I had the pleasure of hosting World Teachers Day here at Parliament house last Friday, 26 October.

Educators from across the Territory attended the function, which was also streamed live to functions held concurrently in Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek. At each of these functions we announced the Teaching in the Territory Excellence Award winners.

Each region has a winner, in each of the categories, as well as an overall Northern Territory winner. It was an opportunity for the Territory to pay tribute to all our teachers and support staff, who are working in our schools for our Territory kids.

I was fortunate in 2015-it might have been 2014-to be awarded as a regional winner for excellence in Aboriginal education in the Territory, and I was lucky enough to be named the overall Northern Territory category winner. So I know what it feels like to be recognised by your fellow professionals and to have that type of accolade to your name.

It definitely drives you to continue to work harder and I congratulate those who have been in that position, and many more teachers we will continue to recognise for their hard work. I am pleased to share with you those individuals that were recognised in the Teaching in the Territory Excellence Award for 2018.

The Northern Territory Principal of the Year regional winners:

- Lorraine Evans, Malak Primary School, Darwin region
- Penny Weily, Bradshaw Primary School, Alice Springs region
- Maisie Floyd, Tennant Creek High School, Barkly region
- John Cleary, Casuarina Street Primary School, Katherine region
- Paul Nyhuis, Bakewell Primary School, Palmerston and rural region

The overall winner being Lorraine Evans from Malak Primary School.

NT School Leader of the Year:

- Emma Pedersen, Ramingining School, Arnhem region
- Jackie Mullins, Larapinta Primary, Alice Springs region
- Brian Manning, Darwin Middle School, Darwin region
- Ben Kleinig, Manyallaluk School, Katherine region in the Arnhem electorate
- Theo Debeer, Woolianna School, Palmerston and rural region

And the overall winner being Emma Pedersen from Ramingining School.

NT Primary Teacher of the Year:

- Mollie Teale, Yuendumu School, Alice Springs region
- Pip Tonkin, Ramingining School, Arnhem region
- Skylar Warren-Blake, Elliott School, Barkly region
- Michelle Koulakis, Nakara Primary School, Darwin region
- Tessa Fondacaro, Casuarina Street Primary School, Katherine region
- Louise Cooke, Gunbalanya School, Palmerston and rural region

With the overall winner being Mollie Teale, Yuendumu School in the Alice Springs region.

NT Secondary Teacher of the Year:

- Hayley Walker, Jilkminggan School, Katherine region
- Emma Forrester, Centralian Senior College, Alice Springs region
- Jennifer O'Reilly, Tennant Creek High School, Barkly region
- Alana Bryett, Darwin High School, Darwin region
- Cindy Hope, Palmerston Senior College, Palmerston and rural
- Damian Alahakoon, Nhulunbuy High, Arnhem region
- Jill Danby, Ramingining School, Arnhem region.

The overall winner being Hayley Walker from Jilkminggan School in the Katherine region.

The NT Aboriginal Educator of the Year:

- Jamahl Hayes, Centralian Middle School, Alice Springs region
- Vanessa Marika, Yirrkala School, Arnhem region
- Beverley Wilson, Elliott School, Barkly region
- Catharine Mauboy, Malak Primary School, Darwin region
- Sherlyne Ngalmi, Lajamanu School, Katherine region-she is from Ngukurr in my electorate but has family living in Lajamanu
- Barty Narburup, Nganmariyanga School, Palmerston and rural region

And the overall winner being Jamahl Hayes, Centralian Middle School.

NT Special Educator of the Year:

- Raylee Parker, Henbury School, Darwin region
- Rohan Rowling, Acacia Hill School, Alice Springs
- Christine Parfitt, Nhulunbuy High School, Arnhem region
- Anthony Menheere, Kintore Street School, Katherine region
- Kathryn Gronholt, Driver Primary School, Palmerston and rural

With the overall winner being Raylee Parker from Henbury School.

NT Vocational Education Trainer of the Year, regional winners:

- Peter Williams, Jabiru Area School, Palmerston and rural region
- Danielle Brown, Alice Springs Department of Education
- Felicity Faull, Henbury School, Darwin region

The winner being Peter Williams from Jabiru Area School.

NT Education Support Person of the Year, regional winners:

- Jaylene McArthur, Tennant Creek Primary School, Barkly region
- Margo Nott, Alcoota School, Alice Springs region
- Justin Raabe, Nhulunbuy High School, Arnhem region
- Deanna Ther, NT School of Distance Education, Darwin region
- Bronwyn Barrow, Katherine High School, Katherine region
- Julie Burgess, Humpty Doo Primary School, Palmerston and rural region

With the overall winner being Jaylene McArthur from Tennant Creek Primary School.

World Teachers' Day is an opportunity for all of us to give thanks to the tireless, dedicated teachers of the Northern Territory and to recognise special individuals for excellence in the profession. I may no longer be in the classroom, but as Minister for Education, I know that teachers are the most important part of the education learning equation.

To all our dedicated teachers, principals and support staff, on behalf of the Territory government I would like to say thank you, and I hope you all enjoyed World Teachers' Day last Friday.

I would like to share with the House a fundraiser I will be doing over the next couple of weeks before the next sittings, on behalf of the Machado-Joseph Disease Foundation. MJD Foundation is an extremely important organisation that works to support the sufferers of MJD. It is a terrible disease. It is a muscle degeneration disease. Unfortunately, there is no cure for MJD sufferers. The MDD Foundation also supports family carers who look after their family members who suffer from MJD.

It is a hereditary disease. There is a 50% chance that MJD sufferers will pass it on to their children. It is undetectable until a particular age, when people start to display the characteristics.

I thank the MJD Foundation for the continuing work they do to advocate for and support those who suffer from MJD, as well as their carers and family members. My goal as the local Member for Arnhem, knowing I

have family members who suffer from MJD, is to do my small part and organise a small fundraiser. I will chopping off all my hair on 27 November in a fundraiser called Hair Because I Care.

I invite anyone listening to contribute. I will send out the link to the page tomorrow. My target is very ambitious, over four weeks I want to raise \$5000. I will also auction off a couple of beautiful pieces of artwork from the electorate, a piece from Ngukurr, Groote Eylandt and Numbulwar. They are all linked to family members who suffer from MJD. I am looking forward to supporting the foundation in this small way.

I have family members the same age as me who suffer from this awful disease. The strong work that the MJD Foundation does in its research, advocacy and trying to find a cure—in the meantime, ensuring sufferers and their families are supported—is important. I hope everyone is able to support me in this fundraiser and find out more about this terrible disease that some of our fellow Territorians suffer with.

Ms UIBO (Casuarina): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I look forward to donating to the Member for Arnhem and encouraging other people to. I think it is a very generous, wonderful and warm thing to do. I look forward to supporting you in your endeavours to raise funds for a worthy cause.

I wish to speak about some of our sporting achievements across the Territory. We have talked a lot about sport today, particularly about how well we do nationally and internationally for a jurisdiction of our size. One area we are doing very well in is ten pin bowling. I am immensely proud of what Territorians have achieved at the Australia ten pin bowling championships, which were held recently in Melbourne. The Territory sent a diverse and strong team to compete.

The restricted challenge team had incredible success with a team that had two members with a disability and a sprightly 82-year-old bowler who was in his first championship. It goes to show tenpin bowling really is a sport for everyone; a very accessible sport and they certainly do a great job here in the Territory. The team was coached by Chris Kirwin and comprised Martin Sammut, Jyrah Sammut, Steve Cubillo, Jai Ewins, Captain Lea Kirwin, Lisa Tiernan, Uschi Bennetts and Kathryn White. It is an amazing team that did us proud in all categories bringing home a total of three golds, two silvers, a bronze and a number of other high placings.

One notable performance was that of Uschi Bennetts who finished fifth in the Australian Restricted Cup matchplay. It was Uschi's first national championship for more than 19 years. Very well done.

We know that age is no obstacle for Territorians. We have just delivered an exceptional Masters Games so we know that no matter what age you are, you can still compete to win. That was the spirit of many members of this chamber. Our tenpin bowlers seniors challenge team may have all been past the half century age wise but Captain Chris Kirwin and his team Darren Burton, Mark White, Andrew Krink, my former teacher and co-captain Janine Matheson, Cherylynn Cowan, Uschi Bennetts and Tracey Crisp all came back with an impressive number of medals.

Chris Kirwin had a real captain's bowl winning two silver and a gold and he also had the first perfect 300 game bowled in the senior's challenge. His doubles partner Darren Burton, is the first Centralian to win a silver. The Walter Rachuig Trophy is a scratch competition open to bowlers and attracts some of the best bowlers from Australia and New Zealand. It is really competitive with all the states and territories represented in addition to an invitational team from both the defence forces and New Zealand.

Unsurprisingly to anyone here, the NT held its own with the legendary Territory bowler Rebecca Vouklos winning the allstars category, Angela Shima winning the point score and Felicity McArthur winning the sportsperson award.

The Australian masters is the premier singles event of the Australian ranked tournaments and attracts the best bowlers in Australia. I have to congratulate 21 year old Territorian Jaime Maglieri as the crowned winner in the women's division. This was Jaime's first year in an open adult competition and her success will not surprise her family, her grandmother, father and uncle were all highly accomplished tenpin bowlers who have represented the Northern Territory and the Australia on a number of occasions.

It is not just in tenpin bowling that Territorians are excelling. Territory resident Coleen Orr is also dominating at lawn bowls. Coleen is a member of the Darwin Bowls Club and she is representing Australia at the International Champion of Champions event in Sydney. Coleen is well placed to progress with four preliminary matches to come and I am sure that all Territorians will join me in wishing Coleen well and be proud of her progression in the tournament so far.

I am also on the record many times saying how important it is for us to be supporting women's sport and we are proud supporters of the Adelaide Crows women's team and we are of course, investing in the Thunder women's team to provide that pathway for Territory girls into the AFLW.

I congratulate two Territorians who have benefitted from this pathway and who last week were drafted into the AFLW. St Mary's star Danielle Ponter is on her way to the Crows, drafted at number 48 and I have no doubt that she will be an absolute star and we will all be looking forward to seeing her play—especially the Member for Port Darwin, uber fan over here—when she plays for the Crows against Fremantle in Darwin next year.

Centralian Jordan Hickey was drafted at number 31 by the Melbourne Demons. Jordan is a fine athlete and she is going to be a really big part of the Demon's women's team. Congratulations to both Danielle and Jordan. We all look forward to watching their football careers progress.

I also congratulate local league player Matti Moyle, who has just signed a three year deal with the North Queensland Cowboys. Matti has played for the Northern Sharks and Palmerston Raiders and hopefully we will see him back here in Cowboys colours in the next few years.

To go back to women in sport, I called for expressions of interest in our first Women in Sport advisory committee earlier in the year. The response was fantastic. Lots of people who share our vision to see women's sport in the Territory progress and develop. The committee is fabulous, made up of some incredible Territory women and they are all really committed to the individual sports that they are a part of but to women in sport more generally.

They are working on a number of recommendations to government. I am expecting them to give us a report in April. I thank them for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to NT women in sport. The committee is chaired by Louise Morrison. I recently had the opportunity to catch up with her and hear about how the work of the advisory committee is progressing. I visited their workshop earlier in the year. It reminds you how wonderful it is to be in a room full of passionate women. There was a lot happening in there.

I thank all of the committee members, Alex Billeter, Brittany Ward, Ewa Finch, Shani Wellington, Sheralee Taylor, Sue Kendrick, Sue Marshall and Suzi Hullick for their hard work. I look forward to reporting back to the House on their recommendations and work. I congratulate everyone again on their fantastic work across the Territory.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Braitling): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, it is with sadness that I acknowledge the recent passing of two members of my Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians. One of the great aspects of this job is having ministerial advisory committees members who you get to know well and seek good advice from.

Firstly, I acknowledge Graeme Bevis, who contributed much to the Northern Territory in his time. He was a strong advocate for seniors in the Northern Territory. He joined COTA NT as a board member in 2013 and stepped up to the role of CEO in late 2014. More recently, he was appointed the President of the Association of Independent Retirees, Darwin Branch, where he continued to advocate for the rights of all seniors.

Graeme was one of the key organisers and advocates for the position, asking the government for a meaningful review of the former NT Pensioners and Carer Concession Scheme. He organised this year's AIR forum on an important topic, keeping seniors in the Territory, which highlighted just how valuable NT seniors are and that they are the very people we need to keep here to continue their contribution to our wonderful community.

Clearly, Graeme and I did not always agree on everything, but one of the hallmarks of a true gentleman is someone who can disagree with respect and grace and still maintain relationships. Graeme was very good at that and I respected his opinion very much. He contributed enormously to the ministerial advisory group. Many people appreciated his wisdom and experience. He mentored many people, volunteered extensively across the Territory and had a keen sense of building this great Territory.

He wore many hats over the years and worked within the local and Territory government. Before his retirement, Graeme was the CEO of the Motor Trades Association. He led a very active and busy life and was a true Territorian. In his rare downtime—he worked very hard—he enjoyed sailing; travelling with his wife, Sally; and spending time with his grandkids and family. I send my heartfelt condolences to his family. He was extremely loved by them. My thoughts are with them at this difficult time. I acknowledge that he was a good and strong Territorian.

I also acknowledge Morag McGrath, who was a long-term Alice Springs stalwart—that is the term I will use; she would laugh. She unfortunately lost her battle with cancer in September. She was a Glaswegian woman who never really lost her accent and had a sense of adventure. Morag was already extremely well-travelled by the time she and girlfriend, Mary Evans—another prominent Alice Springs resident—set off on their adventure to Australia as teachers in the early 1970s.

Initially finding Adelaide a bit boring and clearly women of good taste, the two teachers soon moved to Alice Springs and became involved in a local and vibrant community, particularly in the folk music scene.

Morag was a long serving Charles Darwin University academic and well known for her outstanding contributions to vocational education and training. In 2012, Morag became the second Territorian to receive the Legends award from AUSTAFE, a professional association of senior managers of technical and vocational training.

This award recognised her efforts to inspire and encourage the current and next generation of Territory and further education leaders. She had a very positive impact on the vocational education training sector across the Territory. She held a variety of senior roles in Central Australia over the past 20 years, regularly travelled between Alice Springs and Darwin, and managed a number of CDU teaching teams.

She was well known in many organisations where she volunteered her time including the Friends of the Araluen Art Centre, Tourism Central Australia and the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame. Morag enjoyed travel so much she initially delayed chemo so she could visit siblings in Europe. Whilst still ill, she managed trips to Tasmania and Melbourne.

Morag was a bubbles drinker, like myself, and particularly enjoyed some Moët. She was a woman after my own heart and was also known to have a red wine or a whisky. She was nicknamed amongst those who knew and loved her as '1am dot com' given her honour to propensity for late nights.

She also was one of the early supporters of my campaign in Alice Springs, was incredibly supportive of a range of people and very supportive of me personally, I thank her for that. She was someone who received services from the palliative care unit in Alice Springs and she would want me to acknowledge the standard of care she received. It was important for her to be in her community when she passed and palliative care allowed her to pass with a great deal of dignity, which is what she wanted. Known for her style, resilience and passion for people—that certainly was Morag—she will very much missed in the Alice Springs scene.

Both were very different Territorians and not only contributed to the ministerial advisory committee but also to who we are as Territorians with great diversity. The core things I acknowledge about both of them is that they were both about community and volunteering their time to make our community a better place.

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): I want to share with the House some work I have been doing recently. I will start with Neighbourhood Watch Week which was held a few weeks ago. I send a huge shout out to Neighbourhood Watch NT for all the work they do. The national week is focused on signing up new members for Neighbourhood Watch in their local areas so that we can build a community of crime fighters. I thank Tracy Dowell-Middleton for all her work and support in the community, and all the police officers and volunteers who participated in the Malak information stall during Neighbourhood Watch Week.

During Neighbourhood Watch Week I also held a Karama information stall inside the Karama Shopping Plaza on the Friday, which was quite helpful. It was a great experience to be able to engage with community members and encourage them to sign up to Neighbourhood Watch locally, to become our own community of crime fighters. It seems that the wheelie bin stickers for Crime Stoppers were very popular.

I took the liberty to visit YWCA recently. YWCA is located in Malak and are funded through the Department of Territory Families for youth diversion. It was great to get out there and speak with Neville Khan and his team over there to listen to their stories and how they have been able to engage with young people prior to court appearance in regards to youth diversion.

The one thing that stuck out with me during my visit to YWCA is an entire board encouraging young people to take up employment opportunities. It is a practical way to go about it. Neville and his team do a wonderful job in researching what jobs are available, and the majority of young people who are on youth diversion and engage with YWCA are seeking the opportunity for employment.

Keep sticking at it. Only good things will come.

I also took the liberty of visiting Phil Blunt, CEO of Banyan House. I have heard about Banyan House over a number of years, so it was wonderful to actually visit the site, walk around and engage with some of the clients. It was interesting to learn from Phil that the majority of people who are successful in the rehabilitation at Banyan House are those who self-refer. Thank you to all those at Banyan House who are doing wonderful things. Thank you to the staff and good luck to those who are on their journey to get back on their feet.

I attended the Darwin Toy Library's 40th birthday with Madam Acting Deputy Speaker and the Attorney-General. It was wonderful to support Frances Czolozynski, the director, and her team. I remember the toy library from the early to mid-1980s. My mum would point it out on the way to basketball. It is great to see that 40 years later it is still standing. I also thank Frances for taking the opportunity to give us a walk through the facility. It is homely on the inside. The toy rooms are quite full. If anybody has any donations, if your kids or grandkids have outgrown the toys you have lying around, please consider donating them. I am sure they will be put to good use.

I caught up with Jo Vlassco, Kathy and the rest of the team at the Malak Family Centre. I like touching base with the centre as it provides a wonderful service to our community. Many people sing their praises on a regular basis. I can guarantee it is all valid and worth it. To Jo and her team, thank you for everything you do, and keep kicking goals.

It was also great to visit the Territory Intelligence Coordination Centre, or the TICC, with Madam Acting Deputy Speaker and the Member for Port Darwin. Thank you to the minister for Police for allowing us and organising the visit for us. It was great to walk around the centre and speak with the Police Commissioner about our concerns and ideas, and to provide feedback on behalf of our constituents in our communities.

It was also great to see the hub and different agencies working together, sharing information for the benefit of keeping Territorians safe and protected.

I attended the Save the Paws Ball, which is the RSPCA's key fundraiser. This year it was successful in raising \$44 000 for its on-site vet. I believe the Northern Territory Government has provided a great amount of funding to support this initiative. It is wonderful to see this money go toward wages for the vet. I am looking forward to the benefit the RSPCA will get out of that.

I also attended the Dancing with the Celebrities event recently. It was fantastic to see a number of local community identities joining in this celebration and fundraiser. Total Recreation raised \$22 000 this year. Congratulations to them.

Also congratulations to winners Margaret and Danny. There are a number of talented dancers out there. Some were able to practise more than others. It was great to see our federal government member, Luke Gosling, the Member for Solomon, strutting his moves on the dancefloor. It was a sight to behold. If anyone in this Chamber gets the opportunity to participate in this wonderful fundraising initiative, please jump at it. I would love to see you dance, too.

National Carers' Week was held from 14 to 20 October this year. I give a shout-out to Kim Farer and the team at Carers NT for the wonderful event run at the Leanyer recreation park on the Sunday. It is great to spend time with our carers and acknowledge there are more than 2.7 million unpaid carers around our country who do a job that we could not do. To every carer who does their job, goes above and beyond and sacrifices their time—their own sanity at times—thank you so much. Make sure you are supported in that journey and take the opportunity to pat yourselves on the back. You are the unsung heroes who hold our community together.

I launched Mental Health Week in the NT in Palmerston recently. Mental Health Week ran from 7 to 13 October. Just a shout out to all of those mental health services locally who do a wonderful job to try and care for some of our most vulnerable people. Thank you also to the Mental Health Coalition and to Vanessa Harris who does a wonderful job of sharing information, advocating for services and holding everyone to account to make sure we do everything we can to improve that space. Well done Vanessa and the service providers. It was great to see so many different events run throughout the Territory during Mental Health Week.

The final thing I put on public record, I had the opportunity to launch the youth mindfulness app called 'In the Zone' which was designed and created by ShoutOut! Shoutout is a youth mental health group that both myself and the Member for Casuarina have had a bit to do with over the years. It is headed up by the

wonderful Pritika Desai who has travelled interstate to take up further opportunities but still has her hand in looking after the youth mental health space in the Northern Territory.

Pritika, I know that you have had these huge dreams with your team over a number of years to get this youth mindfulness app up and running. Congratulations to both yourself and Slim Digital for pulling that together. I am pleased to report that 'In the Zone' is available on android and iPhone platforms. I have had a look at it. It is a wonderful app and I encourage everyone in this chamber to take a look, have that experience yourself and encourage everyone else out there. We might not be youths anymore but I got a lot of benefit and I am sure you could too.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, tonight I speak about the wonderful staff and students at the Larrakeyah Primary School and their amazing production of the Lion King at the end of last term on 27 September. It is pretty well known through the Top End that when their performance gets put on, if you do not get in early and get tickets, they sell out the Entertainment Centre. They fill it to the rafters and it is one of their major fundraisers for the year.

I was lucky that I got in early enough to purchase a few tickets and give some tickets away to a family who might not otherwise have been able to afford to go. It was a nice touch to be able to be there on the night. We took little Layla with us and she sat on our lap and was spellbound by the costumes and the entire night. Congratulations to the Larrakeyah Primary School for all of the fundraisers they do. They do fundraisers and movie nights and all sorts of different things to provide the fun stuff and educational trips that they provide for their students. This is certainly the most significant event that they plan for the year.

It was really interesting that it was a mixture of pre-recorded and part animation, but mostly a live performance. They were able to combine the two at the Entertainment Centre and have some of the animation done to explain some of the story and then have the performance part of show explain and work through the rest of the story.

The costumes that the boys and girls and teachers had put together were amazing. The job that the young actors did in remembering their lines, understanding the story and portraying everything to the best of their ability was fantastic. The teachers and all the support staff in the organisation and the culmination of the night coming together as smoothly as it possibly can is fantastic.

Natasha Guse was the coordinator of the production. Dani Madiazzo coordinates the casting. Angeline Vretis is the arts teacher and teaches across all the disciplines of arts so coordinated the dancing which was fantastic on the night. The passion that the kids put into some of the dance sessions and performances, the choreography these young students could remember was absolutely fantastic.

The Term 3 for Larrakeyah Primary School is the dance so Angeline had the role of choreographer and teaching all of the students the dances they did and they do a fantastic job. Both Danny and Angeline coordinated the scripts so they could know which parts needed dance and which could be added to the script. It all fitted in properly with the storyline of *The Lion King* most of us know the story and can wonder how that came together in a school production. They did a fantastic job. They made great use of some big props, which they moved around the stage. There were a number of little props. The costumes and enthusiasm were amazing. To sell that stadium or centre out for a night like that is a wonderful achievement. You could see the pride on the parents' faces. They were beaming with smiles after leaving and seeing what a great performance their children have put on.

The principal, Fathma Mauger, does a great job and is a driving force behind supporting this to help young kids produce and accomplish so much. Thank you to Natasha, Danny, Angeline and Ms Major. They do an amazing job putting that production together. It is a passion of theirs. The love and passion these teachers display for these students through this event and everything they do shows exactly why Larrakeyah Primary School is great and respected throughout the community.

While I am speaking about the school, I acknowledge World Teachers Day from last week and the hard work of all teachers. My daughter is in early learning, so the important dedication and passion educators of all ages is well-respected in the House. I congratulate all our hard-working teachers and educators in the Northern Territory. I wish them all a happy World Teachers Day for last Friday. I commend all their wonderful work.

I would be out of step if I did not say on behalf of the Chamber that our thoughts, love and prayers will be with the Lee and Lawler family in their tough day tomorrow. I have no doubt there will be hundreds of people at those events. We will be thinking of the families.

The Assembly adjourned.

DRAFT