Mr Speaker, I think it is worth putting this project in context. It is the single largest civil works project since the Snowy River Scheme and it will provide enormous benefit to Territorians right across the whole region, from Alice Springs right through to Darwin, and everybody in between. The rail link with the port will provide additional opportunities, not only for the Northern Territory but for the rest of Australia, as a link to the rest of our Asian neighbours to the north.

It is this government that is driving this vision. It is the CLP government that is driving this vision on behalf of Territorians that will provide jobs, not only during the construction phase, but also for many, many years to come.

The opportunities that will flow with the construction are obviously in terms of contracting opportunities that my colleagues have spoken about, it's also employment and training opportunities, supply opportunities, provision of accommodation and services, and certainly after construction, opportunities in terms of track maintenance and training of personnel and freight terminal operations. Not to mention of course, as I said, the flow-on effects to all Northern Territory businesses.

Regional benefits out of the construction obviously are going to include sleeper factories, construction of sleeper factories and flash-butt welding facilities. In Tennant Creek, for instance, up to 80 jobs. Katherine sleeper factory will provide somewhere in the order of 60 jobs. The load-out gantry in Katherine, in the order of 40 jobs. And Adrail has proposed logistics facilities and Alice Springs becoming a major service hub during that construction phase, for Tennant Creek and Centralian region that will provide more jobs.

The establishment of permanent construction camps in both Tennant Creek and Katherine, and construction camps along the route will provide yet again more jobs. My department has been working with Territory businesses to give them the service that they would expect from this government, the service that they have come to expect over the years, and the support that they have been getting us to assist them in becoming rail ready.

We have been providing networking workshops. We have funded such things as the Barkly business directory so that the rail consortium is aware of the capacity and the capability of those businesses in that region. We have run seminars to increase the opportunities for business in terms of expanding their company profile and they are still running. In fact, another couple of those will be running up and down the track over the next few weeks.

This is the CLP government supporting Territory businesses in gaining opportunities out of this fantastic project. Over 230 visits have been made by my department to businesses around the Territory, to make sure that they are aware of the potential and the opportunities and to be rail-ready.

We have also, through my department of lands, provided land in Tennant Creek itself, that will facilitate the campsite. There was some talk that the campsite was going to be outside the town of Tennant Creek, and visits by
myself and the Chief Minister, showed that the economic benefits to the region and particularly to Tennant Creek businesses, would flow better if that camp was sited in the town itself. Obviously the businesses welcome that, and they will be using the likes of the local suppliers and service businesses of the town. The construction workers will be walking down to the pub every night to have a drink in the local hotels. All these things provide more jobs for Territorians and more jobs for Territory businesses.

Local contract and transport companies have already had the opportunity to get work out of this project with relocating heavy earthmoving equipment into Katherine for the site works of the sleeper factory there, and obviously, when this project starts, there will be many, many more transport opportunities, including the carriage of fuel and the sourcing and cartage of raw materials.

The Minister for Education and Training has mentioned the MOUs that have been signed with the indigenous Territorian groups that will take part in the construction opportunities of this railway. Groups like Tangentyere Council and Julalikari and CLC and others have signed MOUs in respect of training opportunities. These are jobs for Aboriginal Territorians in this particular project and we are very proud of that, and it is this CLP government that continues to support those businesses.

The opportunities right across our regional centres are enormous for Territory businesses, and as I said, this project, the Alice to Darwin railway, is going to bring enormous benefits, not only in the interim construction period, but for many, many years to come across the whole region. It is this government that is bringing this new wave of economic development and providing these jobs for Territorians.