

Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 11 am.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE  
Member for Fannie Bay**

**Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business):** Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 224, I move that leave of absence be granted for today to the Member for Fannie Bay due to personal reasons.

Motion agreed to.

**RETURN TO WORK LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 123)**

**Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice):** Madam Speaker, I present a bill entitled the Return to Work Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I table a copy of the explanatory statement and a statement on compatibility with human rights as defined in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* Commonwealth act.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the *Return to Work Act 1986* and the Return to Work Regulations 1986 to reverse elements of the 2015 changes to the NT Workers' Compensation Scheme that so disadvantaged injured workers in the Territory.

I will take a moment to reflect. One of my very strong memories of the 2012 to 2016 Legislative Assembly was when our firefighters came in here in uniform—Madam Speaker, you will remember this—and they were so upset about the changes that were made, but also not moving forward. It gives me enormous pride to be introducing this bill today for our government. This goes to the core of our Labor values. We support workers and we will continue to support them. This bill will reverse some of those changes and make further changes to the scheme to expand the number of diseases and conditions under presumptive legislation.

Every Territorian deserves to come home safely at the end of a day's work, but accidents happen and when they do workers should be fully supported by their employer during their recovery and rehabilitation.

In 2015, the CLP government made a number of harsh changes to the act that hurt worker. Some of those changes were beneficial to the operation of the Northern Territory Workers' Compensation Scheme; however, some changes removed or capped workers' entitlements.

In the lead up to the 2016 Northern Territory General Election we made a commitment to reverse elements of the 2015 changes to the act. We are acting on that commitment now and supporting our Territory workers.

A working group comprised of government representatives and industry professionals was tasked with providing the Government with advice and options on potential changes to the *Return to Work Act*. The group focused on changes made in 2015 that removed or altered workers' entitlements, require further clarification and other emerging priority issues.

The working group consulted with key stakeholders including the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Advisory Council, the Insurance Council of Australia and Unions NT.

The most significant change is that journey claims will again be allowed. The intention is to reverse the 2015 changes so that the benefits in place prior to 1 October 2015 will again apply, noting that this change will not be retrospective.

It is also intended that the legislation be extended to provide cover to workers who are travelling to and from work and home as a result of a call-out by an employer, even if the worker is not paid for the time taken for the travel.

This change recognises that how, when and why workers travel to and from work and home can be directly affected by the employer. This change will assign the costs of an incident to the instigator of the travel, the employer rather than the worker. It will also ensure that the public health system is not burdened with injured workers who have no way to claim for benefits or compensation. Thus, there will be significant reduction in personal and social impacts through this reversal of the 2015 amendments.

It is intended that the Northern Territory make post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, a deemed disease for:

- first responder police officers
- firefighters
- ambulance officers, paramedics and other emergency-trained personnel who attend life-threatening, time critical incidents.

The risk of PTSD is inherent in the work first responders do. We all know the hard job they have to do. They attend scenes that most of us here would avoid. When we are running away, they run to those emergency situations.

In this parliament we often admire and talk about the work of our police officers, firefighters and paramedics. There is a public expectation that first responders will be prepared and capable of responding to any emergency that arises, whatever day or time that may be. There is an implicit social contract that those first responders will be taken care of if they are injured in the line of duty.

Making PTSD a deemed disease in legislation will support access to early and effective treatment for first responders who develop PTSD, while limiting further trauma that may be induced by having to prove that the PTSD was caused by their employment.

To this end, PTSD will be included as a deemed disease by adding it to the schedule of deemed diseases in the regulations. This will include the employment criterion being that the worker needs to be a person with specialised training who attends and provides assistance in time-critical and potentially life-threatening situations.

It is intended that this criterion will allow workers such as a paramedics, police officers, firefighters or other emergency personnel, as well as remote clinic nurses and doctors to make a claim for this deemed disease.

It should be noted that under the act, volunteers who are appointed and conduct work or training activities under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the *Bushfires Management Act 2016* or the *Fire and Emergency Act 1996* are deemed to be workers in the employ of the Territory for clarification. As such, volunteers who are first responders will be covered by this new legislation. The changes will not apply retrospectively, however, the presumption will apply to all undecided cases and to new claims if the injury occurred before commencement.

A beneficial change made in 2015 was the creation of presumptive legislation for firefighters. The legislation covered 12 cancers, however, firefighters have always campaigned for 16 cancers with the additional cancers being:

- asbestos-related diseases
- skin cancer
- lung cancer
- liver cancer.

Firefighters are exposed to many different substances in the course of their work and it can be difficult to attribute the cause of disease to exposure to one individual substance through a normal claims process. As such the list of prescribed diseases for firefighters is being amended to include four additional cancers with a qualifying period of 15 years to clarify their applicability. These additions will also apply for volunteer firefighters subject to qualifying criteria.

The changes if passed by this assembly will mean that the Northern Territory will have the best coverage for firefighters in Australia and internationally. All of us here have acknowledged the hard work our firefighters do, particularly last summer. Although in the Territory we face our fire season mid-year we have already seen territory firefighters lend a hand interstate. I thank them for their efforts. Ensuring firefighters have the right protections under our legislation is important.

Unfortunately there are still employers who use technicalities to argue that they do not need to have workers' compensation insurance. To remove these technicalities the government is revising the definition of a worker. This is to clarify that a worker is a person if they should be an employee for a PAYG withholding requirements and that the worker's ABN is not a determinant factor. This will ensure that workers are not disadvantaged

when making a workers' compensation claim due to inadequacies or deliberate evasion by employers with regards to PAYG withholding requirements.

The working compensation status of individuals working for labour hire organisations cannot be solely determined by the fact that they are subject to PAYG withholding requirements. Working out the status of these individuals involves a number of common-law tests to decide if they are employees or contractors, which is administratively complex for stakeholders. After consultation with stakeholders and experts it has been determined that the simplest resolution of this issue is to deem all individuals working for a labour hire organisation to be workers under the Act.

Another important amendment is to remove the cap on normal weekly earnings for payment made after 26 weeks of incapacity. During the first 26 weeks after claiming compensation when a worker is unable to work their compensation payments are paid at their normal weekly earnings. After 26 weeks compensation payments are at a 75% of their normal weekly earnings. The 2015 changes placed a cap on workers' normal weekly earnings after 26 weeks of 250% of the average weekly earnings. This was an inherently unfair double-hit to those injured workers, something this government does not support.

In addition to these beneficial changes there are a number of legal and administrative amendments including revising the provisions dealing with negotiated settlements to clarify their operation, clarifying that the normal insurer has full rights to manage claims made against uninsured employers, moving the methodology for funding the normal insurer to the regulation rather than in the Act, aligning the Act with the minimum national benchmarks under the National Injury Insurance Scheme where appropriate, and providing a fair and reasonable approach to alleged overpayments to an injured worker arising from an error of the employer or insurer.

We believe these Amendments should reduce legal ambiguity when resolving claims and administrative costs of managing the National Injury Insurance Scheme. We owe it to Territory workers and families to ensure the Northern Territory has fair workers' compensation laws. Territorians deserve a safe workplace and a strong regulator is important. We have, as we committed to, a review of Worksafe which was conducted by Tim Lyons. It looked at current policies, procedures and activities and considered how best practise can be implemented to support staff, the industry and the broader Territory.

We are now working across those 27 recommendations and have released our full report. We are committed to strengthening and enhancing workers' safety in the Territory. We will continue to support workers and are proud to be presenting this legislation today, and are committed to delivering the legislation. I acknowledge the unions for their support as well as their presence in the gallery this morning. Their contribution to the development in this bill and over many years needs to be acknowledged. This is about people; Territorians and the stories we heard through 2015–2016. We read it in our newspapers and on social media. They were people who were disadvantaged by changes—people who were going about their jobs, some of which were particularly difficult anyway.

This bill sends a strong message that this Labor government supports Territory workers and will continue to do so. I acknowledge the work of the Parliamentary Counsel and the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

I am pleased to commend the bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; bill read a first time.

**Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice):** Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be referred to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee for report by 5 May 2020.

Motion agreed to.

### **LICENSING (DIRECTOR-GENERAL) REPEAL BILL (Serial 115)**

Continued from 28 November 2019.

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

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Opposition Leader):** Madam Speaker, this bill is essentially technical in nature and simply gives meaning to changes included in the *Liquor Act 2019*. The opposition has no objection to the legislation.

I would, however, like to comment as the minister made note in her speech on her approach to alcohol-related harm. There is no question that everyone in this Chamber understands, as do Territorians, the magnitude of harm that can be caused by the misuse of alcohol in our community. We all agree that the less alcohol-related violence, antisocial behaviour, health outcomes or any other issues that flow from it mean less time our police, healthcare workers and government agencies need to deal with the fallout from alcohol abuse. Reducing it is an important thing for us to focus our energy on.

What we will not always agree on is the approach taken to reach that goal. The CLP opposition firmly believes in personal responsibility and helping those who need it the most. This includes the idea that people doing the right thing should not be punished for their actions and people doing the wrong thing should be supported to overcome their problems with alcohol.

All too often we have seen this government's approach to alcohol and other issues take a broad brush and, unfortunately, lack KPIs in how well those measures are being implemented, and whether or not they are effective. Instead of looking at measures in isolation, this government's approach is to implement a range of measures that are not targeted in any way—broad-brush measures—and hope for the best coming out the other side.

Our view, which we have spoken about many times, should be that we are focusing on the people who are most afflicted by alcohol and tailor our solutions and measures to support them and drive down harm. We are very sceptical about measures such as the floor price. The Attorney-General, time and again, while she continues to defend it, has shown that the government is not measuring the effectiveness of the floor price in contributing to a reduction in alcohol-related harm. Even the BDR—it remains to be seen what meaningful impact that has.

That comes back to my earlier point on KPIs. How do you know if something is working if you are not measuring the success of it?

We have seen some successful policies come out in this regard, including the POSIs, which the CLP introduced. The Labor government discontinued the POSIs before bringing them back last year.

The changes to this bill are technical in nature and implement the government's policy, which is already on foot. It is not anything we will oppose today.

I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WOOD (Nelson):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I only received notice of this bill today. Be that as it may, I do not object to it. I just need a few minutes.

**Ms Fyles:** I apologise.

**Mr WOOD:** I could not read it while the Bombing of Darwin ceremony was on—it was a bit difficult.

The bill is straightforward. We now have a director of gaming, a director of kava management; we have lots of directors with the changes to this act, with the appointment of director of private security regulation and a director of gaming controls. There are changes that bring legislation in line with the *Liquor Act* that the government brought forward some time ago.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition. The funny thing about the Riley report is that when it first came into this parliament, both sides said they would agree on the recommendations. I always get a bit worried when members of government or opposition say they will agree to all the recommendations. It is dangerous because many times we have not had a real look at the implications of those recommendations. They were recommendations by Justice Riley who did an excellent job.

However, on both sides of this parliament, we have moved away from a bi-partisan approach to the recommendations. The classic one is liquor inspectors outside bottle shops that are now police. Justice Riley did not support that. On the other hand, we have a floor price which, again, while originally saying it supported all the recommendations, the opposition now does not support it.

It should be noted that what the government is trying to do is honourable. It is trying to do it for reasons that most people would agree with, but whether everything that was in the Riley report needed to be promised without a full analysis of the ramifications of those recommendations was foolish. The government did not take on the full floor price even though the recommendation from Justice Riley was a certain amount. The government said that was too high and reduced it.

That might have been sensible but that is why it would have been better to say—it is a bit like the royal commission into youth—we accept in principle the recommendations; we think what is there is good but we will spend our time identifying the possible ramifications of bringing each one of those recommendations into place.

With regard to the changes to the *Liquor Act*, the government did a good job talking to industry. I was involved in a couple of the public meetings. That was one of the better approaches by government in getting the community, especially industry, involved in the changes to licensing in the Northern Territory

Justice Riley did an excellent report. It would be nice to know how many recommendations out of the total have been put into place. An update on the Riley report would be good. I also take note of what the Leader of the Opposition said, which I believe is a fair comment.

If you are saying we are here to try to reduce the effects of alcohol harm in our community, and to do that, we will bring forth a number of recommendations that Justice Riley brought in because we think this will make a difference, once you have made that statement then you have to prove down the track that you are changing things; that your changes to legislation, which you say affects the majority of people—I am always wary of that because many laws in the Northern Territory and in Australia affect the minority because as a community, we take some responsibility for the minority.

It is like some of our road rules. Most of us travel at the correct speed but we are told we should drive at certain speed limits because some people drive too fast. So we introduce penalties for the people who drive too fast. As a community, we accept that we will have limitations on our speed because that is good for the health of the community, generally speaking. It is the minority who cause the problem.

I support the legislation but it would be good for the government to make a statement before the end of its term on where it stands with the Riley report in relation to the number of recommendations it has accepted; what are the recommendations that have had a direct effect on drinkers—either the floor price, the BDR, or having a sobering-up shelter at Berrimah. Can we show the public that those changes have had a beneficial effect? That is important.

I worry when I hear comments about Dan Murphy's, as if Dan Murphy's will save the economy of the Northern Territory. One reason is I do not think we should be hanging our hat, necessarily, on promoting the alcohol industry as a means of overcoming some of our financial difficulties, and another is we need to ensure we do not barrack purely for the sake of getting a few votes. We need to ensure our opinions in matters are serious and affect the health and welfare of many unfortunate people, especially in remote communities amongst our Aboriginal people—which is reflected in the number of people who are part of the tragedy of domestic violence and the extraordinary number of Aboriginal people in our prisons. We must balance the bigger picture, sometimes, against the popular picture.

I know I do not have that long to go in this House, but if there is anything I regret it will be that we have not decreased the number of people in our prisons—even if it is removing them and allowing people to work more out on the communities. I know the government is doing work on that, but this is something—and the Member for Barkly would know we have spoken about this for a long time. We have had the Barkly Work Camp—eventually—and we have the Nhulunbuy Work Camp. It is something we need to do a lot more work on.

We can talk about this bill here today and the Riley report, but we should not forget the big issues that the Northern Territory faces and not give up on trying to turn things around for the betterment for some of the—you might say—the lower socioeconomic parts of our community which we need to help and bring back to make us a vibrant and strong economy—which includes all people in the Northern Territory.

**Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I will touch upon some of the points that have been raised by those opposite. First, I sincerely apologise. Usually the process is that the opposition and Independents are notified the evening before of the legislation for the next day. That email was not sent out yesterday. I take responsibility and I apologise. I sent messages to people this morning to sincerely

apologise about that. I am happy to accept that criticism and I will try to ensure that does not happen again. But, I am only human.

There were a number of points raised. This bill is a relatively straightforward bill in one sense about reducing red tape and making sure we remove the Director-General of Licensing from a number of pieces of legislation. This was something that was implemented by the previous CLP government. We previously saw a Liquor Commission in the Northern Territory and that was taken away, I think, in 2014. As people know, we reinstated that independent Liquor Commission as one of the recommendations from the Riley review. So, this is a technical, administrative piece of legislation about removing the position of Director-General of Licensing in a number of pieces of legislation.

I will take a moment to talk about some of the points. The Member for Nelson raised some questions. He said, 'Do not just barrack for a few votes'. I can assure you that the Riley review is evidence-based and we are implementing that. We are working on policy that, for far too long, has been put in the too-hard basket in the Northern Territory. You have seen policies on the run, policies designed as a quick-vote grab. That is why I challenge all prospective members of this Assembly this year in the election in August to listen to the experts, read the evidence and not simply say, 'We will scrap this, we will allow that'.

Regarding the Riley review, we took that evidence-based approach. The Riley review is referred to by Trevor Riley, our former Chief Justice—we also had business, health and an expert in health alcohol policy on that. They handed their report to government in October 2017 and we gave in-principle support to considering all but one of the recommendations which, as we know, is about the total ban of trade on Sundays. We have been providing updates through the Alcohol Harm-Minimisation Action Plan, which is our report-back to the community, on where we are tracking against those Riley review recommendations.

Last year we passed the *Liquor Act 2019*, a complete rewrite, which completed over 70 of the Riley review recommendations. We are in the process of completing recommendations. Apart from the *Liquor Act* we:

- shifted our (inaudible) space licensing model
- re-established the liquor commission which is chaired by Mr Richard Coates
- established a community test for significant liquor licensing decisions—it is important that community have involvement, so often they feel left out
- extending and expanding a moratorium of new take-away liquor licenses
- established the banned-drinker register

The last point is a challenge for the opposition, are they going to scrap that? They need to come clean with Territorians, it is a simple question, yes or no. The BDR is a relatively simple tool that stops the supply of alcohol to those who cause harm, for referral pathways to the BDR.

They came into power last time and scrapped it, they did not like it and felt that somehow in showing your identification to purchase alcohol impeded on rights. The BDR stops people from accessing alcohol which causes harm, before it happens. The CLP then introduced a backwards model of the BDR, a guessathon. People were banned but no one knew who they were and retailers had to go through pages of photographs—that was my understanding of that legislation.

We believe the Banned Drinker Register is simple and effective. We need a range of measures. We have empowered the Police Alcohol Liquor Inspectors to:

- conduct point-of-sale duties
- provided the Police Commissioner with emergency powers to suspend liquor licences for 48-hours
- the floor price, which we introduced on 1 October 2018
- the ability for the liquor commission to hold public hearings
- provided police with powers to engage in undercover operations.

We consulted with community and industry, which is important. We often refer to liquor licensees or industry, they want what we want—a safe vibrant community, people to come to the Territory and have a good time, locals to go out and enjoy themselves and have a nice meal and beverage.

I personally attended many meetings with industry. We did not always agree but there was a pathway for them to be heard. A conversion of the liquor licences to the new risk-based licensing regime has begun, working with Licensing NT.

Our work has seen some amazing results. I will come to the evidence and making sure that we have researched that, Member for Nelson—I know you are genuinely interested. As I have stated previously in this House:

- alcohol-related assaults are close to their lowest level in a decade
- in the 12 months ending November 2019, there was a 21% drop in alcohol-related offences
- Darwin had nearly 10% fewer alcohol-related assaults than the previous year
- Palmerston had 15% fewer alcohol-related assaults
- Alice Springs and Katherine had about 30% fewer alcohol-related assaults.

They are just some of the statistics.

The Menzies School of Health Research showed that the economic cost of alcohol harm in the Northern Territory has increased from \$642m in 2009 to \$1.38bn per year—a staggering figure. We must have special policies on alcohol—it is a commodity, not just milk and bread, it can cause much harm in our community.

The latest alcohol harm-minimisation report, which is our update to the community, shows that 168 of the 219 recommendations have been completed. We are continuing to work on the 33 recommendations which we support in principle, to ensure we implement them in the best way for the Territory's context.

Our government has taken something which was put in that 'far too hard' basket and we are getting on with the job. In terms of research and evidence, we have had success with the Deakin University in receiving a grant in which we will receive independent research and analysis. Other jurisdictions are looking at the work we have been doing.

People want to know, 'How does this impact me?' We have seen sustained reductions in emergency department presentations. Our surgeons have said that they are seeing fewer facial surgeries they have to do. That is our health sector having less pressure on it—meaning that when you or a loved one is sick, you will be seen to quicker.

We have that evidence-based approach. We have also backed it up with coordination between community patrols, police, sobering-up shelters and local governments. There has been a lot of work that has been occurring behind the scenes that people do not realise is taking place—working with the Aboriginal controlled health sector for FASD assessments and improving screening and education for pregnant women on the harms of alcohol during pregnancy. There are lots of things that are happening and we will continue that work into the future.

The CLP say the floor price has failed or they do not like it because it impinges on someone, but what will they do with the BDR and the floor price? It is important that they share that with Territorians. Now is the Leader of the Opposition's chance to share with the community. The former Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Daly, was very clear about a bipartisan approach. He let us have some of those conversations that are difficult. The Leader of the Opposition said she agrees with less alcohol in the community, but what is her evidence-based approach? What will she do? Will she listen to clinicians? Will she look at the statistics that we have seen and the measures that we have put in place, or will she simply scrap that?

We saw last time under the CLP government alcohol mandatory treatment, which was a huge failure. We had an independent evaluation which demonstrated that that program was expensive and ineffective, with no evidence base. The alcohol mandatory treatment was condemned by Health, Justice, welfare stakeholders, APONT, NTCOSS, AADANT, NAAJA, AMSANT—just to name a few.

Alcohol mandatory treatment criminalises people with alcohol dependence and is punishment, not treatment. The CLP's policy—and it would be interesting to know if this is what they will have this year—of AMT locked people up for nothing more than being a drinker in a public space. Their policy was steamrolled into operation with no solid planning. It went against the advice of health practitioners—that forcing people to participate in treatment is not productive in addressing behaviours—and the cost!

The Member for Nelson was talking about our high rates of Indigenous incarceration. We, as a government, acknowledge that. We have far too many Aboriginal Territorians locked up. Community safety is important and that is why we have an Aboriginal justice agreement that is out for consultation.

Alcohol mandatory treatment cost \$57 000 per mandatory treatment episode compared to \$17 000 for a voluntary treatment in our community. That means—for those people listening in and those in the gallery—that AMT—and they did not even have the ability to lock them up, I think we had Houdini who just kept getting out—three time—was \$57 000 versus our non-government organisations that run these treatment programs where it is about \$17 000 per person for a voluntary treatment.

We saw that alcohol mandatory treatment provided no benefit in alcohol-related harm indicators such as ED presentations, interactions with police and homelessness compared to people who had no alcohol treatment. Also, AMT excluded more people than it included. The independent AMT evaluation found that in 2014-15 810 people met the trigger for the CLP's policy of alcohol mandatory treatment, but only 301 individuals received a treatment order. Of those, only 190 had a mandatory residential treatment. The AMT program failed to reach a significant proportion of the population who may benefit from accessing assessment and treatment services. Yet, in contrast our treatment pathways through the BDR and the health system are inclusive and encourage people to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Alcoholism is a difficult disease to overcome but the alcohol mandatory treatment model is not the way to go. In alcohol policy we have seen the PALIs, so we have delivered our plan along with 75 police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors in Alice Springs, Katherine and Tenant Creek and provided 12 police officers typically responsible for targeting secondary supply. CCT cameras have been installed.

The floor price was introduced on 1 October 2018. It targets people who drink to levels that cause harm in the community through alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour and crime. We have seen a floor price trialled twice before in the Territory and was both times found to be effective in tackling alcohol-related harm, crime and violence. Despite the majority of Territorians drinking responsibly there are many who misuse alcohol, impacting the community daily. We hear stories shared from those opposite, but the minimum floor price sets the standard drink to \$1.30 and multiplies it out. It removes cheap alcohol upon which people with dependency become intoxicated and cause harm.

The Western Australian Government is examining introduction of a floor price and the Royal Australian College of Physicians have called upon the New South Wales Government to introduce one. I know those opposite dislike listening to me, but perhaps listen to some of the experts in this space. The Member for Nelson talked in his speech about making sure we research and have evidence, so we had the Riley Review looking at the Cardiff Model.

The Last Drink Survey has been a standard practise for NT Police since 1 March 2018 and enables police to identify where people purchased and consumed their last drinks. It takes into account a 12 hour period, negating a misconception where people say 'what if someone has quite a few beverages at home and then they go out and have one drink?' but they cause harm. The questions make sure to include the aspect of that 12 hour period. It also looks at community displacement. Deakin University is assisting NT hospitals in implementing the Cardiff model in emergency departments, which allows them to collect data about alcohol-related presentations to inform us from policy and crime-prevention perspectives.

Alcohol in remote communities has been talked about. This morning I met with Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Ken Wyatt. We know that a number of communities would like to have alcohol available to them. It needs to come from a community safety perspective. Women and children need to come first. The Riley Review references the Bo Chung Report, which looks at the issue of alcohol provision in remote communities. We know we have the Stronger Futures Act in place until 2021. The former Senator for the Northern Territory refused to contemplate a liquor license, but the new Minister, I won't verbal him, but he indicated that our work and policies have seen positive change in the Northern Territory, and that he would be open to that discussion. We will absolutely continue conversations based around the work of those two reports, making sure it is about community safety, which is a difficult issue we need to address.

I will take a moment to talk about the social and economic costs of harms of alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory. The Menzies data we spoke about is up from \$642m to \$1.38bn. That means \$7577 per adult in the Northern Territory. Some people in this House do not drink— that figure is across every adult in the Northern Territory, a significant cost. Although we are seeing consumption rates decreasing, the cost of harm is increasing as we know from that figure from 2009–2018. There is an estimated 142 premature deaths caused by alcohol compared to 95 in 2004 and a significant impact on police and crime in our justice system, as well as child abuse, neglect and an impact on our child protection system.

Tragically, 50% of road crash deaths and 20% of serious injury crashes are attributed to alcohol. When people say, 'I do not have a problem with drinking. It is not me'—it impacts our whole community through cost and things such as road safety. The Northern Territory has the highest per capita alcohol consumption in Australia and amongst the highest in the world. It has the highest rate of risky alcohol consumption in Australia, with 44% of people drinking at levels that put them at risk of injury or other harms at least once in the past month. That is compared to 26% nationally.

The NT has the highest pattern of lifetime risky drinkers, at 30%, compared to 18% Australia-wide. It has the highest death rate due to alcohol of any Australian jurisdiction. Non-Aboriginal Territorians are double the national rate, and Aboriginal Territorians are nine to 10 times higher.

It has the highest rates of hospitalisations related to alcohol misuse in Australia. We estimate that 10% of all emergency department presentations are alcohol related. I spoke earlier about the road statistics.

Alcohol is associated with a minimum of around 50% of assaults and up to 65% of domestic and family violence incidents.

The impacts are not only felt on individual problem drinkers, but also the families and communities. The work we have done as a government, and this bill before us today, is ensuring we have a strong licensing regime to protect our community. We also have therapeutic pathways.

This bill supports a restructuring of Licensing NT which, I am pleased to inform the House, has commenced. The restructure will help make processes easier and give businesses the ability to engage with and have matters dealt with effectively and efficiently by Licensing NT.

The Director-General has prescribed statutory powers and functions under various acts, relating to licensing functions of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. As I mentioned before, the position of Director-General was established through the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014*. The position of Director-General replaced the Licensing Commission and the position of Director-General of Licensing, which previously undertook licensing functions under various acts, including the now repealed Liquor Act 1978, Gaming Control Act 1978 and the *Private Security Act 1995*.

The final report of the Alcohol Policies and Legislation Reform—the Riley review, as we commonly refer to it—was handed to us as a government in October 2017 and in-principle support was given to implementing all but one recommendation. Included in this report was recommendation 2.2.6 to create the position of Director of Liquor Licensing as created in the *Liquor Act 2019*, which replaced the Liquor Act 1978.

This position has been established, and I extend my thanks to Phil Timney for his hard work in the position. It is a balance, that position, but he is very approachable. That is the feedback I get from licensees. I thank him and the team that supports him for their hard work.

The Liquor Commission, established through the *Liquor Commission Act 2018*, has already taken over functions related to liquor licensing from the Director-General in the Territory. But the flow-on effect of this is to completely replace the position of Director-General and the restructure of Licensing NT. The government approved removing the position of Director-General through the repeal of the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014*. Repeal of the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014* requires amending various affected acts to remove the references to the Director-General.

We heard from both members who have spoken on this that it is quite straightforward and technical in nature. Consequently, it is replacing with a new position to exercise the powers and functions under those acts that previously sat with the Director-General.

There was extensive consultation in the development of the *Liquor Act 2019* which foreshadowed the replacement of the Director-General through the new position of Director of Liquor Licensing. The bill repeals

the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014* and various acts which contain references and are associated with the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014*, including the following:

- the *Associations Act 2003*
- the *Co-operatives (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2015*
- the *Gaming Control Act 1993*
- the *Gaming Machine Act 1995*
- the *Kava Management Act 1998*
- the *Private Security Act 1995*
- the *Racing and Betting Act 1983*
- the *Tobacco Control Act 2002*
- the *Totalisator Licensing Regulation Act 2000*.

Also various subordinate legislation.

The bill will further the restructure of Licensing NT and support the dismantling of the position of Director-General as exists under the *Licensing (Director-General) Act 2014*.

The amendments to the various acts in this bill will provide administrative flexibility within the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. This is for the administration and operation of the work areas associated with the amended acts, with the intended flow-on effect to be improved processes. Once the bill has passed, the Director may be appointed under the various acts amended in this bill to undertake the powers and functions that currently sit with the Director-General position.

The substantive powers and functions remain the same with only a new office holder to exercise those powers and functions established. While a separate position of director is established for most of these acts in practice, the various director positions may be held by one person or more as may be required.

The bill also provides for an administrative review as was available for decisions of the director-general. That is an important point; it is something that businesses and the community have raised with us. Additionally, the bill amends all references to director-general, to remove those references and replace with a relevant reference.

The bill was introduced in November 2019 to the NT Legislative Assembly. We referred the bill to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee for enquiry and report by 24 March. We thank the Legislation Scrutiny Committee for their work. It has reported back and it tabled its report yesterday. It stated that the Legislation Scrutiny Committee received most submissions. There are no matters arising requiring consideration of the amendments in the report. They recommended that the bill pass the Assembly.

Although simple, this bill is an important piece in our alcohol policy reform agenda. It is an opportunity for Territorians to understand the point of difference between this Territory Labor government and the alternative: a Mills-led Territory Alliance or the CLP opposition. They have failed at alcohol policy in the past and they have offered nothing in terms of an evidence-based approach going forward.

The Member for Araluen and the Member for Blain were responsible for alcohol mandatory treatment. That is their alternative, criminalising a health issue, going against the evidence of all those stakeholders that I read out, and many more.

It is now the new Leader of the Opposition's time to shine. Now is her time to show us the evidence of what she will do. I acknowledge the former Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Daly, for taking the harder way forward at times I am sure, for looking at the evidence, for getting briefings and being informed, and not just slapping the government because that is what oppositions do. He looked at the issues presented before the Assembly and backed them. We saw that across a number of complex alcohol policies and through different pieces of legislation.

We will continue to highlight the contrast between what we offer Territorians as a government in tackling issues, issues that will take decades to change but we are seeing via the statistics that I read out, some amazing steps forward. The rest of Australia, in fact the world, is looking at our alcohol policies. We must continue that work.

We must continue that work for the workers on the front line, for the police and firefighters who attend road accidents, for the emergency doctors who are run off their feet, for the ICU nurses who care for people when they are the victims of alcohol-related harm. We will push ahead and continue to follow an evidence-based approach and share it with the community. I challenge anyone running for the NT Legislative Assembly later this year to take the same approach.

I thank the hard-working Department of the Attorney-General and Justice staff who have led the development of this bill and particularly parliamentary counsel. They have had a very heavy workload. I am very appreciative that this bill is able to be before the House today.

I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

The Assembly suspended.

#### QUESTION TIME

#### Business Outlook Survey – Government Policy

#### **Mrs FINOCCHIARO to TREASURER on behalf of MINISTER for BUSINESS and INNOVATION**

On Monday, 3 February 2020, the Chamber of Commerce released the results of their annual Business Outlook Survey. The results are catastrophic. Of 584 respondents, 61% rated the Gunner government's economic and business performance as extremely poor, up from 53% in 2019. Only 17% are planning to increase staffing levels in this coming year.

The Chamber of Commerce CEO, Greg Bicknall, said the key factor identified by business as most affecting the economy was government policy. In contrast, you seem blissfully ignorant and say everything is fine. Are you correct, or are the 584 Territory businesses correct?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, as I have said before, there is no doubt it has been a challenging few years in the Territory economy, particularly in the Darwin and Palmerston region—we know off the back of the INPEX project. As a government, we have taken clear and decisive action from day one after we inherited what had been a chaotic four years under the former CLP government. We know the mess, the show and the 18 Cabinet reshuffles, two-and-a-half Chief Ministers and so forth. We knew we were seeing the coming end of the INPEX project.

We lost four years of work ...

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** Are the 584 business wrong or are you wrong?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms MANISON:** ... four years under that chaotic and dysfunctional CLP government.

We put the shoulder and we have been working to make sure we are delivering more investment to the Northern Territory. We can see that there is a very bright future ahead of the Northern Territory.

We have seen some incredible resource projects coming in, looking at particular industries. Have a look at the investment in the Tanami, the work that is happening with lithium and rare earths. There is great potential

coming up. Have a look at the work in the solar industry, at the Sun Cable project, which is visionary about diversifying our economy and creating new jobs in the Northern Territory. We have been doing a lot of work on aquaculture to see the expansion of things such as barramundi, but also looking at the potential of prawns with Sea Dragon. Of course, there is the space industry. These are some of the things we are doing.

We have also delivered very clear and targeted stimulus to support the industries that needed it, particularly for housing and construction. We have delivered quality infrastructure that will help grow jobs in the Northern Territory. By supporting industry, it has supported short-term jobs, but there are also long-term jobs it will create.

What will not help the economy and its road to recovery we are on in the Northern Territory would be a CLP government or a Territory Alliance government. We know their form—cut, cut, cut.

Here is a clear example of their old form. For example, this old doozey here, *Your job is safe*. We remember that one, don't we? What did we see? Cut, cut, cut. The only thing they did not cut was power prices, because we saw those go up by 30%, didn't we, Madam Speaker? That is what people put at risk if you get a CLP or Territory Alliance government. We are talking about a track record of cuts, cuts, cuts, which does not help grow the economy.

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### VISITORS

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of the lovely parents of the Member for Arnhem, Didamain and Michael Uibo. Welcome to Parliament House. Nice to see you here again.

Also in the gallery we have Willem Westra van Holthe, the previous minister in a previous government. Welcome as well.

**Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms Worden:** Mr Mike Foley.

**Madam SPEAKER:** And Mr Mike Foley. Thank you. Is he one of your constituents, Member for Sanderson?

**Ms Fyles:** No, the Member for Casuarina.

**Ms Ah Kit:** No, he is just a wonderful community volunteer, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER:** You are a wonderful community volunteer person. Thank you.

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### Wadeye – Clinic Staff Safety

#### Mr HIGGINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

In the last few days we have received an email regarding a situation at the Wadeye clinic. I will read part of that email without saying who it is:

*Last week the doctors had three break-ins ...*

The doctor's house:

*This alone had been bad enough, but the sexual nature of these break-ins was highly concerning as there was explicit sexual drawings on furniture, windows, TV, alone with playing with the female doctor's underwear was a message that could not be dismissed.*

*Doctors and nurses have left the community due to this unsafe situation.*

Can you please give us an update on the situation there at the moment?

#### ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am aware that there has been some unrest and incidents with our clinical staff in Wadeye over the past couple of weeks—which is incredibly disappointing.

We have Health staff across the Northern Territory. We have 80 remote clinics—approximately 50 operated by the Northern Territory government and 30 within the Aboriginal Medical Service. People live in those communities and care for community members. It is concerning that we see, from time to time, the safety of those clinical staff threatened.

What you have just read out is unacceptable to me as the Minister for Health. I have made the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services aware of these allegations. I have been advised that there have been repeated break-ins at staff homes, damage to those homes and cars, vandalism of personal property, and threatening behaviour to the health centre staff on their call-outs.

These issues have been reported to police. We support staff who feel unsafe through measures within the community, or if they need to leave that community. Remote nurse safety is an issue. In remote areas, we see nurses and doctors welcomed into communities but, tragically, we also see from time to time incidents that take place. We saw that tragic death at the top of South Australia a couple of years ago.

We have completed a review into nurse safety. I have been working with the Australian Nursing Midwifery Federation as well as CRANAPlus who represent the agency nurses, making sure that we put in place measures to protect our staff. In terms of the services, I am advised, Member for Daly, that the clinic is not closed and that we still have a number of nurses and Aboriginal staff present. However, the services have been reduced in the wake of these incidents but essential health care is being provided during this period. That includes provision of medication, urgent needs, ante-natal care and care for children who may be ill, as well as any emergency acute care that is required.

There is a community meeting being held tomorrow, 20 February. I will continue to work with the Top End Health Service through the Department of Health and make sure that we provide that support to nurses, take the advice of police, and work through these issues. I am happy to keep you as the local member informed of this.

### **Westin Luxury Hotel Project – Darwin Waterfront**

#### **Mrs FINOCCHIARO to MINISTER for PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE and LOGISTICS**

Minister, last week in Question Time, I asked you about the luxury hotel and you laughed at me and said, 'Oh, well you've got no experience or anything like that with infrastructure'. But then in your answer, you said, 'None of the dollars have been handed over because \$17m will be spent on a skywalk'. I then asked you another question the next day and you reiterated that the \$17m would be spent on the skywalk and that that information was confirmed by your notes ...

**Ms Fyles:** Oh, she corrected it.

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** ... displaying your own experience with infrastructure, Minister, you embarrassingly corrected yourself after Question Time, confirming that it was \$7m for the skywalk and \$10m for road infrastructure.

**Ms Fyles:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing order 38. The acting minister provided the information that was in her brief. She corrected it as soon as she was advised at the end of Question Time. Is this all you have? Is to go for ...

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** I am entitled to ask another question. Oh, what rubbish.

**Madam SPEAKER:** It is not a point of order. Member you have the call.

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** Defensive. Defensive at their incompetence. Minister, my question is—and I hope you have been briefed this time. I hope you have had a chance to be briefed—how much of the \$10m allocated for associated road infrastructure has been spent?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I will take that question on notice because I want to make sure that I get accurate information to you. You have a particular interest in this. As I said to you previously, the luxury hotel is about

jobs for Territorians. A \$200m build down at the waterfront is something we want to see in the Territory. To be able to have 4, 5, 6 star hotel, a beautiful facility down at the waterfront is something we think—in tourism as well, let alone my portfolio in infrastructure—will be a great asset for the Territory and for Territory tourism to have an outstanding hotel down at the waterfront.

As a government, we have put in \$17m. Some of that is for the roadworks; some of it is for the skywalk that we discussed last week. It is about the jobs, overall, that we will see come out of that project.

Leader of the Opposition, if you are concerned about dollars, I am happy to make sure that I get someone from the department to go through it very carefully with you to provide you with details about exactly where the dollars are being spent.

From the point of the view of our side of the House, I know you think that jobs and infrastructure are sugar hits, we heard you say that before. Infrastructure jobs provide all of our Territory businesses with opportunities they may not have when the economy is not in the best position. We think providing a \$1.4bn stimulus to our construction industry is a positive and are very happy to get exact details for each of those dollar spends, but we think it is an investment for Territorians.

### **Business Outlook Survey – Crime**

#### **Mr. HIGGINS to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES**

As the Leader of the Opposition has said on 3 February, the Chamber of Commerce released the results of their annual Business Outlook Survey. What is clear from business is that this Labor government is not doing its job in keeping our streets safe—64% of businesses rated the government's performance on crime. Vandalism is very poor, and worse still just under 3% said the government were doing a good job. This is what business are saying, not us. Business owners and all Territorians have a right to feel safe.

Why are you siding with criminals with soft-touch laws instead of cracking down on crime and keeping our streets safe?

#### **ANSWER**

First, we feel for anybody who is a victim of crime. People work hard for what they have, so when somebody tries to take property and commit vandalism it is unacceptable. There are some hard-working police doing amazing jobs across the Territory, particularly Strike Force Trident in the Darwin region. The Orion Task Force are doing great cross agency work here too, and our property team in Alice Springs is doing an amazing job. They have been targeting commercial crime in particular. I know it is infuriating to be a victim of crime, but I want to talk about some of the results they had in commercial crime because they are putting the pressure on those criminals. In Darwin commercial breakdowns are the lowest they have been in 4 years, 5 in Palmerston and 4 in Alice Springs. They have been doing good work there.

We have to do what we can to stop this type of crime, which is why we are investing in extra 120 police. The CLP failed to do it, we are doing it. This is why we are making sure police have the resources they need to do their important work. That is why we are investing in the new police system and have put in place the new \$30m Palmerston police station, and are building a new Police Station at Nightcliff. That is why we are backing the police.

We are looking at important technology to help them with their jobs. Automatic number plate recognition assisted them, particularly in targeting commercial crime and covering different districts they know could be more susceptible. Drone technology is something they are starting to use more to monitor people behaving in a certain way or trying to evade police. They already have dogs, but drone technology is also proving to be helpful for search-and-rescue and stopping crime. Tyre spikes have been deployed to quickly stop pursuits and keep police and the community safe.

We are working very hard to tackle crime across the Northern Territory. I have to applaud the police, they work incredibly hard and I love to talk to officers and find out about their work and how passionate they are. We will never stop doing what we can to fight crime.

### **Alice Springs – Hairdressing Apprentices**

#### **Mrs LAMBLEY to MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

The Charles Darwin University Certificate III in Hairdressing course has been scrapped in Alice Springs. Apprentices, most of them young teenage women, have to travel to Darwin for bloc training. This is damaging the local hairdressing industry and the economy and placing hardship on these young people. I have written to you about this. The Northern Territory Government is a major funding partner of the Charles Darwin University. Are you prepared to fund the Charles Darwin University for one position to provide hairdressing training in Alice Springs?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest in education in Alice Springs.

I met earlier this week with the Vice-Chancellor for an update on some of their restructure regarding their VET delivery. As a Northern Territory Labor government, our priority is to make sure VET is sustainable across the Northern Territory.

We have a large population in Alice Springs and we need to ensure the students and workforce are supported with the delivery of courses. Unfortunately, this course, Certificate IV in Hairdressing ...

**Mrs Lambley:** Certificate III.

**Ms UIBO:** Sorry, Certificate III, has not received a sustainable number of student enrolments. Other arrangements have been made by the Charles Darwin University to ensure students are supported in their studies through an intensive one-week training block offered by the Palmerston campus. I acknowledge that Australian Apprenticeships NT is supporting our students. They are covering the cost of travel, accommodation and food for students undertaking these intensive study blocks. They will not be out-of-pocket.

The students currently undertaking that course, who are travelling from Alice Springs to Palmerston, are enjoying their exposure to industry providers in the Darwin and Palmerston region and taking their learning and support networks back to Alice Springs when they return to continue their studies.

There is also Certificate III in hairdressing which is part of our VET in Schools program. The Department of Education is a registered training organisation and that is being provided through a casual lecturer. The course has been delivered to ensure that our students in Alice Springs do not miss out and our industry is not affected regarding the training and capacity of the workforce through the Certificate III in Hairdressing. Our key skills in the NT are not affected in the long-term.

I credit the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, the workforce training unit, who are working closely with the Charles Darwin University to ensure that our students, who are affected by the courses that have small enrolments, are able to be (inaudible) out with the delivery and the Charles Darwin University is still going through that organisational restructure. We fund a part of the public funds to the Charles Darwin University, but the main provider is the federal government.

**Alice Springs – Police Jobs**

**Mrs LAMBLEY to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES**

All we have heard from your government over the last two weeks in parliament is how you have created jobs in the Northern Territory. In Alice Springs the police service currently has 34 vacant positions, which directly flies in the face of you maintaining constantly that you have created 120 positions. What you have told us many times, and publicly, is not true.

How many jobs have you created in Alice Springs?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, we have got the extra 120 police numbers across the Northern Territory police force. I have visited Alice Springs a few times recently—I was asked about this last week—and we have deployed some resources in Alice. The commissioner has also visited.

Crime has been trending down but the community sentiment has not matched that; people have been concerned. We have listened and the commissioner has deployed additional resources to do targeted CBD patrolling, 24/7, as well as sending some extra assistance; for instance drones.

I was speaking to a TRG operator, who was training staff last week, and saw a demonstration of the capability at night—it is fantastic technology. They are doing a wonderful job.

We will have 30 recruits from the May graduate squad going to Alice Springs. I have no doubt they will do an amazing job. We have troops who will be going to Tennant Creek and Katherine out of the 59-strong contingent we have.

The other way Alice Springs benefited—every time you go to the station and talk to people in the muster room, next to that is where we have the police auxiliary liquor inspectors and the police officers who support them. Over 40 have gone to Alice Springs.

We went to a graduation two weeks ago where we spoke to some of the graduates who were about to be deployed to Alice Springs. There are about 44 PALIs based there. What was so wonderful about that, is we have 44 extra resources and do not have fully qualified police officers standing out the front of bottle shops.

It is also pleasing that, lot of the people who join up as PALIs, have ambitions to go beyond that and join up as a fully sworn officer. I am very pleased with the conversations I have out there. There is no doubt we are doing what we can to tackle crime by putting more resources in.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! The final part of my question was, ‘How many jobs have you created in Alice Springs?’

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

**Ms MANISON:** I was just talking about an extra 44 positions that did not exist under the former government. They have been doing a wonderful job out there. We just had a new operational structure being deployed that the commissioner released last week across the Territory to make sure they have the resources they need. Police is a very big organisation, being made bigger by this government because we put on another 120 police officers and 75 police auxiliary liquor inspectors.

### **Myilly Point – Asbestos Removal**

#### **Mr HIGGINS to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS**

Your plan to put a \$3m running or jogging track on a most valuable piece of land Myilly Point seems to have hit a few setbacks. In December, asbestos was discovered at the proposed site and DIPL communique state that remediation will be required and an investigation was under way. Has that investigation progressed? Is this ill-conceived project now dead in the water or how much additional costs will there be to the taxpayer as a result of the new asbestos find on the site?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, Myilly Point is an amazing site. I was born there, so I am very interested in that site along with a lot of other Territorians. As a government we have been talking and consulting with people. I recently had conversations with the Friends of Kahlin about that site.

Initially our view for that site was building an art gallery there, but we listened to the public put the plans on hold. That site needs some ownership and development. Our concept of having a play and exercise area was about using a partial amount of land to start to activate—that is a good word—that site and have things happening there and a space for people in the CBD and visitors to utilise in the Top End.

It was no surprise to most people, because everywhere we dig up in the Top End, particularly areas that were part of Cyclone Tracy—or used after Cyclone Tracy—we find asbestos.

Asbestos was found at that site. The department is working with the contractor on contingencies and how much it will cost to remove the asbestos. If it is not removed now it will have to be removed or covered up at some stage. As I said, pretty much any infrastructure project, whether it is the flood mitigation at Jingili—wherever we go there seems to be an asbestos issue.

To me it is not a huge issue, but it is almost par for the course when we are doing infrastructure. That site will continue to be developed. We want to see a playground. That playground will be a facility for older children or young adults as well. It will have facilities for exercising, jogging, walking and physical fitness equipment.

The Member for Port Darwin is keen to see that happen, so it will be developed on that corner. The cost of asbestos removal is a factor in the Darwin area. Any government since 1974 has been well across the issue of asbestos.

**Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business):** Madam Speaker, the Member for Wanguri has had to leave unexpectedly for personal reasons. I will take her questions.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION  
Myilly Point – Asbestos Removal**

**Mr HIGGINS to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS**

If the government is so aware that it will have to cater for asbestos every time it builds a building, did you allow for that in the \$3m? If not, why not? If not, how much extra will it cost?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, people are aware that there is asbestos. We saw that with Garramilla Boulevard, once the road started to be built, there was asbestos. There will be an additional cost to the development of Myilly Point, but it is either developed and the asbestos is removed now or it becomes a cost at a later date.

Myilly Point is a valuable asset for the community. We want that site to be activated, but there is asbestos there which will need to be removed. It will be an additional cost on top of what went out to tender for the site, but it will be a valuable asset for the greater Darwin area, to have a wonderful facility there.

**Gunn Point Road – Prawn Hatchery**

**Mr WOOD to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS**

Over 12 months ago the government spent more than \$35m on sealing the road to Gunn Point, which is great for fishermen and people who want to travel there. This was done because a prawn hatchery was to be built at Gunn Point. By the way, there was no contribution from the company to the cost of the road. There appears to be a sealed road but no prawn hatchery. Is this project going ahead, or has it stalled or simply stopped?

**ANSWER**

Member for Nelson, I know you were keen to see the Gunn Point Road happen, and it has been delivered. In regard to Seafarms and the prawn hatchery, that project is still being worked on. It is a project we are looking forward to seeing come to fruition.

That project is a diversification for our economy. It is not one of our traditional markets like cattle or tourism. It is a new development for the Territory to farm prawns and sell them to Asia. There is a growing middle class that wants fresh produce, especially fresh Territory prawns.

You lobbied hard for the Gunn Point Road, Member for Nelson. You have talked about it for a very long time. One part of that is about providing access for Seafarms and we want to see that project come to fruition. It is also a bigger-picture project.

The land use plan for Gunn Point is being worked on. It is highly valuable land. One of the issues is water, and we are aware of that, but it is beautiful land looking back at the city of Darwin. A large number of tourists go there already—the grey nomads camp on the foreshore there.

I regularly meet with John Coleman from the Land Corporation—as it is Land Corporation land. One of the things being worked on is how we cater for visiting tourists to Gunn Point. How do we put in toilet facilities, make sure that the cliff face is not being eroded ...

**Mr WOOD:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110, Relevance. As much as I appreciate what the minister is saying, the question was is the prawn hatchery is going ahead or has it just been stalled?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, you have the call.

**Ms LAWLER:** I was answering, Member for Nelson. Yes, that work is going ahead. There is work being done on Legune site. King and Sons got the contract recently to develop the grow-out ponds at Legune. The prawn hatchery will be part of that equation. It is a big project, over \$1bn, but it is one that will be worked through.

As I said previously, that road was not just there providing SeaFarms access to a bitumen road. It was for stimulating the economy, but it was also about providing a bitumen road out to what will be a great future development.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please pause, honourable members. I want to seek some advice in regard to the fact that we are down three ministers.

Honourable members, by leave, we can have the ministers or an acting minister asked two questions in a row, because otherwise that would knock you out?. Is everyone comfortable with that?

Leave granted.

**Mrs Lambley:** Not really.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Otherwise, you will not get any questions to them, Member for Araluen.

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO:** A point of order, Madam Speaker!

**Madam SPEAKER:** Leave was granted.

**Mr WOOD:** Madam Speaker, can I ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please sit. All three of you, sit, sit, please. Do you have a question, clarification?

**Mr WOOD:** I have a question for the minister that I did not know I would ask a second question of.

**Ms LAWLER:** I am very happy for him to ask ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** No, I think the Member for Blain had a question.

### **Gas Reservation Policy**

#### **Mr MILLS to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and RESOURCES**

The federal government is moving to develop a national gas reservation policy framework, with a particular focus on Beetaloo. Can you describe the NT Labor position on gas reservation? If your government supports a gas reservation policy, can you describe any details about models under consideration?

**Mrs Lambley:** Oh, you are here. That is great.

**Ms FYLES:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Referencing whether a member is in the House or not ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** It is not a point of order.

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I ...

**Mrs Lambley:** We appreciate the attendance of a minister ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members! Just keep your smart-alec comments to yourselves for the time. Minister, you have the call. Just continue.

**Mr KIRBY:** Madam Speaker, it is a very important question. As we know, the Beetaloo Basin and some of the other basins through the Northern Territory that are being investigated currently are a world-class resource. We know that diversifying our economy through the Northern Territory is extremely important for us to do. I am sure every member of the parliament would be honest in saying that they have heard the Chief

Minister speak repeatedly about our future not wholly and solely being reliant on gas, but a big part of the mix going forward.

Yes, we can honestly say that there had been discussions by the previous federal minister, Matt Canavan. I have spoken to him as I know the Chief Minister has. We also understand there has been a recent change of minister. We have not been briefed that there has been any change of policy from a federal perspective.

The federal minister went to great pains to explain at the time that there would be no adverse effects for the Northern Territory under any reservation policy that they put in place. They were aware of the policy the Northern Territory government has in that we want to grow industries in the Northern Territory and make use of as much of that gas locally as we possibly can. We also understand we have the ability and capacity to send that gas to the eastern states. That will be a bit part of the future makeup of the Northern Territory as well. It will be a multipronged effect.

There were guarantees from the federal minister that they would not be enacting any gas reservation policy that in any way harmed the Northern Territory's plan to use our own gas. They have repeatedly gone into detail on that.

We know that our plans to secure the Territory's future, through industries that grow out of being able to use world-class gas suppliers ...

**Mr MILLS:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. The nub of the question was: Does the Territory Labor government support a gas reservation policy? If you have given consideration to it, can you describe any details?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister.

**Mr KIRBY:** I am giving as much information as I can about our plans going forward, utilising the onshore and offshore gas suppliers we have available to us to get industry to the Northern Territory and that any plays by the federal government to have a gas reservation policy would not affect our plans to make the best use of that and create jobs locally.

### **Dan Murphy's – Bill to Support Operation in Darwin**

#### **Mrs FINOCCHIARO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE**

Last week we asked two questions about Dan Murphy's and, as usual, we did not get any answers from you. Perhaps a third time will be a charm. Do you agree with representatives of Woolworths that the bill, in its current form, will not necessarily solve the problem—like the Chief Minister promised it would—and allow a Dan Murphy's store to be built at the airport—a \$40m private investment?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, we want to make sure Territorians are safe, which is why we are taking an evidence-based approach. We have an independent Liquor Commission.

I am not sure if you heard my response in the House this morning. I talked in great detail about our evidence-based alcohol policies, which is something you might like to familiarise yourself with. You are proposed as the alternative Chief Minister, the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition took the time to get thoroughly briefed and, in fact, offered bipartisan support, which is something that, in your leadership, you seem to have thrown under the bus and gone for the popular vote.

We have horrific alcohol-related statistics in the Northern Territory. We have talked about them at length in this Assembly. I was talking about them this morning. From our evidence-based approach and the measures we have put in place we have seen a reduction in the alcohol-related harms so that we all have a safer community.

As the House knows, we introduced a Liquor Amendment Bill during this sittings. That has gone to the scrutiny committee and we look forward to the scrutiny committee report coming back. Please pull me up if I am speaking about business before the House, but it became apparent that the substitutions in the *Liquor Act* were not aligned with the government's policy position.

We have an independent Liquor Commission. We will let things go through the process. We had a clear process of a cap on takeaway licences and we wanted substitutions and trades.

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** I pick up on the interjections from the Leader of the Opposition. Now it is your opportunity to share with the community. Will you scrap the floor price and the BDR? What will you do?

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** So you would scrap the floor price! There you go, straight away. She is only a couple of weeks into being Leader of the Opposition and she will scrap the floor price and the evidence-based policy.

**Mrs Finocchiaro:** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** I am picking up the interjections from the Leader of the Opposition, the floor price is gone. That is an evidence-based policy.

**Members** interjecting.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Please pause. Minister, you have the call, keep going.

**Ms FYLES:** The Leader of the Opposition just said that she will get rid of the floor price, which is an evidence-based approach.

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** And they are cheering, Madam Speaker. It is such a shame. I do not think the police you were just calling clowns, Member for Araluen, I do not think they will be cheering. Our ED doctors and nurses, our ICU staff ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** Member for Araluen, I challenge you ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, please pause. Honourable members of the cross benches, may I remind you that it is GBD today. If your noise is not kept down, you will be on a warning and if you keep going you will be out, so you will not be doing your GBD.

**Ms FYLES:** Member for Araluen, the Alice Springs Hospital has seen a 50% reduction in alcohol-related presentations to the ICU. You do not want to listen to that evidence-based policy, do you? It is a cheap vote-grab, but we will continue the hard work, unlike those opposite who will throw anything out for a vote-grab.

### **Gamba Grass – Control on Crown Land**

**Mr WOOD to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Bombing of Darwin was quieter than that. Last week I raised a question of controlling gamba grass. Your answer did not touch on gamba grass on Crown land, such as in Charles Darwin National Park, Crown land near Thorngate Road, around Leanyer and other patches of Crown land in the Darwin region.

What is the government minister doing to reducing gamba grass on its own land?

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#### **VISITORS**

**Mayor of Tennant Creek, Steve Edgington**

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the Mayor of Tennant Creek, Steve Edgington. Welcome to Parliament House.

**Members:** Hear, hear!

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**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, this is an important question. Our government has put in a concerted effort to contain gamba grass across the Northern Territory. The gamba action program is making inroads. We recorded over 2000 participants and approximately 20 000 litres of free herbicide was distributed.

I have been working hard with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics on making sure that they are receiving outcomes for their contractors that are employed to attack the issue of gamba grass on road verges and Crown land.

Gamba grass is an issue which has to be addressed through everyone doing their part. As the minister with responsibility for Crown land, I have had conversations with the department, ensuring they are getting value for money from the contractors who are employed addressing this issue.

If there are specific areas you wish to point out, I can then follow up. Two weeks ago my chief of staff and I travelled to Katherine; we took notes on the areas which had uncontrolled gamba grass. It is a huge issue. Our government has put in dollars, but local government councils and government agencies have to do their part—there is a big job at Litchfield Park.

I will follow up on Charles Darwin National Park. This is the time of year where we need to spray and eradicate as much as we can. We do not want to see hot-fires as we move into the bushfire season.

Please send me email containing details, I can follow up with all agencies.

### **Housing and Infrastructure – Milingimbi**

#### **Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Power and Water said there is more water in the Milingimbi aquifer than previously thought—this is good news. When will we see an assessment and plans for further housing and infrastructure in Milingimbi? There is great need for this including housing and service providers such as renal nurses.

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his interest in providing remote Indigenous housing. I am proud to speak on behalf of the Labor government which is delivering record levels—I think 1654 brand new, fully upgraded or innovated homes. Under the CLP—we have a CLP candidate up here—there was one house delivered in the last two years.

It is important, service provision and (inaudible) service provision to build new houses. Let us talk about Milingimbi and (inaudible) services. You cannot deliver houses without land, we must talk about land. Under a Labor government, \$426m of a land servicing program—nothing delivered under the CLP, no land. I think there were 70 lots of land across the Northern Territory and those guys had 4 years in the saddle. Milingimbi has some good news: there is the possibility of extra water, because when we get to land we have to talk about power, water and sewerage. I do not know what the previous administration thought about that; probably nothing because they delivered nothing and the bush is cognizant of that fact.

It is now about water security, securing infrastructure through our land servicing program and funding and delivering new housing. When we see that chain of service provisions shape up the most important thing is local decision making. I think the Labour government has agreed on strong principles of local decision making.

We have our Power and Water Corporation and Minister for Essential Services who will give you more specific information, Member for Nhulunbuy. We are working with cross agencies, and I am very proud to say that the Department of Local Government Housing and Community Development are on that team, and we are looking at water stress communities across the Northern Territory and Milingimbi is on that list. It is about delivering water in quantity and demand management, and it's important every Member in this house take that message back.

Whether you are living in town or bush, it is about demand management and infrastructure provision. Milingimbi is in a priority list for the work being done. It is a great part of the world I know is very dear to your heart and your country, and it is about a government on this side that is delivering for remote Indigenous Territorians.

### **Accommodation for Homeless Children**

#### **Mr. COLLINS to MINISTER FOR TERRITORY FAMILIES**

I understand there are around 5 000 children who are tragically homeless each night across the Territory. It is no doubt that some but by no means all of these kids are responsible for much of the rampant youth crime in many of the communities around the Territory. Disturbingly, suicide is a main killer of at-risk children. What is this government doing to identify and provide secure accommodation for these children?

#### **ANSWER**

Thank you for the question, Member for Fong Lim. I think this might be the first question you have asked me since you have been on that side of the chamber. I am more than happy to talk about the issues of homelessness in the Northern Territory because they are significant challenges. As someone who ran the womens' shelter in Alice Springs, which is one of the biggest homelessness services in Australia sadly, not just in the Northern Territory and half of the clients going through that organisation are children, we know that this has been a significant issue over a long period of time.

We as a government have been committed to working hard with our federal counterparts on the homelessness agenda. We saw, through the intervention under the federal Labor government, some significant funds put into homelessness services in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately permanent housing did not follow through, which is why the work of the Minister for Housing and the delivery of those houses out bush has been such a significant issue.

Young people get caught up in the homelessness issue because they are often moving between households couch-surfing rather than what people usually think homelessness is, which is someone sleeping rough in the street. Young people are much more likely to be moving from couch to couch. We have been working with homelessness services in the Northern Territory, Anglicare and NT Shelter, around this issue; there is a range of ways to tackle it. First of all we need the federal government to continue to step up under the current agreement, which has been long-term since 1989. The federal government has stumped up half of the money, which has been met by the States. The Northern Territory Government meets more than its commitments in that area and we need the federal government to up that ante. It is certainly something I have raised at community service meetings across Australia.

We also need to be making sure we are delivering good domestic and family violence service, because we know the biggest driver of homelessness across Australia is domestic and family violence. That is why I am so proud we have built a new women's shelter in Alice Springs which is fit for purpose and means people can have issues of homelessness addressed, as well as leading to transition housing, on which we are doing a range of work.

We are also doing master planning for the women's shelter at Tennant Creek. I notice that the Mayor of Tennant Creek is here. It would be great if they could come on board and help us with some land for that issue. We are working very hard to make sure we are addressing those issues. There is much more to do.

We know that young people who are at risk are more likely to end up in the justice system, which is why you need a government that is working together as a team. You need housing and policing working and we need to be working with our NGO partners. The Aboriginal combined organisations in Alice Springs are working towards some accommodation solutions in Alice Springs, about which I will be very happy to work with them—as a team, as a community—on this big problem.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.

### **Crime Statistics – NT Leading the Way**

#### **Mrs FINOCCHIARO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE on behalf of MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The ABS has released its annual crime victimisation statistics and the Territory is leading the way in the worst possible way, with break-ins, attempted break-ins and property damage all more than double the national average—and increasing. Your government's approach to crime is not working and it is Territorians who are paying the price. When will you admit that your government has failed?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, we are putting in place a range of measures to tackle crime and have safer communities. We are putting in place measures that will tackle the alcohol-related violence, but we are also making sure that police have the numbers—something that those opposite, when they were in government, failed to do, which was to recruit police numbers.

We have made sure we have the specialised ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** They do not want to hear it, Madam Speaker. When you give them information they just interject.

The specialised police liquor inspectors—all 75—have been recruited. CCTV cameras are in Nightcliff, Palmerston and Tennant Creek ...

**Ms Lawler:** A new police station.

**Ms FYLES:** A new police station is in Palmerston, something the Member for Spillett, I am sure, would be proud of. I am sure she would have claimed in her local community newsletter that she delivered it, but Territorians and the resident of Palmerston know it took a Labor government to deliver them a hospital, a police station—and I think a fire station is on its way.

The residents of Nightcliff know that you promised us a 24/7 police station. What did you do? You shut our police station down ...

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110, Relevance. Does the Attorney-General deny that we have double the national average?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, you have the call.

**Ms FYLES:** The resident of my community know the CLP turned their backs on them. They shut down our police station instead of doing what they promised. I am very exciting that project is happening.

Police have said that the very small sample size—only about 0.5% of the Territory—was surveyed. I am advised that we should take our advice and data directly from police—surprise!—something those opposite would not do. That shows a range of statistics.

We know any crime is unacceptable and that there is more to do. We are doing things, unlike those opposite who cut, cut, cut. They shut police stations, they have cut police numbers and they do not care about the community. They said in Question Time today that they will cut the floor price.

We are making steady progress with more police and more CCTV. We have spent significant time reversing the CLP's cuts. We are changing the course of the Territory. We are getting on track for a safer, stronger community. We will continue the hard work, listening to the police, listening to an evidence-based approach, unlike those opposite who have already said that they will throw out evidence-based policies. We know what we saw from them last time.

Madam Speaker, we will continue plans across the Territory, whether it is in the Top End or Central Australia—significant work on our youth justice system, overhauling a broken system. We are targeting long-term solutions. This takes time.

But the biggest risk to the safety of the Territory is a return of the CLP government or a Mill's-led Territory Alliance. It is the biggest risk to Territorians right now.

### **One Mile Dam – Housing**

**Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Residents of the One Mile Dam community live in substandard housing with almost no services. The government granted this land for Aboriginal housing and it has been neglected for the last 40 years. These people need proper housing and services on the land they call home. Why is the community continually neglected, and what is your department doing to make sure the land is being used for the purpose it was granted?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Nhulunbuy for the question and for his interest in town camps.

The Territory Labor government has invested significantly in trying to address what was framed in the question—decades of neglect. It is a proud moment when you get into government and are sworn in as a minister. You are given carriage of policy that you have advocated for and driven.

We have been to One Mile Dam and made significant safety improvements. We have upgraded one home there for a traditional owner. I met that family and saw the works. Not only did I see Indigenous workers on the site, but there are Indigenous contracting companies. There was an electrical company which was great in informing me about the development of Aboriginal business enterprises, which is a Labor policy as well.

Like in the majority of town camps in the Territory, we are focused on land tenure. One Mile Dam has very conflicting land tenure situations. For governments to invest in the long term we need to secure a land tenure agreement. I advocate strongly to lease housing lots. That way I can secure leases and provide the appropriate infrastructure investment. Then we can create the public housing model.

In One Mile Dam it is about what the residents want. How do they see their future? How can they secure the best investment from government and others? We can talk about the Aboriginals Benefit Account, for instance, which the new federal minister is willing to talk about in regard to Aboriginal development and closing the gap initiatives.

If you can provide any support as well, I welcome that. Wherever we are in the Northern Territory, these discussions are front and centre. I am driving this as a clear policy focus in regard to how we can secure these agreements. Our policy is local decision-making. We are a government that listens; we are not stomping around on people.

If there is something resonating across the Territory that I am proud of, it is that we have a Labor government in the Northern Territory that is finally listening.

### **Education Investment**

#### **Mrs FINOCCHIARO to MINISTER for EDUCATION**

As part of your ill-conceived approach to budget repair, which clearly demonstrates your government's misplaced priorities, you promised that frontline workers would not be affected.

**Ms Fyles:** Cuts, cuts, cuts! That is you mob!

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO:** I pick up on the interjection. They are all saying, 'Cuts, cuts, cuts'. That is exactly what you have done, and that is why I am asking the question.

Why have you decided to go after frontline workers, the leaders in our schools, with your government's pay freeze? How many principals left their positions this year through any means? How many are currently being recruited to, and how many principals that you cut did not sign up to your pay freeze?

## **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, the Opposition Leader was part of a government that ripped \$135m from Territory education, so I welcome her interest in education.

When we talk about what the community expects and what they deserve—the Territory Labor government has always invested in education. We have the highest level of investment in education that the Northern Territory has ever experienced.

Unfortunately, it has taken us a bit of time to get back to that level of investment because of the shameful cuts by the CLP in education where we lost 500 education staff and teachers out of the Northern Territory education system. This is shameful by the CLP.

Again, I welcome this question from the Leader of the Opposition because we know what the CLP's approach is to education. It is cut our resources. It is cut our teachers

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing order 110: relevance. The minister does not want to answer the question. Why has she gone after school principals? How many staff ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** It is not a point order. Minister, you have time, get to the point.

**Ms UIBO:** Madam Speaker, we support our principals, our teachers and our school communities because of the investment in education, which is why we have chosen to look at the ways we can better support our schools by not cutting jobs in our schools, by not cutting principals out of the system like the CLP did, particularly in the first six months when they ripped \$52m out of education. That was sadly the first tale of what the CLP government did over their four-year-term.

We have chosen to use this as a mechanism to safeguard and to protect our principal positions. We are not cutting any school positions which we are very proud of and which is why we have had to go to these measures of the pay freeze because the alternative—and the CLP always fails to acknowledge this—is to cut those jobs out of the system to save money. This is exactly what they did four years when they were in government. They cut jobs out of the system to save money and that is not what our community expects, and not what our Territory students deserve. The Territory Labor government and our investment.

To go to the question, there have been four principals who retired at the end of last year; four. All this hoo-haa. This is four retired because they were working extremely hard. They were supported over the last couple years through the investment in our schools an extra \$20m to our schools to help with the resources for our Territory kids. The Labor government is always proud to invest in education.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.

**Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business):** Madam Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Written Question Paper.

#### **MOTIONS**

##### **Withdrawal of Business from Notice Paper – Logistics and Boat Ramps**

**Mr HIGGINS (Daly):** Mr Deputy Speaker, while there is no question before the floor, I move under Standing Order 73, that I withdraw General Business Notice of Motion concerning logistics and the one concerning boat ramps, standing in my name.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Numbers 4 and 7.

Motion agreed to.

##### **Withdrawal of Business from Notice Paper – Infrastructure Program Underspend and ICT Industries**

**Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Opposition Leader):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move under Standing Order 73 that I withdraw general business notice of motion concerning infrastructure program underspend and ICT industries, standing in my name.

Motion agreed to.

#### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 122)**

**Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a bill entitled the Financial Management Amendment Bill 2019 and table the explanatory statement and human rights compatibility statement.

I move that bill be now read a first time.

The Gunner government sent the Northern Territory broke in a matter of months after the 2016 Northern Territory general election. From its first budget in May 2017 the signs were very clear that we were heading for financial ruin. To observe the irresponsible fiscal management of the Chief Minister and his Treasurer has been excruciating for all Territorians.

Yes we have hit hard economic times, but no one expected incompetency on this scale from a government. The figures speak for themselves. The Territory's net debt escalated from \$1.7bn in 2016, when Labor was elected, to over \$3bn net debt in 2018. The net debt almost doubled in less than two years. In 2019–20 the NT's net debt is projected to hit \$5.9bn—almost \$6bn, which is more than a tripling of our net debt in three years. In 2022–23 the projected net debt is expected to be \$8.3bn, at a whopping 120% net debt to revenue ratio.

This escalating debt has raised questions about the Northern Territory Government's ability to manage. It has put our state sovereignty for the Northern Territory's ability to operate independently at risk. Sovereignty is the power of a state to do everything necessary to government itself, such as making, executing and applying laws and imposing and collecting taxes. The Northern Territory sovereignty is at risk.

The Northern Territory has been taken to the cusp of insolvency, bankruptcy, liquidation and financial ruin. This is no exaggeration. The level of debt accrued by the Gunner government also raised speculation about whether the federal government may be forced to intervene. Yet the response of the Gunner government has been to justify its continuing out-of-budget spending, lack of fiscal restraint and apparent inability to take full responsibility for the black hole it placed us in. Continuing to blame everyone but itself for its complete mismanagement of the Territory's finances is incomprehensible. The government has no plan to return us to surplus or do the heavy lifting necessary to address the unsustainable debt it placed us in.

In desperation the Gunner government commissioned an independent report in 2018 to assist in managing its way out of the debt it clocked up. This report was called, 'A plan for budget repair', an independent assessment of the Northern Territory's fiscal position and medium-term outlook. The report was dated December 2018.

The fact the Gunner government had to seek assistance to repair the Northern Territory budget two years into its term of government was deeply shameful and embarrassing for them. This report revealed a structural deficit far worse than anyone had realised. This report revealed a financial crisis in the Northern Territory. The report revealed the Northern Territory net debt is projected to increase tenfold from \$3bn in 2017–18 to over \$35bn in 2029–39.

It was revealed the Northern Territory Government continues to borrow money to cover day-to-day operational costs such as public servants' wages and to cover interest on previous borrowings. In 2018–19, the Northern Territory Government was spending \$4m a day more than the revenue it collects and is borrowing to meet the shortfall. It revealed the levels of public spending were unsustainable.

The report stated that:

*... the Territory faces serious financial challenges and is currently in the unsustainable position of borrowing to fund recurrent activities and interest costs.*

The Gunner government acknowledged there has been massive overspending, the departments are routinely going over their budgets and that the current and forecast levels of debt are unsustainable.

Despite this confession by the government, there has been no reduction in public spending. We have seen the Treasurer, Nicole Manison, go to Canberra begging for more money. The Treasurer knew the GST allocation formula had turned on the Northern Territory when she became Treasurer, yet she kept trying to convince us all there was some sort of political plot, interference and prejudice against the Northern Territory.

The GST allocation is based on a formula and relativities that are independently evaluated. Despite the reduction in GST allocation, the Treasurer kept spending, placing us further in debt. It is now 2020 and the state of the Northern Territory finances continues to be grim.

The Gunner government's lack of financial prudence and responsibility constitutes a breach of the Northern Territory *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*, FITA. On 18 December 2018, I wrote to the Auditor-General of the Northern Territory about the government's 2018 compliance with the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*. I seek leave to table this letter.

Leave granted.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** This is some of what I wrote in my letter to the Northern Territory Auditor-General in December 2018:

The release of the report 'A Plan for Budget Repair, an independent assessment of the Northern Territory's fiscal position and medium outlook' on Friday 14 December 2018, has raised community concerns about the very bleak state of the Territory's finances.

The Northern Territory's Treasurer, Nicole Manison, also tabled her 2018–19 Northern Territory Treasurer's Mid-Year Report in parliament on 28 November 2018. The dire state of the Territory's finances specifically raises concerns over the government's compliance with the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*

The dire state of the Territory's finances specifically raises concerns over the government's compliance with the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*. The endorsement by the Under-Treasurer is also questionable given the apparent mismanagement of the Territory's finances over the past 12–18 months.

It is my view from reading these reports that the government could be in breach of the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act* (FITA). I consider the government may be in breach of specifically Part 3, "Principles of Sound Management" of the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act*.

The act requires that the government mitigates against financial risk arising from 'excessive debt', 'an erosion of the Territory revenue base' and 'the management of assets and liabilities'.

The government's current fiscal strategy would suggest no clear plan of how to manage these current risks with the projected debt rising to unprecedented and unsustainable levels. This is not meeting the FITA requirements that governments manage the Territory's finances 'prudently'.

Part 3, section 5.1(d) of FITA:

*... the Government must manage financial risk faced by the Territory prudently (having regard to economic circumstances) including by maintaining debt at prudent levels.*

Despite the financial risks that have emerged over the past 18 months, most clearly being the down-turn in the economy and the reduction of GST revenue, the government has spent recklessly to the extent that we are now dependent on borrowing to the tune of \$4m per day, according to the independent report.

The Auditor-General responded to my letter in early 2019, saying she would look into the matters I raised, but it is not just up to the Northern Territory Auditor-General to pull into line a reckless, irresponsible government.

This government is accountable to this parliament and the people of the Northern Territory. This government is a fiscal train wreck, a fiscal disaster and the Northern Territory parliament needs to address the issue of fiscal mismanagement by the Gunner government.

A major impact of the deteriorating state of the Territory's finances is the corresponding deterioration of business confidence in the Northern Territory. In 2020, business confidence in the Gunner government is extremely poor.

A few weeks ago, the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce undertook a survey of Northern Territory businesses on the issue of confidence. There were just under 600 responses to the survey of which 61% rated the Gunner government's business and economic performance as extremely poor. The survey also found that 42% of respondents had a negative outlook for the future of their businesses and only 17% were considering hiring additional staff in 2020. These figures show just how concerned the business community is with the present government's ability to manage the Northern Territory out of difficult economic times.

The report 'A Plan for budget repair', an independent assessment of the Northern Territory's fiscal position and medium outlook, provided:

*... a package of 76 interdependent reforms to support the Territory government and agencies to achieve the necessary level of expenditure growth restraint.*

This report specifically recommended the implementation of a debt ceiling to prevent governments from overspending and governments such as the current Gunner government from taking the Northern Territory to the brink of financial collapse.

Recommendation 5.1.9 of the report, A Plan for Budget Repair, is to legislate for a debt ceiling. This is what it says in the report:

5.1.9. *Legislate a Debt Ceiling.*

5.1.10 *Strengthen the accountable officer requirements in the Financial Management Act to limit the ability of accountable officers to commit money for expenditure in excess of the approved budget and develop a Treasurer's Direction clearly outlining the sanctions for accountable officers for non-compliance with the act.*

Sustainably managing the Territory's debt and net debt to revenue ratio is a key focus of the Territory's fiscal strategy and the driver of the need to return the budget to balance. To further increase accountability for financial performance, the Territory should legislate a limit on the level of debt it can incur—that is, a debt ceiling. The debt limit should be supported by strengthening the accountable officer requirements in the *Financial Management Act* to limit the ability of accountable officers to commit money for expenditure beyond the approved budget.

On 16 April 2019, the Northern Territory government released a document called *NT Government response to the Fiscal Strategy Panel: Final report*. This document outlines the government's response to each recommendation of the independent budget repair report.

In relation to Recommendation 5.1.9.—the recommendation to legislate a debt ceiling—the government accepted this recommendation and undertook to implement a debt ceiling in the 2021 Budget. So, the government undertook, in April 2019, to 'commence work' to implement a debt ceiling for implementation in two years' time, in May 2021. Why take two years? Why did the government not do it in 2019 or 2020 implement a debt ceiling? This was a key recommendation to repair the dire state of the Territory's finances—and the Gunner government decided they will take two years to implement it. No wonder we are broke!

Here I am, the Independent Member for Araluen, with no parliamentary staff, moving a Private Members Bill to introduce a debt ceiling. The government is incapable of implementing a key recommendation of the budget repair report before 2021. This is a disgrace. This is a reflection of just how incompetent this government is.

The 2019 budget repair report—the final report—recommended a debt ceiling designed to limit the ability of accountable officers to commit moneys for expenditure in excess of the approved budget. The report also recommended that the legislative instrument for this limiter should also include sanctions on officers who are in breach of this. This is an important part of the plan for budget repair.

Why does the Gunner government want to take years to implement this? A debt ceiling must be implemented as soon as possible. This is essential—it is critical. The need for a debt ceiling in the Northern Territory parliament is obvious. This government cannot be trusted to manage the Territory's finances. This government needs to be stopped. This government needs to provide full disclosure and transparency about exactly what they are spending and where the funds are coming from.

A debt ceiling would be a legislative instrument which would force a limit on government debt. By using a legislative instrument, this will ensure compliance and would also force the government to a greater level of fiscal responsibility, which could not be worked around by using party politics.

Benefits which will flow from the instigation of a debt ceiling could include:

- strengthening the perception of—and perhaps the actual—Northern Territory economy
- strengthening the Northern Territory's economic credibility with internal and external investors, businesses, including internationally and with other governments
- encouraging flow-on and leveraging through other industries such as tourism, agriculture and education
- demonstrating the NTG is serious about controlling debt.

A debt ceiling will increase the ability to plan for the future beyond four-year election cycles. In turn, this could increase the capacity of long-term initiatives that raise social capital and have a social return on investment. The potentially improved balance sheet could also increase the ability to have a buffer against catastrophic weather events—for example cyclones, bushfires and climate change—and global calamities like the Global Financial Crisis.

The framework to support a debt ceiling could lead to innovative practice reforms across the Northern Territory Government's service delivery and debt management—reforms that could be scaled to extend beyond the government sphere could positively impact the private and for-purpose sectors.

In essence, a debt ceiling will strategically align agency activities and government priorities; enable a debt-responsible culture in the bureaucracy; and strengthen efficiency, effectiveness and accountability across government.

Debt ceilings are one debt management measure that governments can employ in executing a strategy for managing their debt. It provides an authority to incur debt up to a point and can assist in limiting debt expansion.

A debt ceiling is established with the intention of limiting the maximum amount of debt that a government can carry. As a consequence, this should also place a limit on the amount that a government can spend. The limit is usually expressed as a nominal amount in the currency of the country or in the form of debt as a proportion of gross domestic product or state domestic product.

Of course a debt ceiling goes hand in hand with a range of other debt management strategies which may include:

- having clear objectives for debt management
- weighing risks against cost considerations
- ensuring the separation and coordination of debt and monetary management objectives and accountabilities
- carefully managing the refinancing and market risks and the interest costs of debt burdens
- developing sound institutional structures and policies for reducing operational risk, including clear delegation of responsibilities and associated accountabilities among government agencies involved in debt management.

The Gunner government has proposed to begin the implementation of the debt ceiling in the 2021 budget. This is more than 12 months away.

I am moving that the legislation required for the implementation of a debt ceiling be instigated now, in 2020. There is no reason why the process cannot be started this year. There was no reason the process could not have been started last year, in 2019.

This delay in implementation is more evidence of a government that is procrastinating—a government that is stuck in a black hole of debt that, even with expert independent advice and assistance, is incapable of making the tough decisions.

Implementing a debt ceiling is a strict measure that will ensure that this NT Government and any future NT Government adheres to responsible and transparent fiscal management

In order to implement a debt ceiling, I am calling on an amendment of the *Financial Management Act 1995* to insert sections 30A and 30B. This is a simple piece of legislation.

Section 30A inserts a debt ceiling amount. The Territory under this act at any time must not exceed \$6.988bn. This is the debt ceiling.

Therefore, the total face value of the principal owing on the debt incurred by the Territory under this act at any time must not exceed \$6.988bn.

This figure is in the 2019 NT budget, in Budget Paper No 2, on page nine. A total of \$6.988bn is the projected net debt for non-financial public sector for 2021–22.

Although \$6.988bn is an unacceptably high rate of net debt—at a 105% net debt to revenue ratio—it is a reasonable debt ceiling given that the government has already committed to spending and borrowing for this period.

Ideally the debt ceiling should be set at a much lower level, but given the financial commitments made by this government, a debt ceiling set lower than this would only serve to lower business confidence in the whole of the NT by the government not being able to deliver the existing commitments. Mechanisms are built into the bill to ensure that the government adheres to the debt ceiling.

The debt ceiling is designed to stop the NT Government from exceeding this amount.

Section 308 inserts that:

1. If the total face value of the principal owing on the debt incurred by the Territory exceeds the debt ceiling, the Auditor-General must prepare a report of that fact and give the report to the minister.
2. The minister must table the report in the Legislative Assembly on the sitting day immediately following the day after receiving the report.

The meaning of section 30B is self-explanatory. The Northern Territory Attorney-General will be required to monitor the debt or the principal owing on the debt incurred by the Territory. If the debt exceeds \$6.988bn, the NT Attorney-General will present a report to the minister or Treasurer. That report will then be required to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the sitting day immediately following the day after receiving the report.

These two proposed sections would work in reciprocal manner ensuring transparency and that the minister is kept to account for the state of the NT finances. The minister would need to be mindful of the debt levels at all times, which would have a flow-on effect of departments needing to know the state of their finances. It would also ensure that, in the event of the debt ceiling being exceeded, the minister would face scrutiny as to why that had been allowed to happen.

To change the debt ceiling the Northern Territory Treasurer would need to amend the *Financial Management Act 1995*. To exceed the debt ceiling the Northern Territory Treasurer would need to fully account to parliament as to why the government wants to breach the debt ceiling stated in the *Financial Management Act 1995*.

In and of itself, a debt ceiling would not be the panacea to the current fiscal problems, but would need to be incorporated into an overall debt management framework that:

- projects across the medium to long term
- sets clear principles, objectives and obligations
- includes evaluation to entrench good practice
- ensures transparency, accountability and reporting to the elected representative members and the public.

Other less obvious impacts of a debt ceiling include, but are not limited to:

- enabling leveraging for other borrowings, which in turn could be invested
- increasing the interest rate return on Territory Bonds, therefore increasing the number of investments and broadening the investor demographic to decrease the risk of investors selling bond holdings at the same time
- demonstrating the maturity of the NT Legislative Assembly, by agreeing across party lines
- being psychologically positive for the Territory business and consumer community, which could improve the economy and wellbeing of Territorians.

Any governmental financial management strategy contains a certain level of risk, but these can be mitigated by sound policy, strict adherence to budgetary promises and ensuring departmental accountability. Ensuring robust modelling that incorporates scenario planning and considers the longer term is required to manage strategic risks.

The effect of uncertainty on the ability of a debt ceiling to achieve its aims can create both internal and external risks.

Strategic risks external to the Northern Territory Government include:

- non-controllable external conditions that are directly important to the Northern Territory Government's capacity to service debt, for example, the GST revenue
- global downturn, which can devalue the Northern Territory Government's security investments and contract the business environment
- Commonwealth Government reaction, as it can effectively invalidate NT powers to make laws concerning debt ceilings
- International investor reaction could be favourable or non-favourable depending on the circumstances.

Although these are outside the ability to control greater fiscal responsibility, coupled with a limit to the amount of debt which the government is able to incur, will mean that in the event of any of these occurring, the impacts could be minimised.

The present paradigm of government spending includes the following negative trends:

1. short-term political decisions in favour of the loudest interest group are common and may be counter to principles of the debt management framework, which in turn undermines the public legitimacy of the framework
2. inability to control the bureaucratic culture that enables debt
3. the four-year political cycle in the NT, which is counter to long-term reform.

These trends could be viewed as being the underlining cause of the present financial problems faced by the government. By instigating a debt ceiling, this will put in place an immovable benchmark which would need to be worked around in all future policies. This will mean greater forethought will be required during budgeting and will in turn hopefully reduce some of the problems which arise from the above points. In conclusion, in 2020 the Northern Territory Government is not borrowing money to build, but to pay for interest repayments.

This is a serious state of affairs. The only way out of this position is to implement strict fiscal controls and strategies. The reluctance of the Gunner government to follow the recommendations of the 2018 Budget Repair Report is a sign of paralysis. This government is not capable of the discipline and restraint required. A debt ceiling is a simple but powerful mechanism to make governments account for their spending and stop them from sending us broke. The present level of Northern Territory debt is unsustainable. Unless decisive action is taken immediately the economy will continue to decline.

The presently forecasted escalation in government debt is worrying for the whole community, from the average person in the street to the business struggling in this stagnating economy, and external potential investors. The implementation of a debt ceiling will create a barrier to an ever-increasing amount of debt. By using a legislative instrument it negates party politics and ensures compliance. By implementing it now as opposed to the proposed 2021 it means another whole year will not be wasted in excessive government spending, and another year towards improving the state of the economy. Once in place it could mean that citizens and businesses can view the future of the Northern Territory with more confidence. I table the speech and the explanatory notes for the *Financial Management and Amendment Act 2019* Serial 122, a bill for an act to amend the final management Act 1995. I move that this bill be read a first time.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Araluen, thank you for tabling that. I will just confirm, we also require the human rights compatibility statement.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** Yes, that has all been provided, and the explanatory statement.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, I will just wait to receive so I can cite that before we proceed. The advice I have received is that it has not been received yet.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** Oh okay, sorry. I thought it was sent through.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That's quite alright. So Member for Araluen, if you want to table that now we can proceed. I will get you to table the human rights compatibility statement.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** I table the explanatory statement and the human rights compatibility statement.

Motion agreed to; bill read a first time.

**Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be declared to be urgent.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Araluen, you may proceed. You have 5 minutes to discuss in detail around the urgency, and all other honourable members in the chamber also have an opportunity to speak for a period of 5 minutes. There is no opportunity to close on the urgency. The question will then be put.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** This is a matter of urgency for the Northern Territory. The state of the finances of the Northern Territory are extremely bleak, and they only get worse as each day passes. We know that we are spending almost \$1m per day on interest repayments. This equates to over \$5m per week in interest repayments alone.

The net debt in the Northern Territory has escalated from just under \$2bn in 2016, when this government came to power, to \$4.1bn in 2019–2020. Next year, \$6.2bn; the year after, \$6.9bn; the year after that, \$7.5bn; the year after that, \$8bn; and in 10 years' time, we are looking at a net debt of over \$35bn.

We cannot waste any more time procrastinating with this hopeless, incompetent government. We have to implement this strategy as soon as possible to rein in spending. In the last 12 months since the Langoulant budget repair report was provided to us all to consider the financial crisis this government placed us in, we have seen the government already breach its recommendations. We have seen spending outside of the budget.

One of the recommendations made by Mr Langoulant was that the government controls itself, shows some fiscal restraint and responsibility, some prudence around its spending, to remain within the budget it set the Northern Territory.

I remind the Gunner Labor government, this is not your money; this is public money. This is money that does not belong to you. It belongs to every resident of the Northern Territory. You cannot continue to be irresponsible in this regard. This mechanism I put forward today, a debt ceiling which is well above where I would prefer to put it, but I am a realist—at \$6.988bn, which is the forecast net debt for 2021–22. That is enough money for you to do what you want without taking us further into debt.

We need to put this through on urgency tonight to put it to bed once and for all, to stop the government overspending.

In the last 12 months we have seen the government allocate \$12m, which was not in the budget, to the Darwin Turf Club grand stand. That is a significant breach of a recommendation that Mr Langoulant made in his budget repair report. We also saw \$6m allocated to the Arrernte Living Culture Centre in Alice Springs. I am not making any judgments about those projects, but that \$18m allocated to those projects were not in the 2019 budget or any previous budget. It was spending outside of the budget.

We also saw a significant increase in public servants last year. Were we not supposed to be reining in spending and making reductions? We were supposed to be making budget conscious decisions on how we would move forward. There is no evidence whatsoever that this government has taken on board the recommendations to be fiscally responsible for the Northern Territory.

We must implement this debt ceiling tonight. We must demonstrate to the people of the Northern Territory that enough is enough, that we will control ourselves, that the government will rein in spending and be accountable for every dollar, and that we will not see this government take us further into unsustainable debt.

**Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice):** Mr Deputy Speaker, we will not be taking advice from the Member for Araluen, who was the Treasurer for six months—the Treasurer who could not add up, but explained it was because she was Alice Springs. This is ridiculous. It is a stunt.

The figures and time frames the Member for Araluen just read out were rubbery. There is nothing more than a stunt in this. She has only just declared her urgency.

We have a clear plan for budget repair. The Treasurer has outlined that to the community, and there are time frames we are working towards. We will not be taking advice from the Member for Araluen who, when she

was the Treasurer, handed her responsibilities to the Renewal Management Board. I remind the House about that board, because some members were not in this House when we saw their work. I think they were the million-dollar men. They were paid a significant amount and all they did was cut frontline services, teachers and youth services. The Territory is still paying for that.

We are legislating a debt ceiling for Budget 2020–21 consistent with the budget repair implementation plan. We are sustainably managing debt. We have already our new fiscal strategy strengthened and implemented it in Budget 2019–20. We have the Charter of Budget Discipline. The Member for Araluen would know this if she bothered to read the plan for budget repair, which was released in April last year.

We are getting on with the job of looking at the Northern Territory budget—the long-term budget—the recurrent expenditure and making sure we deliver frontline services to Territorians with a sustainable approach. As a government we have seen significant declines to our GST. Nobody is arguing that. But the Treasurer has outlined a clear plan for budget repair.

We will not be caught up in cheap political stunts like what the Member for Araluen did this evening. We have not seen the bill! She is the first one to bark on about seeing a bill. We have not seen it. She has, in the last 20 minutes, decided that all of a sudden as a stunt she will do it in urgency. If you were serious you would follow the process.

We will not be supporting this urgency.

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** I pick up on the interjections from those opposite. They know this is simply a political stunt. We have a plan to do it properly, get it right and will not be supporting this urgency motion.

**Mr HIGGINS (Daly):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this going through on urgency. My reason for that is not political, it is looking at the dire situation we are in. To say they have a plan for budget repair—looking at the future, it is a bit like the statements on generational change. How well have we gone when we look at the crime situation we have.

I say that this needs to be addressed on urgency because, as the member pointed out, the projected debt is \$6.9bn by 2021, the time this government wants to introduce a debt ceiling. The issue, of course, is that is a debt, not the deficit. It is a debt; it is real money. People need to understand the difference.

This government is not addressing its deficit situation. It is spending more money than it earns. That amount, or the difference between the two are growing. When you put those figures into perspective and look at how much interest—I asked the Treasurer this yesterday. I asked, 'Are we paying \$800 000 a day in interest?' I did not get a clear answer. I then asked a supplementary and gave her the exact figures, which are \$805 240.45. The issue there, of course, is we still did not get an answers.

When you combine that interest with our deficit we are borrowing \$4m a day. It is not just the interest of \$800 000 that is creating for us. The deficit means that every day we are borrowing another \$3.2m. They are overspending by \$3.2m and do not see any urgency in addressing it.

Everything has been tried. There is a motion before this House tonight to talk about the precarious economic situation we are in. These people do not want to listen, they think you can just spend money willy-nilly. Langoulant said that this has to stop, but they continue to do it. I fully support doing this on urgency, because those people over there cannot be trusted and I do not believe they will ever introduce the debt ceiling legislation they talk about. I do not they even understand it.

I support the motion of urgency.

**Mr WOOD (Nelson):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting it on urgency, but I will support it going to a scrutiny committee. If that required it to be slightly shorter, so be it. I do not generally support matters on urgency.

The dire straits of our finances in the Northern Territory have been around quite a while . We are coming to the end of this Assembly. There is another estimates procedure to happen before the end of this Assembly and many of these issues can be raised at that time.

The other problem is I also have not seen the bill. One of the reasons you have a scrutiny committee is to allow a group of members of this parliament to clearly look at what has been put forward by the Member for Araluen. She has every right to ask for it to be on urgency, but I also have the right to see what is in that bill. The best way—and that is what this government proposed even though it had some changes which I do not agree with—was to send it to a scrutiny committee. That is the best way for us to get a clear understanding of what this bill is all about.

I am not saying this bill is not important, I am just saying I would much prefer the process for the bill to go through a scrutiny committee so it can be looked at thoroughly. We can get people to come in from Treasury if we have to. The scrutiny committee could ask Treasury's opinion on what is in the bill. That is important as a good process going forward before I decided whether I support the bill that the Member for Araluen has brought forward or not.

**Mr McCONNELL (Stuart):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I support some of the concerns of the previous speaker about due process and the scrutiny process, but I am still supporting this on urgency.

I am really concerned about where the budget in the Northern Territory is heading. As members of this place know, I have put considerable work into that and tabled in this place the letters patent for a royal commission into the Northern Territory because of issues like its budget and the way it is governed.

I have seen much more evidence that this is a problem. You cannot sit in this place and tell us that you have budgeted for \$12m at the Darwin race club when you did not ...

**Ms Lawler:** We did.

**Mr McCONNELL:** It is not in the budget ...

**Ms Lawler:** It is in the Infrastructure budget.

**Mr McCONNELL:** It is not in the budget. It is not there. You crow on about things as little as a few hundred thousand dollars when you release budget papers and this was not in there.

I am concerned that you just come up with money—and I am not saying this government is the only one to do it, I am saying previous governments have done it as well. Here is the opportunity to deal with these matters and legislate a debt ceiling. This opportunity has been presented to us, let us do it. It is in the Langouant report. We should be doing this.

**Ms Fyles:** You cannot trust the Member for Araluen.

**Mr McCONNELL:** You cannot trust anyone in this Chamber, I am afraid!

**Ms Fyles:** Hey!

**Mr McCONNELL:** You cannot ...

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Stuart ...

**Ms Fyles:** Offensive.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, stop it! Every elected member has an opportunity to contribute to this debate. We will hear each and every member on the urgency motion in silence or you will be removed!

**Mr McCONNELL:** There are significant issues of trust in this Chamber, I can tell you. Anyone who wants to deny it, they are not a realist. There are many issues of trust in this Chamber. How we dwell on it here, frankly, is not what is most important. What is most important is that there is trust issue between this Chamber, this government and the community of the Northern Territory. They are very concerned about numerous things in the Northern Territory—crime, economy, environment including climate change and budget.

Here is an opportunity—the work has been done by somebody else for you. Here is the opportunity, bring it forward ...

**Ms Fyles:** But we do not ...

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr McCONNELL:** ... discuss it. Bring it forward and go through the scrutiny process and the process of debate and second reading. Do those thing and that work. Do not put in a situation where you are at the moment where you simply want to have another election where you can continue to spend on all of these things you want to spend on. There will be car parks and all sorts of strange things. None of them will be in remote areas or helping to support the development of a remote economy.

It is extraordinary, we live in a place with entrenched social inequality in the nation. It is an exemplar for the world of social inequality. We are not working on those things, but we can find hundreds of millions of dollars for projects we do not need.

Here is an opportunity to demonstrate to the people of the Northern Territory that we are listening to the Langoulant report and the need for a legislative response to a ceiling on borrowing—which is incredibly generous, the ratio is over 100%. We have the opportunity.

Leader of Government Business, you may not like not controlling the agenda, that you cannot sack people from the Caucus or kick people out of this parliament, but you do not always get your own way. You are governing for the Territory, do the job you were elected to do and that is what I was elected to do, which is why I am supporting this bill on urgency.

**Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Member for Nelson's comments and the consideration of this bill. It is an appropriate use of the Assembly's time and I agree the bill should go to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

The government should not be afraid of the legislation. You may not like the form of words, but the scrutiny committee process can deal with that and look at the need for this legislation and suggest some wording or a better formation.

The basis for this bill is a reference in the Langoulant report and you need to take that into consideration. It is like the ICAC committee tomorrow, it is something you should have done some time ago.

I will move an amendment to the urgency motion that the bill be referred to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee.

**Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen):** Thank you Member for Fong Lim for your contribution, and other members. It is not going it through on urgency but it is an urgent issue. It is of primary importance that a debt ceiling be implemented, as with the other recommendations of the Langoulant report.

The government has agreed to implement a debt ceiling in May 2021. Why cannot they implement it sooner; that is the question for government? Why can they not commit to this important reform that was recommended by an independent report.

I am happy for this bill to go to a scrutiny committee, it will give the whole of parliament an opportunity to consider the importance of this bill.

I thank honourable members.

The Assembly divided.

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Ayes 6          | Noes 13      |
| Mr Collins      | Ms Ah Kit    |
| Mrs Finocchiaro | Mr Costa     |
| Mr Guyula       | Ms Fyles     |
| Mrs Lambley     | Mr Kirby     |
| Mr McConnell    | Ms Lawler    |
| Mr Wood         | Mr McCarthy  |
|                 | Ms Moss      |
|                 | Ms Nelson    |
|                 | Mr Paech     |
|                 | Mr Sievers   |
|                 | Ms Uibo      |
|                 | Ms Wakefield |

Mrs Worden

Pairs: Mr Higgins and Mr Gunner

Amendment not agreed to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question now is that the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly divided.

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Ayes 5          | Noes 13      |
| Mr Collins      | Ms Ah Kit    |
| Mrs Finocchiaro | Mr Costa     |
| Mr Guyula       | Ms Fyles     |
| Mrs Lambley     | Mr Kirby     |
| Mr McConnell    | Ms Lawler    |
|                 | Mr McCarthy  |
|                 | Ms Moss      |
|                 | Ms Nelson    |
|                 | Mr Paech     |
|                 | Mr Sievers   |
|                 | Ms Uibo      |
|                 | Ms Wakefield |
|                 | Mrs Worden   |

Pairs: Mr Higgins and Mr Gunner

Motion not agreed to.

#### **FIREARMS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 121)**

**Ms PURICK (Goyder):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a bill entitled the Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 and table the explanatory statement and human rights compatibility statement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a first time.

This bill and its contents is not controversial and should not be any cause for concern for members in this Assembly, the police or the community. Indeed, I will show that many people and groups support this bill and its contents.

The bill is about setting a legislation framework such that business, training and tourism ventures involving 50-calibre rifles can be established in the Northern Territory, and that a firearm range that supports such a business holds the relevant licence under the *Firearms Act 1997*. The bill also details the criteria for gaining a firearm range licence, plus reporting to the NT Police and the keeping of relevant records.

This bill does not involve the police or military.

Similar businesses, tourism and training ventures and legislative frameworks exist already in Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, and in numerous countries around the world, notably in America, Canada and European countries.

This bill is about allowing the use of 50-calibre rifles for recreational, sporting and training purposes on a privately and appropriately licensed firearms range, which the legislation does not currently allow. As the legislation currently stands, recreational and sporting 50-calibre activities cannot be accomplished either under the legislation or regulation. There is no policy position by the NT Police, and the Police Commissioner cannot make a determination.

Simply put, the current laws do not allow the use of 50-calibre rifles by private citizens for recreational sport or training as there is no licensed private range in the Territory.

At present, 50-calibre firearms are classified as category D firearms. Pursuant to section 11 of the *Firearms Act*, a person must have a genuine reason for a licence, and genuine need for category C, D and H. The

Police Commissioner or delegate cannot issue a licence if the person does not have a genuine reason pursuant to section 11.

The current legislation lists 12 genuine reasons for holding such a licence. This section enables the regulations to limit genuine reasons to specific categories of firearms. Pursuant to regulation 13, a licence cannot be issued in respect of category D firearms unless the genuine reason for the licence is pest animal control, primary production, firearm collection, museum display or instruction in firearm safety and use.

Seeking to establish a tourism type business venture that could be used also as a shooting sport training destination is currently not considered genuine. That is what this bill seeks to change along with have a supporting range licensed.

By way of background, for those who may not be familiar with the sport or 50 calibre shooting, I will provide some information.

When I started out on this job of trying to change the legislation to allow new businesses to be set up, I have no real idea of what was involved. Sure, I know a bit about guns as I have a few myself—a few 22 rifles, a few 410 shotguns, an historic 303 and the occasional slug gun. I have done a bit of shooting for feral animal control and for recreational purposes.

However, the sport and shooting of 50 calibre rifles takes it to a new level and I believe has excellent potential to mark the territory as a new tourist destination for engagement in this sport and recreational activity.

The first device identified as a gun, a bamboo tube that used gunpowder to fire a spear, appeared in China around 1000AD. The Chinese had invented gun powder in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The ever mysterious gunpowder is just a combination of potassium nitrate, sulphur and charcoal.

The history of guns and rifles is dotted with familiar names like Samuel Colt, who invented the first revolver in about 1836; John Moses Browning, who invented the Winchester rifle and the pump shotgun; and Eliphalet Remington and Henry Derringer, who designed small arms.

Many of these designers were American, but there were Scottish designers such as Alexander Henry and, in more modern times, designers have been from Russia, England—and even Australia has had a designer, Evelyn Owen, who designed a machine carbine which was used extensively in World War II, in particular the Pacific and Asian battles including the Korean and Vietnam incursions. While it was a bulky gun, it was very reliable and popular with the Australian Diggers and got the nickname, the Diggers Darling.

The .50 calibre rifle was most likely designed by Joseph Whitworth, a prominent English engineer. His rifle design used polygonal rifling, which meant the projectile did not have to bite into grooves as happens with conventional rifling. This rifle by Whitworth was more accurate than the previously designed Enfield, which showed up serious weakness in the Crimean war. The Whitworth rifles could hit a target at 2000 yards and the Enfield only 1400 yards. It is well known that .50 calibre rifles are known also as sniper rifles.

However, this is not what this bill is about and that activity is completely separate from the current sport of long-distance shooting. The sport of shooting .50 calibre rifles is more popular and universal than many people realise. While it may not be that well-known in the Territory from a public commentary point of view—and perhaps not in this Chamber—it is well-known in sporting circles in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. Having said that, the sporting shooters in the Territory know about .50 calibre shooting and from my talks about this bill, are keen to see a private range set up and the sport get established in the NT. By way of information, these groups include the Sporting Shooters Association, NT Field and Game and the Firearms Council members, who I have written to about this bill.

In the Sporting Shooters Association of Victoria, a now 15-year-old teenager—although he might be 18 now—Lachie Adolph, won the junior world title for .50 calibre shooting when he was 13 years. That was an Aussie who took on the world and came home with the big prize. It was an international shooting competition in New Mexico in July 2018. Since that time, Lachie has collected other titles including national titles at a place called Warracknabeal in age groups—and he stacks up pretty well against the seniors as well. This young fellow is just one of the many people involved with the sport in Victoria through associations such as the Long Range Shooting Club. The sport is about accuracy, concentration and discipline, to name a few, and is growing in popularity every year both in Australia and around the world.

The use of .50 calibre rifles is considered to be the most demanding sport of ultra-long range—that is, 1000 to 1760 yards—competitive target shooting and is a popular sport in some states of Australia, notably Victoria, which I mentioned, and Western Australia, UK, America and countries throughout Europe.

Given the lengths of the required shot, there is a high demand and need for many skills and knowledge to be successful. To succeed at long-range shooting, the shooter must have good shooting skill fundamentals, a rifle with good precision and as consistent ammunition as possible—mainly to achieve a consistent muzzle velocity.

In addition to the successful hitting of the target—which, of course, is the ultimate goal—a variety of external factors must be taken into account with regard to ballistics calculation—to be a good long-range shooter—and these include: wind—both by the shooter and along the whole flight path to the target; bullet shape and weight; air pressure, altitude and, to a certain degree, the humidity; the temperature, including air, ammunition and barrel temperature; the spindrift, an effect caused by the rotation of the bullet; the Coriolis effect caused by the Earth's rotation; a mirage which causes the shooter to hit high and to the side if there is a little wind; and the angle to the target—called a cosine angle—either up or downhill. So, it is not just getting a gun and shooting a .50 calibre rifle, there are many things to consider and it takes considerable training to become a champion or a very good shooter.

Long-range shooting is demanding and precise, which is probably the reason it is a popular and growing sport across the world. In past times, it tended to be reserved for the wealthy people—which is often the case in some sports—but current times see all manner of people involved, including many women shooters.

In Western Australia, a remote pastoral station called Ella Valla is attracting firearms enthusiasts from around the world to its property where people can shoot a .50 calibre rifle and test their skills against the most rugged condition the land throws up, including but not limited to wind, dust, high temperatures, to name a few characteristics of the property, which is located south of Carnarvon. The Ella Valla range is 2.7 kilometres straight and is one of the longest non-military ranges in Australia.

In busy times the property has had over 250 people visiting at one time. Sometimes it has a single client who hires or uses the perhaps for personal and exclusive use. Naturally given the property is in the middle of nowhere, all facilities, camping, homestay, tours and so forth are provided for a fee and that contributes to the economy regionally as well as to the state as a whole.

This would be a new initiative for the Territory; however, police and other involved agencies can draw upon the legislative frameworks from other states, plus requirements such as training needed for instructors in the Territory.

At this time I must stress the bill is not about wholesale licensing of people to acquire and shoot 50 calibre rifles. It is about a business including a shooting range being developed where an individual can shoot a rifle under supervision—and in the bill it is qualified supervision—and/or participate in a shooting competition.

The bill is not dissimilar to the legislative changes that were needed to set up paintball activities in the Territory. It may take some time to get all the requirements identified and implemented and proposed businessperson or people would need to be beyond reproach and of suitable qualifications. I would expect no less and I am sure all of us would expect no less.

The bill is not overly complicated and seeks to insert words such that recreational/training shooting can be listed as a genuine reason and, in my mind, establishing a range and business for recreational purposes and changes to ensure a good regulatory framework is included.

Work started on this bill in January 2019 when I wrote to the minister for Police. By May 2019 I had not heard from the minister's office, so I wrote again and received a formal reply in August 2019. The minister recommended I contact the OIC of the firearms unit of NT Police, which I did. I got a reply within the week, which simply stated that the current legislation does not allow the licensing of a firearm range to accommodate the shooting of 50-calibre rifles, which I already knew.

That is when I set out to change the legislation, as I had been asked to do so by businesses and people involved in this sport or the sport of shooting.

I would like to think that the NT Police would not have an objection to this bill, given the requirements for the range licence and the rifle use by the people on the range. Sure, there might be a bit of extra work in licensing the range but, let us be honest, from my research there will only ever be one—maximum two—of these

ranges in the Territory, given what will be required in regard to compliance, let alone the business prospects and what would be involved in setting up such a range.

The firearm range would need to be long—2 kilometres in length—and designed to exacting standards. There are design standards around not only in Australia, but in the world, including places like South Africa, which has range standards in its legislation if they want to attract the top-class shooters from Australia and around the world.

Baffles and stop butts or protected zones, will need to be installed as well as signage, first-aid resources, appropriate storage and security to name a few, apart from the amenities for human comfort and enjoyment.

While we may see only one or two of these ranges, the tourism potential could be large and wide. The purchase of one rifle, by the operator of the range, can cost between \$4000 and \$20 000, depending on the make, model and scope. The bullets for such a rifle can cost between \$6 and \$11 per bullet.

For every gun there will be other costs, including gun safes, carry bags, ammunition, scopes, eye and ear protection, maintenance and repair equipment, to name some of the usual items that go with any rifle and sporting activities.

There will be a multiplier effect, involving travel, accommodation, fees, hire car, meals, souvenirs, compliance fees by the operator, and the list goes on.

The shooting of 50-calibre rifles is an internationally recognised sport. The facility could be also used by military and police agencies, so it has great potential as a facility to improve the skills of professionals in the Northern Territory. This should not be underestimated.

This bill presents an opportunity for the Territory. I trust such a business venture will be viewed favourably by the government, because it is viewed favourably by the shooting community.

I extend my thanks to the people who helped with this bill development. I thank Patrick Orr, from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, for his patience in walking me through what has to be involved in developing a bill; Darryl Yesburg, who owns Guns and Ammo, whose knowledge of the nitty-gritty of firearms, storage and security was very useful; NT Field and Game; the Sporting Shooters Association; and the researchers who look after the Independents, Elizabeth Creed and Annie McCall.

I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a first time.

**Ms PURICK (Goyder):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be referred to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee for report by 5 May 2020.

Motion agreed to.

### **MOTION** **Northern Territory Economy**

**Mr HIGGINS (Daly):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that this Assembly:

- recognises that the Territory continues to stagnate under Labor, and that after three-and-a-half years in office, Labor has no solutions, no visions to move the Territory forward
- calls on the government to apologise to Territorians for the parlous state of the economy
- calls on the government to take urgent action to address the fiscal and economic challenges, and restore hope, reward and opportunity.

The facts are stark and there is only one conclusion after nearly four years of Labor. Territorians are worse off under Labor. Even though Labor has been in power for nearly four years, they always want to blame someone else. If it is the budget deficit, it is the fault of the federal government. The Labor government should be working with the federal government in a mature and constructive way to deliver outcomes for Territorians.

The CLP has demonstrated that we work with the federal government and deliver for Territorians, even from the opposition. Take for example the fast-tracking of federal funds for the Port Keats road. Nearly \$54.3m fast-tracked.

The facts for the day, according to the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, *NT Economy Snapshot – February 2020*:

- economic growth—the state final demand year-on-year to the September quarter 2019 is down 3.1%
- Gross State Product for financial year 2018–19 is down 1.5%
- employment—the government that is going to create 14 000 jobs a year—the average weekly earnings are down 3.4%, year to the end of May 2019; employment is sitting at 131 109, down 4.2% on year to December 2019
- unemployment is up by 0.6% annual change; now it is 5.6% in February 2020 and, in February 2019, it was 5%
- construction work is down—September quarter 2019 is down 10.1%
- construction work done—the NT year-on-year to September 2019 is down 60.6%
- property prices:
  - Darwin median unit price to December quarter 2019 was \$305 000, that is down 12.9% for the year to the December quarter 2019
  - median house prices in Darwin to December quarter 2019 was \$460 065, that is down 6.8% for the year to December 2019
  - the Palmerston median house price to the end of December 2019 was \$406 250, that is down 9.7% annually
  - the Alice Springs median house price to the end of December 2019 was \$455 000, that is down 4.1% annually.
- household consumption—the annual change to the end of the September quarter to the total private final consumption expenditure is down 2.1%.

We heard the Member for Araluen talk about debt ceilings. Let us have a look at debt and deficit.

The net debt—from the pre-election fiscal outlook in 2012—was on track for 2012–13, to peak at \$3.5bn. In the same report, net debt was on track to surpass \$5.5bn by 2016. The CLP government was handed a net debt of \$3.5bn with a projected debt of \$5.5bn.

What did this government get? In the PEFO for 2016, that net debt was \$1.8bn. That is about half of what your projected debt was when we came to power. That was the outcome of the 2015–16 financial year.

This result clearly shows the improvement in underlying net debt position achieved by the Country Liberals during their time. The contrast is pretty stark. Since then we have seen that forecast net debt projected to peak at \$35.7bn under this Labor government. That is according to the interim report by Langoulant.

Year after year we see under the Labor government that the Territory has recorded multiple \$1bn-plus deficits. The difference between revenue expenditure is the critical issue. Action must be taken to close the fiscal deficit, but Labor has taken no real action. Action must also be taken to address the underlying structural reasons for these deficits. That is, you have a volatile revenue base and a steady growth in recurrent expenditure.

The critical issue is deficit. The Territory has recorded high deficits when compared to other Australian jurisdictions and internationally. The key message is that any improvement to the budget bottom line in either the deficit or the debt have been in spite of and not because of Labor.

A CLP government would look to address the underlying issue of the deficit with a deficit to GSP cap or restriction. That is precisely what the Member for Araluen was talking about today in her motion.

The Territory is borrowing \$4m a day to cover its basic operational costs, including interest repayments and the salaries of public servants.

If you tried to home budget under that scenario, how long would you last? Not very long at all. How long do you think businesses survive under that scenario? Not very long. They are giving their own interpretation of how happy they are with you.

This situation is unsustainable. The simple facts of the matter are that as a government the Labor government is living way beyond its means and has made no savings and no reductions in the cost of delivering government services, not even since seeing the Langoulant report.

We have seen textbook falls in investor, business and consumer confidence as a direct result of this Labor government's inability to manage the Territory's economy. What we have not seen is the leadership to follow through on the necessary corrective measures.

A key objective of the fiscal policy is to maintain the sustainability of public finances and avoid crisis. What the CLP is saying is that it is time to get common sense back to government and get government to act like any business or family across the Territory. At some point we need to rebalance the ledger.

The CLP opposition believes there is a lot of low-hanging fruit when it comes to savings across government. The waste we have seen by this far-left Gunner government has been unparalleled in the history of the Territory. The CLP will end the waste. We will be unrelenting, unforgiving and forensic when it comes to auditing the business of government and how service is delivered to Territorians.

Territorians were promised that the Langoulant review would be a handbrake on the government to prevent the Territory going over the fiscal cliff. We are still very much headed for that fiscal cliff. Report after report confirms time and again what all Territorians know, that there are serious problems across the economy now.

The latest in that long line of damning reports is from Sensis. In the Sensis Business Outlook and Confidence Survey, January 2020, the staggering data is that zero percent of small and medium businesses in the NT expect economic growth this year. It puts a different spin on those green shoots, does it not?

On top of that, 50% expect a slowdown and 50% expect a stand-still. And 50% of businesses believe the Gunner Labor government policies, and I quote, work against small business. This is nearly double that of Queensland, which is the next-worst performing economy at 28% and they are staggering under an Anastasia Palaszcuk Labor government.

Small and medium business is the backbone of the Territory economy. They make up 95% of businesses in the Territory, numbering about 14 000 in total. The CLP is pro-business, pro-development and understands the Territory must be competitive as an investment destination.

The fact that zero percent of small to medium businesses in the Territory expect growth this year is damning. The opposition have been calling on the Gunner Labor government to free up industry and business, support a diversified economy, support sustainable infrastructure, remove regulatory burdens on businesses, incentivise private sector investment and stop the waste.

The CLP is the pro-business, pro-development party that understands the Territory must be competitive as an investment location. We have always said that to engage business and be credible with business people, we must speak the language of business. Chief amongst this approach is understanding that certainty in policy direction and executive action is key.

Investors must be confident that there will not be knee-jerk reactions, half-baked ideas, decisions on a whim, policy by press release, essentially everything we have seen from this Labor government in the last three and a half years.

If we are to get things moving again economically, we need to demonstrate to investors that the government will work day and night to make the Territory nationally and internationally competitive. We must recognise there are significant risk premiums associated with operating in the Territory and must work to de-risk investment wherever we can.

This is the approach of a future CLP government. For example, to address the infrastructure deficit, we must acknowledge it and be creative about securing capital to close that gap. The old ways of thinking have to end. It is not sensible, prudent or credible to roll out a strategy of asking for more money from Canberra. It will not work. No one has ever begged their way to prosperity.

It is a story of a CLP government setting a new course, beginning with a new vision. A vision that says risk taking is good and private enterprise should be encouraged, fostered and rewarded. Taxes should be as low and fair as possible and government should be the referee and champion, not the be-all and end-all of every business.

There is no escaping the sad reality of the times. Labor simply is not working. When we break down the reason why the Territory is going backwards, it is because Territorian consumers do not have confidence in the economic management provided by this Labor government. There is no confidence in the housing, retail or job markets. Territorians are simply not confident they will have a job in six or 12 months' time.

That is interesting, is it not? Six or 12 months' time, so a lot of members over there must be worried or not confident they are going to have a job in six to 12 months.

Rightly and predictably, we see Territorians cutting back to live within their means and save for a rainy day, something this Labor government knows nothing about and could never do. We constantly hear, you will cut, we spend. Well, you have spent too much. You are costing the Territory millions of dollars every day.

As consumers, Territorians are fearful because every day we see shops closing, redundancies, friends and family leaving the Territory and that is naturally an emotive area. It is shocking and the Labor government should be roundly condemned for their economic vandalism and ineptitude.

This clearly demonstrates that the Territory is completely out of line with other states and territories and the national picture. The clear implications and conclusions is that the Gunner Labor government is unable to govern. Indeed, it is now common to hear Territorians sigh in resignation and say, 'Can't they do anything right?'

That is the question Territorians will be asking themselves in August 2020, 'What has this Labor government done right? Was it blocking Dan Murphy's, banning an onshore oil and gas industry for over two years during the moratorium or was it rising the price of alcohol for all by introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol? As a result, people are leaving, crime is out of control, the economy is broken and the debt continues to grow.

Territorians must wonder if there are alternative approaches—if there is hope. The answer is there is. A CLP government will help small and medium businesses, not hinder it with more costly, complex and unnecessary regulation. The CLP government will be one of fewer hurdles, not more. A CLP government will make every taxpayer dollar work harder by seeking to leverage every dollar to achieve a better outcome and return of our investment. We will do this because we know there is no such thing in government as government's money—it is Territorians' money and it should be spent wisely and more productively. We will end the waste.

What would a CLP government do different that would reduce government spending? It would invest in skills development and help more young people into work, capitalise on free trade agreements, abolish fees for small businesses. This is the type of leadership that has been lacking in the Territory for the last three-and-a-half years. The message is simple: if one says the Territory is open for business, then it really must have legislation and regulations that reflect a pro-development, pro-growth philosophy and outlook.

The high-tax, high-spend Labor experiment of the last three years is sending the Territory broke. Their efficiencies can most appropriately be secured through reductions in expenditure on contractors, consultants and travel, because that makes sense from a value-for-money point of view.

A CLP government will back the public service to become the most efficient, innovative and agile in the world. The CLP is ambitious of the public service and public service reform.

Territorians are tired of the spin cycle and 'say one thing, do another' approach of this lame Labor government. It is time to put the Territory back to work. The Territory should be open for business and have the incentives in place to show the world that we mean it.

Closer to the ground, we believe roads are a critical part of paving our path to prosperity. We continue to lobby the federal government to fast-track its \$500m beef roads program for the NT. The majority of this

funding parcel should be front-loaded. This would see hundreds of kilometres of strategic transport corridors sealed or upgraded.

The opposition has also called for the funding to be fast-tracked for shovel-ready projects such as the mango roads in the Litchfield Council area. We support the energy roads, building the roads that will unlock our vast potential onshore gas industry. Energy roads will, and should, serve to create opportunity in the Territory's world-class renewables sector as well.

It is time to get things happening in the Territory again. We must make the Territory competitive and attractive as an investment destination. The Territory has great potential, but if we continue under this Labor government, that potential will never be realised.

After four years of Labor, the average Territorian is probably asking themselves, 'Was it worth it?' They might think, 'Am I better off now or four years ago?'—house prices down, wages growth down, inflation up and crime up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is clear that the Territory and Territorians do better under a CLP government.

**Ms MANISON (Treasurer):** Mr Deputy Speaker, clearly, we will not be supporting this motion because this is just pure politics ...

**Mr Higgins:** What? You disagree with the facts that are in there?

**Ms MANISON:** It was a rant again by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Yes, we know that Territorians will have a choice come August, that is for sure. They will have a choice where they could look at a CLP government or a Territory Alliance government, depending on who is the opposition. They can think about that. Let me remind them what they would be signing up to, because of the appalling track record they have seen in the Territory parliament under the leadership of the CLP and the Member for Blain, formerly of the CLP, now Territory Alliance.

We saw 18 cabinet reshuffles, which was not good for confidence in the Territory, the reputation of the Territory, or to attract investment. It was a disgraceful period of time. There was no momentum.

We saw 2.5 Chief Ministers, incidents in ministerial bathrooms upstairs that were very well publicised, ministers putting tabs on Territory's credit cards in Japanese bars, ministers jumping on planes and flying around the world to look at stuff, water licences given away to mates and absolute chaos.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will tell you what I do not like, honourable members. I do not like the continual interjections. I have told you repeatedly today not to do it. Standing order 49 is looking really good this afternoon; I am hoping to use it. I remove the next person who interjects. Am I clear?

Deputy Chief Minister, please, I am waiting to hear you in silence.

**Ms MANISON:** They saw chaos, instability and a government that squandered opportunity. Whilst the INPEX project was in full swing we had peak construction going at full tilt. We had the highest GST takes coming into the Northern Territory. What did we see? We saw cuts, the sale of public assets like TIO and the port was leased. The bus service and the Government Printing Office went. We saw the power, water and sewerage prices go up. That was the form we saw.

We saw a public service that did not know what they were dealing with from one day to the next. Their boss was constantly changing and they had to do new incoming briefs and explaining to a minister what they were trying to do. They had ministers changing the goal posts; because they had constantly changing ministers.

That is the reality of what people dealt with in the last term of government. That was dreadful for the Northern Territory. When we came to government we were told clearly by people—particularly at the time before going into the election. We met with industry groups and people who advocate for what they wanted to see going forward, what they think is important, where they see opportunities ahead for the Northern Territory. The constant thing that came through was that they wanted stability, momentum and to know they were dealing with the same people and not constantly seeing change. They wanted to know they were not dealing with a government that was seen as a joke nationally and internationally. That is what it had become.

I have said it before. I went to ministerial council meetings as an incoming minister in 2016 and the first 15 minutes of any conversation was people talking about the war stories of the 2012 to 2016 period of the Northern Territory Government. That was what we went through and we tried to assure them that was not what the Northern Territory is about, it is far from that, it does not reflect on what the Northern Territory is.

We came to government and hit the ground running. We worked very hard in important areas, such as looking at Buy Local reforms and making sure we had our first Buy Local industry advocate to work to ensure government procurement is there to benefit Territory businesses and jobs.

We fast-tracked a range of infrastructure projects because it was clear that, when you go off the biggest project in the history of the Northern Territory by a mile—\$37bn pumping \$5bn into the economy each year—it was a difficult gap to fill. There is no doubt about it.

We looked at the industries there that needed support and told us that they wanted support and we fast-tracked projects to get them out the door to support Territorians and local jobs. We are listening to people. We all go out there and have these conversations with our constituents, many who run small businesses and you hear what it is like out there on the ground. That is why we deliberately fast-tracked a range of projects. We took clear and decisive action because we knew that was what they needed across the Territory.

We have focused on projects that will give a better economic boost going forward. You have the short-term gain through jobs and the long-term gain by ensuring investments in infrastructure that enabled new industries, created more jobs and more opportunities. We looked right across the Northern Territory. It was not an approach where we just looked at the urban centres, we wanted to maximise the benefit right across the Northern Territory. It is a good thing when everybody does well in the Northern Territory. When the regions do well, the cities do well.

We fast-tracked some wonderful projects. We have been focussed on roads, for example. We lobbied the federal government very hard because we see the economic potential. In a traditional cost-benefit analysis that the federal government often looks at through Infrastructure Australia and others, we have had to look at convincing them and changing their way of thinking. I am heartened by recent discussions that they are slowly turning and understanding that you are not going to have the same numbers stack up when it comes to investing in the roads in the Northern Territory bush but it is a good investment for Territorians and the nation.

We are focussed on getting them to fast-track the roads that we think will bring the most productivity and will open up new opportunities for investment. Given 70% of our road network remains unsealed—we all know the figure of the magic \$1m to seal one kilometre of road in the Northern Territory—we have some way to go. Nonetheless, we have been very focused on ensuring we get that roads funding in.

Another point I keep stressing to my federal counterparts—sometimes with the support of the Queenslanders and Western Australians, the northern part—they get it especially when you see GST equalised away when you get significant roads packages through. We have been focussed on getting that out there.

We have looked at some of those exciting opportunities to create more jobs and support new industry as well as our construction jobs here. The shiplift—which will be a game-changer when it comes to the marine engineering industry which will be good for tourism operators, pearling fleets, fishing fleets, oil and gas vessels and is going to be very good for Defence. Today is a day that highlights the importance of Defence here in the Northern Territory. When you look at the bombing of Darwin and our history, we are a proud Defence city that has a long history of defending this nation with a strong military capability.

It is a good investment here to know that our naval vessels and fleet—but also the fleet of our allies who we work with—are going to be serviced here and we will have the opportunity to lift those vessels and do that work here. It means that they have more time to be out at sea rather than getting stuck losing important operational time when they are having to travel further distances. That is an important part. The shiplift is going to be a real game-changer in marine engineering. We have seen what has happened in Western Australia and that can be done here.

We have to invest in these projects and we will not see the immediate benefits of that over the next few years but I will be very happy to look back in 10 years' time to see what comes of that. It had promising numbers from all the analysis that was done.

The solar industry presents really exciting opportunities with new jobs. We have geographic advantages when you look at our sun and we have seen some of the biggest investors in this nation jumping on this project because they can see it is a game-changer. This project is going to stack up and presents exciting opportunities for innovation and making the Northern Territory the renewable energy superpower of this nation and the world. It is very exciting when you look at what can happen out of the solar and renewable industry.

Onshore gas—we made sure that we did the right level of work, because we know there are very mixed views out there in the community when it comes to fracking. Very strong views on the ‘for’ and the ‘opposing’ sides. There is a good lot of people in the middle as well. They just want to know there is good process and strong environmental protections in place to ensure water is well protected and the right environmental regulations, check and balances are in the system. That is why we did an enquiry into it with Justice Pepper. We did get 135 recommendations, which we accepted and implemented because it is important to get it right.

We know the gas estimated to be under the ground here in the Territory is looking very attractive. The conversations with the gas companies are that they are excited by how things are going. We are also very excited because one thing we did again, that was scrapped by the former government, was bring back the gas taskforce. We saw the value in making sure that when the gas comes out of the ground in the Northern Territory—we have deals signed up offshore in Northern Territory—how do we get the best value for Territorians first? How do we put Territorians first when it come to the immediate benefits of the gas industry?

It goes beyond piping, building more pipelines and pumping it off to the east coast or loading it onto the ships. Yes that is an important part of it, and yes that will be part of it, but how do we create new jobs and new industry through gas manufacturing. That has also been a large body of work. We now see there three studies going on at Middle Arm to look at the feasibility of some very exciting projects, such as Coogee Chemicals and the methanol work. Again, a great opportunity there that used to be in Victoria, having issues with the price of the gas and they have gone, ‘Rightyo we think we can do a better deal in the Territory’. That is why they are looking set up. Again, that is ongoing jobs for Territorians. We have exciting news coming up with regards to Darwin backfill of LNG. That is going to be a great project to refurbish it and extend the life of it. We are looking forward to that final investment decision, which will be great for the Northern Territory.

This is the government that delivered the Darwin City Deal, which is again about how we get more people, tourists and international students in to the Darwin CBD. How do diversify the economy further? By building a state-of-the-art campus in the CBD, which is the way of the world these days. More and more cities are recognising it is important to have the university campus and facilities in the city. That is what we have signed up with the commonwealth. You are seeing the face of the Darwin CBD changing. There has been a huge amount of work over the last three years. Things to add to the vibrancy to get more tourists to want to come here. Building on some of our great assets we have already but making sure we have vibrant, modern and dynamic city. Looking at urban cooling has been something we have also done.

The Kakadu Deal is something very important because we know that the mine life is coming to an end. You need to have a plan in place to transition a town—a major town—from a mining to something that is sustainable and ongoing. However the added bonus is that if this was a mining town in other parts of the nation it might be trickier to deal with. But we are talking about a town on the steps of one of our most magnificent national parks. Kakadu is a beautiful, natural asset. It is a stunning place for tourists. It never fails to take your breath away when you go there. But the reality of it is that under federal management it has started to look a bit tired with regards to some of the offerings there for tourism. If you do not have all-weather, all-access roads you cannot guarantee people coming here, who are making the effort to drive out 300 kilometres down the road that they can get to see the prime tourists then it is difficult to get them to make that commitment. To go, ‘Rightyo I will go out to Kakadu over Litchfield’, for example

That is why it is really important to make sure that those offerings are there all year around. We have secured a wonderful deal with Kakadu. That will secure the future of Jabiru as a township, as a services hub and as a tourism town. That will be great for tourism more broadly in the Northern Territory, particularly as you get interstate and overseas tourists to make the Northern Territory a must-see destination because they know they can go have a great time in the greater Darwin region but they can also go out and see a magnificent national park. A world class park at Kakadu.

That is because a strong, stable government was able to go there and have those conversations with the federal government and get things moving. That is what we did. We sat at the table quickly early at the start of this (inaudible) of government because we saw the former experience of what happened at Nhulunbuy and we said no. We also heard that the former government would not go and sit at the table about dealing with the Kakadu issue and the transition of the mine. We got there, we sat down and we said no, we are

going to deal with this. We are going to work hand in hand with traditional owners, the people of Jabiru, the mining company and the federal government. We are going to get something done here and work together and make sure it has a bright future. That is what we have done which will be good for the economy.

The Turbocharging Tourism deal is investing big money to support the tourism industry. Tourism is a key economic plank to the Territory economy and we must support tourism jobs and the tourism industry. That is why we have invested in some great new offerings of tourism product but are also being competitive out there in the world. The tourism advocates will tell you that you have to be smart about the investment around tourism marketing and you have to be in there because it is so competitive. We have been very targeted in that approach.

Clearly we have concerns regarding the bush fires and also the coronavirus and the impact that will have on tourism nationally, but in the Territory in particular. We are working hard with our resilience package to support tourism operators. Myself and Minister Wakefield met with tourism operators the other day having the conversation about things they want to see done through government.

The resources sector is always a sector that really excites me. We have a very strong track record here in the Northern Territory when it comes to resources. Production activity in the last year hit record levels, \$4.49bn off the top of my head. Exploration rates are right up. Some significant projects are nearing final investment decision and diversifying the resources that are sought here in the Northern Territory. We are very excited about what we have there and what we have ahead.

It is important we see a resources sector where we maximise jobs. That is why we made changes to payroll tax in the Territory. There is a two-year cut for those who employ Territorians. That was something very important to do. We also changed the way some of our royalties work in some of those deductions and so forth to make sure that they are prioritising employing Territorians living locally, not fly-in fly-workers. We have seen some major traction there with some companies which we are very pleased about because again it is about employing locals here in the Territory first, not looking to the interstate FIFO answer. That was not what we wanted.

We have seen the emergence of the space industry out in Nhulunbuy which is something as a kid growing up in Darwin I never thought I would see NASA launching rockets. It is quite impressive to know that traditional owners have worked with some innovators and they are doing some fantastic work in Arnhem Land. It is amazing to see what is going on there.

We are working hard to look at the opportunities through Project Sea Dragon. This is a massive project of such scale that it does take a bit of time to get off the ground because of the complexity. It has the potential to be a game-changer for us in the seafood export market.

The Member for Port Darwin will talk more about agribusiness and the opportunities the industry offers. I am looking forward to catching up with Farmers NT soon to hear about some of the work they are doing. We have the land and we have to work with people to make sure we maximise it.

These are some of the opportunities we have been working on to make sure we increase the own-source revenue base in the Northern Territory. If we have more local jobs, we will have more payroll coming in and more GST and more people spending their money in the Territory on Territorians.

We have done a lot of work with the INPEX transition. It has been a challenging transition, to say the least, but we are on a road to recovery. We have been working hard and if we had not taken the clear and decisive action on stimulus projects and working with project proponents to get more investment into the Northern Territory and keep moving projects forward, what would this place be?

We have continued working with the luxury hotel proponents to get that project off the ground. This has been a 'can do' government that works with business to get investment here. We are looking at ways of making the process of working with government even more efficient through major projects and Invest NT and putting all of our investment functions in the one place, so it is a streamlined journey for the investor when they come to do business with the Northern Territory.

We have gone to Canberra and had the fight about the GST and we secured a top-up for a few years, but unfortunately the national approach to the GST and reforms the federal government pushed forward ...

**A member:** That is a Liberal government.

**Ms MANISON:** It is a pro-WA government, I will put it that way. They love the west so much they fixed their GST forever, so they are going to have a good time in WA.

The government changed the GST for the rest of the nation; fundamentally and forever. It is fair to say that Western Australians are not the most popular people around the treasury table at times, but we have fought and will continue to fight to make sure the Territory gets its fair share.

Nationally, the other states are starting to feel the same strains we have, through the massive changes to the GST. As the pool of consumption goes down, they see less revenue and this is increasingly becoming a national issue. We felt the worst of it here in the Territory, but I am now hearing other Treasurers feeling some of those pains of the GST and it is going to become an ongoing issue for everyone, except Western Australia. Their life is very good.

They are some of the things we have been dealing with. This government has put the shoulder to the wheel. We are committed to supporting jobs and small to medium sized businesses, creating new opportunities for new industries and investors to come here and making sure we are working with the big companies already operating here.

It was amazing last year when the full board of INPEX came to the Northern Territory. It was the first time they held a board meeting outside Japan. It was a huge event to host them and for them to be able to see their magnificent INPEX plant and to be able to talk directly to them about some of the other opportunities ahead in the Northern Territory.

The board members I spoke to could see this is a 'can do' government that wants to do business and is serious about growing the Northern Territory and our opportunities. It was positive and sent a strong message when the full board of INPEX came to Darwin, to say the least.

We have been working very hard in this space when it comes to making sure we are doing the hard and grinding work every day to support businesses and jobs across the Territory. It has been an incredibly challenging time, when you look at the changes to the economy due to the INPEX project, which was a \$37bn and the next closest thing was \$3bn. That was a huge project. The huge changes to the GST are very difficult to deal with. We are trying to get the balance right to support growth in the economy whilst making sure that every dollar spent by government is wise and efficient.

We also looked at the issues that mean we have huge pressures on the Territory budget every year. We have huge demands on the health system; the largest level of overcrowded housing in this nation; and the largest amount of children who do not meet the Australian Early Learning Development Index benchmarks, followed on by the NAPLAN results. There are big gaps.

Our job is to make sure we do everything we can to improve the lives of people growing up in the Territory so that future governments do not have such burdens on their hospitals and have to deal with massive renal dialysis units in the Northern Territory; the rate of incarceration we see in the Northern Territory; and child protection notifications. We have done a huge amount of work there.

I like to think that the work we have done in reforming alcohol is starting to pay off. If you look at the emergency department admission in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine; and the police examples of the protective custodies they are taking into their watch houses, you will see they have reduced significantly.

We are tackling the issue of alcohol-related harm, which is the biggest cost to the Northern Territory economy and causes injury, death, neglect, poverty, chronic disease and incarceration. They are the long-term issues we are tackling so there are less pressures on Territory budgets going into the future.

The focus for us has firmly been on how we support jobs, business and grow this economy. I believe that having a strong economy is the best thing for everybody in the Northern Territory because it means everybody has more opportunity; we have more opportunity as a government to invest in the things that will further improve people's lives; and we will have more opportunities for growth, like being about to invest in more roads and infrastructure to create even more jobs.

We will not support this motion. But let me assure you that this government has been tackling the challenges, delivering very exciting projects for the Territory and there is a lot more excitement to come. Territorians will have a stark choice in August. Do they risk the strong momentum, hard work and the many projects moving

forward in an incredibly positive direction, or do they put that all at risk again with the CLP or a Territory Alliance, because they know what they get when they pick either of those two.

**Mr MILLS (Blain):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this motion. This is a unique juncture in the Territory's history where we have a history marked by many years of the Country Liberal Party, which effectively ended in 2001. That era concluded with the election of Clare Martin.

There are markers of significant achievements in that first period from the 1970s up until 2001. They were typified by a government that was in touch with their community particularly in those early days. They worked with people who had real skin in the game. They understood the nature of their communities, their appetite for risk and the requirement to make those tough decisions knowing how people needed to be led in these exciting times.

Much happened during that time. There was the beginning of the tourism industry and bold decisions—if they were taken at a time like this the boldest decision is perhaps deciding not to build the museum or whether there would be creepers in a certain section of Cavenagh Street with a shade structure. We do not seem to have the same appetite for risk or creative thinking, but I digress.

At a time like that if you look at the history of how a gas pipeline was built from Mereenie up here to Channel Point, if you revisit that with today's thinking and appetite for risk and how our community seem to be divided, frightened and turning in on themselves—you just have to look at social media to see the mood of the electorate—imagine making such a bold decision to build a gas pipeline when the whole of the Channel Island facility was premised on the use of coal at that time. A bold decision taken by Chief Minister Tuxworth.

Having worked on the project to try and get that support from the multinationals and the feds to have the gas pipeline built across to Gove, I thought there was a can-do spirit at that time that allowed a pipeline to be built which I very much doubt would occur in the current climate. Given that we have gas reserves—it is obvious everyone is moving into position—we could have built that gas pipeline across to Gove and it could be a very different story today.

I only mention that because the political culture changed and that has been to the short-term gain of a few individuals but the eternal damage to the psyche of the Northern Territory.

From 2001 on—except for four years when there was a CLP administration—it was the Labor government. That is a long time since 2001 until now. That is almost 19 years. We find ourselves at this point where we can look at INPEX—nobody is taking away from the bold decision-making and the work of Paul Tyrrell with the support of Syd Stirling and Clare Martin to pull that off.

I had concerns at the time because I thought, as others did, that it was great to have a project like that but we were meant to have done the longer term planning and develop Glyde Point and have these kinds of facilities in a different place. We had that discussion, we have it here and I think the Japan-Northern Territory relationship is an excellent one and there is much more to come from that if we understand what they need and we communicate what we need in terms of security going forward. There are enormous opportunities there to be further explored.

That is a big project for the Clare Martin and Syd Stirling era. I go back a bit to the big project that concluded the era of the CLP was the train—the train on those tracks coming to the north and arriving in Darwin to greet the people who were thrilled to see this finally come to pass was Chief Minister Clare Martin at the time. It shows you that though the Labor administration often referred to it from time-to-time—and reminded of it by the CLP—that they called the railway a 'faded dream.'

To see the Chief Minister Clare Martin receiving the praise and the joy of the community of this train coming—if you just step back a bit from the political noise and hoopla around that—it was a great time irrespective of whose head was out the window. I remember the CLP saying, we got the train, how come her head is hanging out the window? Who cares? It was a train.

Then there was the Henderson era securing the gas contract and what was, at the time, the biggest investment in Territory infrastructure, building the prison. It was an enormous investment and we pointed out at the time that by the time it was completed, at enormous cost, it would not be able to accommodate our rising social problems and this is where we are today.

We are again being sustained by assurances that things are going well and there are green shoots, if you look closely you might be able to spot a few, and there are great things just over the horizon. Just hang in there because you have a stark choice.

The stark choice for Territorians is that we have just about had enough of this. We are finding it difficult, we have negative equity in our properties, we honestly do not know what the next phase brings next financial year.

There is going to be a gas pipeline filled with sunlight energy going to Singapore but there is no talk about what it actually means to the people in my electorate, in real terms they can understand. Perhaps it is going to fight global warming or something like that, but what is it going to mean to the poor people struggling to pay their mortgage on a property that is now worth \$200 000 less than they owe on it?

That is a tragedy and you guys craft revisions of history so neatly to exalt yourselves and denigrate the others, when in fact the reason property prices were so inflated was we spent nearly four years trying to explain to the Henderson and Lawrie administrations they needed to release land. You cannot just cheer for INPEX and say it is going to change everything and not release land.

I remember Treasurer Lawrie, the minister for lands at the time, saying if you release land, you affect the property prices of those that currently hold assets. There you go, who has control of that government? Not the future concerns, but present concerns, perhaps around donors. It does not make sense.

Where is the bold decision to recognise that all you are talking about is going to require planning to release land. If there was more land at that time, there would have been space for people to fill our suburbs and be accommodated and not have such high mortgages today. That is history and I mention it because we have to learn those lessons now and apply them forward.

You have to be blind if you cannot see, have no sense and have not heard what people are saying. People are worried about the future and I know this is hurtful to some, but honestly, people want something different because if we keep doing it the way this debate is being constructed, they have no real hope that the political capital we currently have is going to be able to create the hope and generate some kind of forward momentum.

I will give you examples and I have mentioned them a couple of times during the last few days. We have had questions, answers and statements that are nice and fluffy and loose, but the parents with families, men and women who have invested deeply in the Territory and never imagined they would be looking at bankruptcy, people with large businesses that are empty and feeling ashamed and thinking they may finish their career and their whole life in the Northern Territory as bankrupt. It is a shameful thing socially.

I have spent time with men who are tough, but who have cried because they are worried about their future and their legacy, that they will end up with debt and be labelled a bankrupt, having built this place and be considered a failure. But they take that pain—I have met a number of men who have retired when they never expected to have to retire. There is nothing to do.

People have had to be laid off. Sure, ignore them and pick the few that you can see are doing well for whatever reason—lawyers, perhaps, looking at how to manage people going into bankruptcy. Liquidations, removalists—there are some industries that are doing okay, though.

We have to get real. It is a perfect time for us to reset this, get over this shallow dialogue in the parliament, or do away with it, and do something different.

Getting practical and honest—this is why the galleries are full of people hanging onto all the decisions being made here, because it is relevant and makes a difference to their lives. They will go home and talk about what they heard in parliament today. We have not seen that for a long time. There is a practical thing here, which I mentioned yesterday. Some of the media are interested in it. Those in the real world are interested in it.

All your talk about renewables and the great opportunities—fine. But you have taken those who have invested \$20m of real money in the Northern Territory to generate solar energy—Eni is one example. That is real money from real stakeholders who have put an investment into the Territory on the expectation that there would be a return on that. When you work with companies like this—and there are many others who are calculating where they will invest, as the Territory seems to be a base of great opportunity, if only it had good governance.

Maybe we could have greater confidence, but what has just happened is that \$20m of real money on three projects, on the basis of an agreement with Jacana—as I understand it. The government has allowed the ground rules to change. No grandfathering—just impose greater expense on them, which changes the calibration of the original decision.

The world will see this. You know that sovereign wealth funds are moving their money wherever they can that it will be a link to renewables. Here you have an example of an incompetent Labor government that has sent shockwaves through the industry by changing the landscape and exposing them to risk. They will be telling every one of those investors because they have skin in the game.

This is the real work of government, to build that underlying confidence. It is called sovereign risk. They know the money is being put to good use, will benefit them and will enlarge the capacity of the Northern Territory. But where is the talk of how that energy gets into our system? That regulatory work has not been done.

It all sounds good when you pitch it up to global warming, but when it gets down to the economic benefit for Territory, and the hard work on regulatory frameworks to manage this—nothing. It is like kids talking about how great it will all be when it happens. Attention to detail is the work of real government, and we do not have that.

The transition from exploration to production—we just need to know exactly how that is going to be managed and for government to be able to explain it in a way so it makes sense—have not had that.

These gas reserves that are attracting the attention of the world and is inflated our rhetoric about all the great stuff it is going to do with jobs and so on—fine. But how about being aggressive as Territorians and insisting we will have a gas reservation policy here and will make damn sure gas stays here for our own benefit. Do not wait to be led by the nose by the commonwealth until they tell you what to do, take the leadership on it.

Territorians would expect, if they have given with great reluctance a social licence, to have our gas reserves brought to surface for our obscure benefit. They expect at the very least there would be some fight put up to make sure there is a maximum benefit for the Northern Territory. But we do not have that, we have extremely loose words and vague commentary about other people. People expect their government to fight for them. I would even go so far as this great pipeline of sunlight energy of going somewhere. Where is the conversation to make sure we actually benefit that is retained in concrete terms.

We are missing out on that kind of stuff. That is why I went back and talked about the Mereenie pipeline. I read that again and again and I cannot believe those decisions were made. If you put it in today's context it would be impossible. We would be resorting to whether we build the next section of the shade structure in Cavenagh Street as the biggest project.

All these other things are private capital, other people are taking the risk. But they are noticing the level of substandard governance around how you deal with the real business. Where the government is providing the authoritative leadership and taking the risks and making things happen like they once did. We seem to be folding in on ourselves in ever diminishing circles.

More and more worried about what is happening on social media, the gossip about each other, working with each other to make sure nothing new happens in this parliament. Well nothing new has happened for a very long time in this parliament. I think it is about time it did because we are facing severe economic challenges and compounding social problems. If you keep going the same way, we are going to be standing in here talking about the same thing. We had a bit of a luxury to talk about them and point generally in the right direction, but we have run out of time.

The bush is collapsing. The economic opportunities in the bush are languishing. We need to engage those land councils and get to the table and start talking about how we make the difference. The bush is collapsing. We are now defending our cities and it appears that towns when I first started here, Tennant Creek, have now changed. We are now fighting for the survival of Alice Springs. Now we are all worried about what is happening in our malls. The bush is collapsing, the Territory is imploding socially and economically. This is not time for mucking around and saying silly things about the Johnston by-election, climate change and that sort of stuff—well whatever.

It is time to step up because we are in trouble and we need to do things differently. That is why I support this motion but add that extra—we have to punch through this, otherwise we are in trouble. I have tonnes of other stuff to talk about but that is enough and I offer my support to this motion.

**Ms LAWLER (Environment and Natural Resources):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing forward this motion. I agree that every single election Territorians have an important choice to make—a choice that will shape the future of the Territory. I know some people have short memories, but as I look across this chamber it is a stark reminder of what the previous CLP government delivered for Territorians—cuts, bargain basement sales, infighting and no plan for the future.

Four members across from me were part of such an abysmal CLP leadership. The Member for Blain had no idea how to steer the ship and brought in the razor gang to cut the public service, to cut important jobs like those in education that are crucial for the future of our children.

This is a clear contrast to this government that has put more money into education, has recruited more teachers and support staff and is investing in programs that work, like the child and family centre that I opened earlier this month in Katherine, providing important services for families.

The Member for Araluen thought it was a great idea to hike up our power bills by 40% and our water bills by 30% after getting in on an election promise to keep the cost of living down—talk about out of touch. This government has taken a measured approach and kept costs in line with CPI.

The Member for Daly failed to protect our environment and precious water resources. The CLP scrapped the Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve that supported economic development for Aboriginal people on their country and were careless with the management of the Territory's water resources, of which the effect continue to be felt today.

We have the Leader of the Opposition. Has already backflipped on her election promises. She has proven in this Chamber that she is unable to read budget papers. She demonstrated her lack of understanding about the importance of having a pipeline of infrastructure projects and that protecting our environment protects jobs. These are not the type of people I want leading the Territory.

By stark contrast our Labor government has been prioritising local jobs and putting children at the heart of our decisions, working towards a brighter future for all Territorians.

I am proud to be a part of this government that has worked hard to deliver a pipeline of construction works to support local jobs; has strengthened environmental legislation to ensure our environment is protected, because we know that a healthy environment creates more jobs and a stronger economy; increased investment in Tourism to bring more people to the Territory to invest in our local businesses and enjoy our wonderful lifestyle and unique places; and invested in our communities across the Territory delivering new health, school, sporting and community facilities.

Our Labor team went to the last election with a clear vision for the future and we have been delivering on that vision. We have consistently provided a pipeline of infrastructure projects to support local businesses and deliver ongoing jobs for Territorians. We have been working hard to deliver business certainty through our substantial infrastructure program.

We have delivered a 10-year infrastructure plan that is updated annually, providing information about government and anticipated private capital investment over the short, medium and long term. This creates a foundation for informed investment decisions, gives certainty in business planning and workforce development, provides transparency in planning and prioritises projects for the Territory's future growth. Infrastructure is a key enabler of economic development, which underpins our capacity to create jobs, increase productivity and stimulate growth.

When this government was elected in 2016, we responded to the needs of industry and brought forward a number of significant infrastructure projects to meet the shortfall of work in the construction sector and deliver on the unmet need for key public infrastructure. We brought forward and delivered:

- the \$30 million Palmerston Police Station
- \$25 million for the new home for Rugby League at Warren Park
- \$18 million for the Darwin indoor netball courts
- \$12 million for the multistorey car park at Royal Darwin Hospital

- \$6.3 million for the Tennant Creek integrated preschool.

Our government delivered the Garramilla Boulevard and Tiger Brennan Drive duplication projects nine months ahead of schedule and supported more than 540 local jobs, providing an iconic and beautifully landscaped third entry point into the Darwin CBD.

Since coming to government, the average annual infrastructure expenditure has been \$1.4 billion, compared to previous average CLP government infrastructure expenditure of \$1.1 billion.

We are focused on supporting thousands of jobs for Territorians, our local industry and economic activity through a variety of construction works across the Territory.

Last financial year saw more than 450 construction contracts awarded, with 98.5% of these going to local Territory businesses.

Last year, this government announced the fast-tracking of five more projects valued at \$125.6 million to continue delivering on government's priority to support the local construction industry and create jobs. These projects will create more than 500 local jobs, and through the government's Buy Local Plan and reform agenda will ensure that the largest possible proportion of every dollar spent by the NT Government is retained within, and delivers benefits for, the Territory economy and community.

The fast tracked projects include:

- a new \$25m fire station for Palmerston and the rural area, expected to support around 180 jobs during construction
- \$18m for stage 2 of Zuccoli Primary School that will support around 200 jobs during construction—much-needed school that was not prioritised by the previous CLP government.
- \$50m new Mandorah marine facilities that will support around 275 jobs and I look forward to the construction of this project commencing this year
- the government is also planning for future growth in Alice Springs by ensuring a continuous supply of affordable land, with \$4.1m to deliver new lots at Kilgariff stage two
- there is \$17.5m in works to Litchfield National Park to undertake roadworks and develop trails and campgrounds at new visitor sites across three locations.

In addition to these fast-tracked projects, this government has allocated \$44.1m to redevelop John Stokes Square with a much-needed 24-hour police station; public housing prioritised for seniors; people living with disabilities having carers; and facilities for specialists and wraparound services. This project will support around 240 jobs, with construction of the police station set to commence in the coming months.

This Territory government is backing Territory businesses. Our Budget 2019–20 provides a further \$1.45bn investment in infrastructure to deliver more roads, develop important community infrastructure and continue to create local jobs across the Territory.

Budget 2019–20 provides new funding for a continuous pipeline of projects that will stimulate economic growth, including \$563.6m for improved roads, airstrips, barge landings and transport access to better connect Territorians, and to support economic development in tourism, agricultural, pastoral and mining industries; and continuing to deliver the \$114.3m Remote Housing Investment package.

Our \$1.45bn infrastructure investment will deliver a continuous pipeline of works—creating greater certainty for the construction industry workforce, providing jobs for Territorians and enabling businesses to plan ahead.

We are also restoring trust and certainty through the implementation of a robust, clear and transparent set of rules and guidelines for how the environment must be protected under a comprehensive environment regulatory reform program.

We have delivered on our commitments to reform and improve the Territory's environmental impact assessment and approval system with the passage of the Environment Protection Bill 2019 in September last year.

We are continuing the work on developing frameworks for managing environmental impacts of mining activities, managing contaminated land and establishing an environmental licensing scheme.

We will soon release our final Climate Change Response and have committed to an aspiration target of net zero emissions by 2050, and are well underway to delivering on our 50% renewable energy target by 2030.

This government understands that a healthy environment creates more local jobs and a stronger economy. We have helped 46 ranger groups purchase essential items like vehicles, boats and radio and communications equipment. A total of \$5.8m has assisted 30 ranger groups to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land and sea, and supporting jobs on country.

We are also delivering a critical and ambitious agenda aimed at bringing more visitors to the Territory and supporting vibrant, liveable communities, because we know this generates job, grows the economy and supports social wellbeing.

The previous CLP failed to understand that investing in our creative industries, our parks, our sporting facilities and our visitor experiences is an investment in jobs, in liveability and in a more diversified economy. In contrast, this government understands that investing in arts and culture is critical for sharing our unique stories with the world, and of creating jobs and economic opportunity for Territorians right throughout the Territory.

We are a government that invests in grassroots sporting infrastructure because we understand that sports brings people together and supports more cohesive, healthy communities. We are a government that recognises our parks as some of the Territory's most precious assets—and is investing in them accordingly, in conjunction with traditional owners.

We are a government that recognises tourism is an absolute lifeblood of our economy supporting 17 100 direct and indirect jobs and thousands of small to medium Territory businesses.

In this term of government, we have delivered and continue to deliver a number of major projects and initiatives across tourism, sports, creative industries and parks aimed at enhancing our communities for visitors and locals.

The previous government had no plans and no vision for these critical economic drivers and foundation stones for strong, healthy communities. We particularly saw this with tourism. During the height of construction on the INPEX project, fly-in fly-out workers were taking up seats on planes and rooms in hotels, displacing holiday visitors.

It was clear that post-INPEX construction, there would need to be work and investment put into bringing holiday and other business visitors back to the Territory. The tourism industry delivered this message to the former CLP government but they failed to listen and they failed to act. They ignored the warning signs and left the sector to largely fend for itself.

On coming to government, it became very clear to us that our visitor growth numbers were slipping well below the national average. Unlike the previous government, we did not take a head in the sand approach. We chose to listen to industry, to listen to the experts and actually take action to return visitor growth to healthy levels.

Over four years, we are investing an additional \$165m into Turbocharging Tourism. That is more money into marketing the Territory both nationally and internationally, more money into enhancing our visitor offerings so people have an even better time when they visit and more money into our wonderful events and festivals recognising their potential to drive visitation. That investment has been paying dividends.

To the year ending September 2019, we have seen total visitor numbers to the Northern Territory up by 6.7% to 1.95 million; total visitor spend at \$2.6bn—well above the target of \$2.2bn by 2020; and our \$2.07m business events bid fund has helped lock in 56 confirmed events that will bring 17 300 delegates generating \$40.44m in spending between 2018 and 2022.

We have also provided \$4.5m in stimulus grants to 166 tourism-related businesses to improve visitor experience generating \$12.15m total project investment, with more to come. Importantly, our increased investment in tourism has been done in close consultation with industry. They have been part of developing and rolling out this package.

Our tourism industry is facing some big challenges with the devastating bushfires and coronavirus impacting significantly on people's travel patterns. Our significant investment in turbocharging tourism has meant we have been able to respond quickly to these challenges, with a \$2m resilience package already rolling out the door to support the local sector.

Another critical part of our Turbocharging Tourism package is investment in growing our unique major events and community festivals to support liveability and visitation. Over the past few years, we have injected an additional \$10m into events and festivals, which is already seeing a significant return on investment.

Under the former CLP Government, the iconic Darwin Festival almost folded. They nearly ran it into the ground. We have increased our investment into the festival to \$2m a year and it is now seeing record attendance and record ticket sales.

Our increased investment in events and festivals has also allowed BASSINTHEGRASS to evolve into a nationally significant music festival last year the event attracted a massive 10 000 people, including 3000 interstate visitors. That is just the tip of the iceberg. We are investing strongly and strategically in a range of events and festivals right throughout the Territory, adding to the vibrancy of our communities and encouraging visitation and regional dispersal.

We are investing in our parks with around \$56m of infrastructure projects are either completed or underway, such as the new visitor and event centre in George Brown Botanic Gardens—what a beautiful place that is—and the new visitor information centre, bike and walk trails and a new jetty in Nitmiluk National Park. These enhancements will lift the visitor experience.

Major restoration and visitor experience enhancement works are almost complete at Hermannsburg Historical Precinct and planning is underway on enhancements to the Tennant Creek visitor experience including new interpretative displays to celebrate the region's gold rush and ore mining history.

We are a government that backs grassroots sports. We have demonstrated that by meeting the many commitments we made to the electorate about providing new and enhanced community sporting infrastructure. The previous government could not even manage to sort out redeveloping Richardson Park. They really fumbled the ball there. They also had a revolving door of sports ministers, which was symptomatic of their absolutely chaotic time in government.

In contrast we have got on with the job of delivering for sports-loving Territorians. We have invested \$59m to regenerate Marrara sporting precinct, benefitting thousands of sporting Territorians and creating hundreds of jobs during construction. We have a wonderful new home of rugby league, a new indoor netball stadium, a new tennis centre, better facilities at hockey, new change rooms for women at TIO and at soccer's Larrakia Park. These projects have provided hundreds of jobs during construction, given sporting codes a strong base for growth and sent a message to women and girls that sport is for them as much as it is for Territory blokes.

We are investing in sporting community infrastructure right across the Territory in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine, Elliott, Lake Evella, Barunga, Nauiyu, Milingimbi, Haasts Bluff, Papunya, Docker River, Amoonguna, Maningrida, Milikapiti, Galiwinku, Borroloola, Robinson River, Ngukurr, just to name a few.

It is fantastic to see firsthand the difference these projects make in communities, engaging young people and supporting better health and wellbeing outcomes.

We are also a government that invests strategically in arts and culture to grow jobs in our regional and remote areas. We are investing in a nationally significant arts trail to position the Territory as the premier global destination for Aboriginal art and culture, and have committed \$4.6m to date towards 68 infrastructure upgrades, under the Arts Trail Regional Stimulus grant program.

Remote art centres are vitally important to communities. They provide jobs and opportunity, they allow people to express themselves artistically and culturally and they are an important social hub. Art centres are critically important economic drivers on country and we are very proud of our investment.

I want to touch very briefly on the government's digital agenda. When we came to government it was clear that the former CLP government had completely failed to grasp the fact that we are in the middle of a digital revolution and to prepare Territorians for the jobs and opportunities of the future. They had absolutely no policy and no idea around digital technology. In contrast, this government is driving a strong digital agenda to ensure Territorians are well equipped for the jobs of the future, can harness new technology to open up new jobs and business opportunities and can stay connected.

The Minister for Corporate and Information Services launched the first ever Digital Territory Strategy in October 2018 and this is a living document that will see government, industry and the community working together to harness digital technology to drive economic growth and a more digitally-inclusive society.

This is a government delivering for Territorians by investing in projects and initiatives that will drive economic prosperity, job creation and liveability in communities right throughout the Territory.

**Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen):** I will be supporting this motion tonight. I think things have stagnated under this government. We have not seen the chaos of the former CLP government but we have seen a great deal of incompetence which I think is probably equally as bad if not worse.

I have been listening to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics read out her speech that no doubt she did not write—her staff wrote for her—which is what you do when you are a tired minister and cannot be bothered standing on your feet and thinking off the top of your head.

I did read an interesting article in the *NT News* this week about the fact that the NT Government has scrapped the planned \$2bn Noonamah Ridge development in Darwin's rural area. The proposed development—first raised more than six years ago—would have seen 4200 new residences built over the next 30 years. It went on to explain why the minister decided to can it. The article went on to talk about the proponents, Intrapack Property, how they wanted a town centre with shops, retirement village, schools, sports facilities, bike tracks and a lake.

*'We want to invest in Darwin because we believe in it. The project will create hundreds of jobs per year during construction plus long-term permanent jobs through new businesses in the development', the company said after releasing a revised application for the development. 'It is projects like this that will turn some of the economic problems in Darwin around'.*

However, Ms Lawler said:

*Territorians elected a Labor government that would listen to them and support projects that bring economic value to the Northern Territory in line with community expectations.*

I read that earlier in the week and thought, 'What is going on?' We have just heard the fluff of the Treasurer, and now we have heard the fluff of the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. They tell us a wonderful story about how fabulous they are, what they have done and how they have spent enormous amounts of taxpayer money to please everyone.

You have plugged in every hole and sponsored everything possible. You have thrown money around that we cannot afford. Yet Intrapac wanted to invest their own money in a private development in the Northern Territory with the potential to create billions of dollars' worth of economic activity, and the minister we just heard speak about how fabulous she is canned it.

It speaks volumes about the real agenda of this government. If it is not about tweaking little bits of social policy here and there, or forming a socialist agenda like we had earlier in the week ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** They do not want to hear it, do they? They want to yell and scream when I talk because they do not like to hear the truth.

If it is not about a socialist agenda and spending more money than the Territory can ever possibly afford, it is just not good politics or good government, because that is not in Labor's DNA.

These poor people, who have probably spent millions of dollars to develop some land to make some money, god forbid, and to house future Territorians—it is all about population growth, do not forget. They do not want to know about it. They have canned it. Minister Lawler canned it.

The Labor government does not want billions of dollars spent in the Top End of the Northern Territory ...

**Ms Lawler:** There is, but you do not even know where.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** Interject all you like. Go on! Have a yell over the other side. You did not want that to happen. Obviously it is not politically palatable to give a stamp of approval to the development of Noonamah Ridge. There must be something I do not know about. I do not know much about this.

When you talk about development in the Northern Territory, reflect on some of the decisions you have made along the way.

How could we forget that a few weeks into your term of government, the Chief Minister stood in this Chamber and announced that he was committed to growing the population of the Northern Territory. He was going to do that by creating extra public holidays. Well, how did that go for you? We were all sitting there dumbfounded by the rationale that somehow a couple of public holidays would stimulate the economic and set the Northern Territory humming into the future.

It was a load of rubbish then and it is a load of rubbish now. This whole joke about trying to stimulate the population of the Northern Territory through these hideous strategies is insulting to Territorians and to people around Australia, because they are not on board either. It has been a monumental flop.

Yes, we need to stimulate the population of the Northern Territory, but you do not do it by canning multimillion-dollar private investment in the Territory. You get behind them and facilitate the investment and economic growth.

**Ms Fyles:** At whatever cost—the CLP way.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** Attorney-General, you can stand up in a few minutes and have a say, if you want. Do not interrupt me. Listen, for a change! You people do not listen. It is like you are in this bubble—this amazing, angelic, peaceful bubble.

I look at the Treasurer every day we are in parliament, and it is like she is in a bubble. She talks about all the wonderful things happening in the Territory, when in all reality the people of the Northern Territory are doing it extremely tough. Things are not good.

I can only talk about the place I know the best—Alice Springs. The Treasurer did not talk about crime. We listened to her talk for 30 minutes and she did not mention crime in Alice Springs or throughout the Territory ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Araluen, please pause. Honourable members, if you look right there you will see some doors. The next person to interject will be taking a journey through them.

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** The Treasurer did not mention anything about crime in her speech, because obviously that is not palatable either. You do not want to mention the elephant in the room, the fact that crime is affecting economic growth and impinging on the success of business and the lifestyle and wellbeing of people throughout the Northern Territory.

Do not mention the elephant in the room, because God forbid that is not going to make people vote for you, is it? It is not going to endear you to the people of the Northern Territory, talking about the truth. The truth of the matter, we learned recently, is that the police force in Alice Springs has 34 vacant positions as we speak. We heard this spin from the minister for police who is also the Treasurer that they created 120 extra jobs.

You work that out, I cannot work it out. I am a mere member of parliament who has been listening to this rubbish for the last three-and-a-half years. I cannot make sense of those figures, but maybe Territorians will believe you. I doubt it, you are taking them as fools and it is insulting. The people of the Northern Territory are listening to this rubbish day in, day out and they are just not believing you.

We heard all week, jobs, jobs, jobs. The Leader of the Opposition was called a job snob last week. That was a bit nasty, a job snob. With 34 vacant police positions in Alice Springs, do you call that creating jobs? The hypocrisy and lack of truth in what we are hearing from the government is disappointing.

Yes, the former CLP government was chaotic, we do not need to be reminded of that in every speech from every member of the government.

There is a Johnston by-election coming up, but are the people of Johnston listening to this rubbish? No they are not. Believe me, they have tuned out. They are not listening to your rubbish because they have lives to lead and more important things than to listen to the political spin of this desperate, incompetent government.

They are not fools, they know about the statement from the minister for infrastructure and planning on climate change and all things you need to plug in to get ready for this by-election. You do not have the preferences and support of the greens so there is this desperate shuffle to make yourselves look like you are the great crusaders of climate change and your commitment to renewable energy is beyond imagination. That a vote for you is a vote for the greens. It is pathetic.

Three-and-a-half years ago when there was a change of government, I was optimistic. As people would remember, I was well and truly over the shenanigans of the former CLP government, but now I wonder what was worse, incompetent fools or chaos? I am not sure what was worse.

This constant play of politics and rubbish we hear bounding from one side to the other about how bad you are and how great we are and what we are going to do and what you did 10 years ago and all this stuff which is pretty much past tense, is not important to the people of the Northern Territory.

I do not know if you are aware, but the turnover in our population is high. Do not be surprised if up to 50% of people in your electorates were not even living here in 2016. People do not know what happened years ago and quite frankly, people do not care. It is about what you have done over the last three-and-a-half years that you will be judged on.

You will be judged for all the good things you have done. I will not rubbish everything you have done, you have done some good things. I always try to acknowledge the hard work and good things that any government does. You certainly have not been as wonderful and brilliant as you would have the people of the Northern Territory believe.

My earlier speech in parliament today exemplifies how concerned I am as a member of this Legislative Assembly about the level of debt you have placed us in. That is shameful. At a basic level you have to manage the funds of the Northern Territory responsibly. You have to look after the interests of Territorians. It is not your money to play with and you should be deeply ashamed of how you failed in this respect.

I am not sure if the Treasurer looks in the mirror much and sees and understands the mistakes she made. It would be good to hear her take some responsibility for the diabolical fiscal position she placed us in. It would be good to hear some remorse from her. I was reflecting earlier on the characteristics of psychopaths and not having remorse is one of them. I have to say that, in politics, you see people who have very strange characteristics and one of them is a lack of remorse.

Not hearing any sort of indication from any of you, that you could have done anything wrong in this space should be deeply concerning for all Territorians. We have a very small community here; we know each other. We are neighbours and friends; we are all connected. To be unable to honestly appraise who you are and what you have done as a member of parliament is a deep concern for voters.

You have to show some humility and honesty. You came in on a platform of honesty and respect. I remember that clearly. You put yourselves on this higher moral ground in 2016 when you were trying to oust the former CLP government. It was all about ethics and principles that won you a lot of seats in the Northern Territory. Now it is time for you to respect Territorians.

It is time for you to listen to them and show some humility. You have not done everything brilliantly; you have done some things terribly, one of them is that you sent us broke—to the point of insolvency. Shame on you; I cannot forgive you for that.

I stood in this parliament many times and have taken responsibility for mistakes I have made, but I do not think I have heard any of you say, 'Well, I could have done this better', or, 'Perhaps we should not have spent that \$12m on the grandstand for the Darwin Turf Club', or, 'Perhaps we should not have allowed more public servants to be employed since the Langoulant budget repair report came out a year ago, because that was in breach of what we committed to Territorians we would do'.

Being honest will get you re-elected. Being full of crap and nonsense will not get you re-elected. I am not worried about whether or not you are re-elected, that is for the Territorians to decide.

I am not going to labour this. I am disappointed in this incompetent government. I am disappointed from a perspective of being a member from Alice Springs. Who would have thought that this government could neglect Alice Springs as much as they have? Who would have thought that crime could go through the roof? We had two years, 2017 and 2018, when the police outside of bottle shops were not covered 100%. Go back and look at the crime figure then, Attorney-General, and minister for Police. Look at how things deteriorated during those two years.

You never talk about that, do you? It is all about coming off that very high base of crime and putting the police back and seeing the crime drop again. That is what you talk about. The fact you took the 100% police coverage away from bottle shops was a disgrace. It turned the rivers of grog back on and you have never taken responsibility for that.

Finally, a good team needs a good leader. The Chief Minister is the weakest leader in the history of the Northern Territory. That is probably not his fault; you can see that he struggles. His management of certain things has created concern in the Northern Territory: the management of the Darwin Turf Club grandstand business—there are still many questions to be answered; the sacking of three of our parliamentary colleagues, throwing them out of Caucus; and the sacking of his Chief of Staff.

There has been a lot of drama and chaos in your camp too. You cannot say that everything has been fabulous because it clearly has not. You need to take ownership of that. People like the truth, to hear that you are not infallible, that you make mistakes. But no, we do not hear it from you. It is all great. We particularly do not hear it from the Attorney-General—she is perfect, that one. I mean, gosh. No one is better than the Attorney-General, she has a quick answer for everything. She will jump down your throat as quick as lightning and tell you all the things you did wrong four or five years ago—maybe nine years ago, or whatever. The Attorney-General is not willing to take responsibility for anything.

We are in a terrible position in the Northern Territory. People have a terrible choice coming in the August election: they either vote for incompetence or a diminished CLP that has struggled to hold it together over the last three-and-a-half years as the opposition; and then there is the new party, Territory Alliance. It is a difficult time for Territorians. They literally do not know who to vote for, but they will not vote for liars.

**Mr WOOD (Nelson):** Member for Araluen, if you want to get me started, mention Noonamah Ridge. But you are wrong, wrong, wrong. This was a decision that was not only supported by the government, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker and me over the last six years. It supported the little people and good planning. What it did not support was big people coming in thinking they knew what was best for the rural area.

The Member for Araluen said that she knows Alice Springs well; I know the rural area well. I can tell you that the decision was the right decision. It was also right because we need to make sure that when we develop we do it in a planned manner. That is what planning is about—the word ‘plan’ means that you have a plan.

There is nothing stopping this company developing land at Weddell. It could have spoken to the government and said, ‘We have this idea’—a building, by the way, so people understood what was being put forward. They wanted to put a town as big as Katherine smack in the middle of a rural area presently zoned RL and R—two hectare and eight hectare blocks. People set their homes up in that area, expecting it to be retained as a rural area.

Because someone had a large parcel of land, they, I suppose, thought there was an opportunity to do something more profitable than allowing the land to be developed as rural. That is fine. But governments set the rules about how our townships and land in the Northern Territory are developed, so that people have security and places can be developed in a coordinated and planned way.

The Leader of the Opposition raised interesting points, that we could have ended up with a nicely-designed town but left with a mess in a couple of years when it did not go ahead because the town had to find its own water, it was not connected to Power and Water; and it was not connected to a sewerage system. It had a developer who said it was a good idea.

It needed the developer to talk to the government and ask, ‘Have you land that is planned for suburban development that we could use to develop a new-style town?’ I was one of those people who never criticised the plan that the company was putting forward. I said, ‘That looks good; it has good ideas. It is just in the wrong place.’

When you hear people say, 'Oh, you are just anti-development', I say, 'BS. You are talking rubbish. Are you saying to the people of the Northern Territory that just because you have a bit of money, are influential and have a lovely plan that you should be able to do whatever you like without taking into account what other people feel?'

That is what annoys me here. I am not saying there should not be development but it should be in the right place. I have never been a great fan of where they are developing the Berrimah Farm. I said some time ago that should have been where Fannie Bay Racecourse went, the Greyhounds went, the showgrounds went and all the equestrian could have gone there. Then you could have released some of that land where they Fannie Bay races is and where the showgrounds are for other sorts of development. We could have had one place where the equestrian facilities could have been centred. That included Wongabilla, Berrimah Riding School, the Palmerston Polocrosse as well as the rodeo area. That did not happen.

There was also questions about why we did not look at putting the hospital there and then have one hospital for Palmerston and Darwin at Berrimah. That idea did not go far either way. Now we have a suburb that is basically there because governments have not been willing to go ahead and design a new town at Weddell or Cox Peninsula (inaudible).

Governments are going to have to start thinking about that fairly soon. If they know that the economics of the Territory will eventually pick up—they are in the doldrums at the moment—then this is the opportune time to be getting that planning done for that new township. That is what should have been offered to this group of people. It is not saying we do not want you to develop in the Northern Territory but that is not the place that our plan says you should be developing.

Those rural people out there are just as important as you are. Do not make yourself think you are bigger because you have more money and more influence. They are the people Madam Speaker, the Member for Daly and myself have represented for the last six years. It has been hard. The previous government had a planning commission who made some major changes to rural area that I have never agreed with. We had a good plan put together by Graeme Bailey who has sadly passed away. That plan makes sense and gives an opportunity to do something around the harbour but at the same time allow different lifestyles for people to enjoy.

Some people like to live on a 300 square meter block, or in units or high-rise flats. Others like a bit of room. The ABC rang me the other morning and asked what was so great about the rural area. I said because it has space. It has a place for kids to run around with the chooks, dogs and horses. People like the bush, they can hear the birds and the animals. You have privacy. You can see the blue sky and the stars at night. You do not have as much noise. It is a great place to raise kids but it is not everybody's ideal.

Some people come out to the rural area and the first thing they are worried about is clearing trees because there might be some snakes. I am one of those who came out to a cleared block and I am trying my best now to replant it with as many native trees as possible. It is a great place to live. I get up early in the morning and walk and you can hear—I remember nearly doing a survey one time, you go past the block in the morning where the bush is and you will hear the kookaburras and all the other birds singing, you go past the block that has been cleared and you hear nothing, you go past the block that might just have mangoes and you might hear a couple of birds. You know that when you have bush around you, you have a great atmosphere and a great place.

It is a great place to raise families and that is why I get passionate about it. Do not destroy that lifestyle. Yes, people like the suburban lifestyle—I got brought up in the suburbs when I was young—but I have always loved the bush. Every weekend I went to the bush. I love bushwalking. I love trees. That is what I studied. A lot of other people do like the Wildcare people or people who just love growing native trees. We have the Rural Garden Club and they love going to people's place where there are lots of trees to grow. They go to Madam Speaker's house. They have a social time but they also love being a part of the rural area.

That is really what this debate was about, it was allowing that to continue. This Noonamah Ridge, which is nowhere near Noonamah, even that gave me the proverbials too. Noonamah is on the highway this about 10 to 15 kilometres away up the road. They gave it a name as a selling point. It is simply not a part of Noonamah.

The debate sometimes get trivialised in the media as if because you are not for a particular development you must be anti-development. It shows that sometimes the simplicity people have when it comes to a serious discussion. It is black and white, it is a 'yes' or a 'no'. No it is not, it is about yes, supporting development,

yes, putting it in the right place and yes, protecting the lifestyle of people who live in that area, which this development would have ruined.

Those people do not care about that. All they care about was we have a beautiful subdivision, people will love to live there—they might. But the people who are living there now did not want it. If anyone saw the survey results—there were a number of survey results and they were not all driven by me, they were driven by people out there—clearly the vast majority said ‘we do not want this development’. I think it was a great win by the little people.

If I was to support something the Member for Araluen said I must admit I still do laugh at the one of the first things came into this parliament was changing the public holidays on New Year’s Eve and Christmas Eve. That was going to increase the number of jobs. I must admit that just defied logic from my point of view. It just did not work or seem to be right. I do agree with the Member for Araluen that was a silly move.

Minister for planning I thank you for that. I know being a minister—and probably many years ago when things were a bit different, I always thought I would like to be a minister, but that would have been of primary industry and sport. I would have liked that. Planning would be a difficult one, I understand that. But I think this was a good decision. It was not a political decision, it was a decision for good planning.

Sometimes the problem we have had with governments in the past is they get someone knock on the door who sweetens them up with some new, fandangled, proposed development, maybe like the Nightcliff island. Sometimes they need to say ‘sorry, no that is not the way the area will be planned’. You have your development and fit it in with the plan and we will support it. Do not come along just because you give us a glossy brochure and promises of this and that, jobs and lots more people. That is nice, we will accept that, but you that is not the place to put it, over here is.

We need to protect our environment. That is why I have always supported this bigger plan because it does protect the environment—you know the fights we had over the Elizabeth River dam. It allows development, defence, industrial and conservation areas and rural areas to be developed around the harbour with urban development in between.

To some extent it is a copy of how Canberra is developed. Canberra is developed so it has a centre, but it also has a series of smaller cities, which have their own sustainability because they have jobs within those smaller cities, and in between that is farmland. You only have to go to Canberra and you will see sheep and too many kangaroos a lot of times. But you have that ability to develop something that is not a spread like Melbourne. I was brought up in Melbourne and I was so sad to see the way Melbourne spread—is still spreading, it is the fastest growing city in Australia and spreading like you would not believe. But it is sad it could not have been split up a bit so there were some rural areas in between those areas that were being developed.

So to some extent we have tried to use the same philosophy behind the development of Canberra for the Darwin region, but where the harbour was the centre point. One of my visions that will never be, unfortunately, was the centre of the harbour should have been the equivalent of the Ku-ring-gai National Park or Royal National Park in Sydney. That centre, Middle Arm peninsula, should have been a national park. I was there before they started to scrape it up for extract of mining. A friend of mine used to take Aboriginal long-grasses out there on the weekend to go hunting and get them away from the grog. It was beautiful, it was beautiful area. People could go fishing off Bladin Point—you cannot do that too easily today because you have a big gas plant there.

It is sad that we could not have kept that as a centre park for a city that was growing—technically. The planning was. It could be a million people. An industrial development could have been at Glyde Point. Unfortunately that did not happen.

Governments need to be strong enough to support good development in the right place and be willing to take the criticism because it usually comes from vested interest. It is not coming from a reflection of the people we represent.

The people we represent and the people who told us time and again that Noonamah Ridge is in the wrong place and they do not want it there. I thank the government for that decision, there are plenty of things I could criticise the government for, but the Member for Araluen knows how to press the right buttons. If someone gets up here and supports Noonamah Ridge, I will give a different opinion.

**Mr KIRBY (Primary Industry and Resources):** Mr Deputy Speaker, what an interesting afternoon and an interesting debate it has been. The Member for Araluen mentioned that honesty gets us elected, so I should be elected for calling her speech one of the biggest loads of crap you have heard in this Chamber.

I am happy to debate facts and different sides of the Chamber will have different opinions about how things have played out. But we are more than happy to put our facts and our wares on the line. We have worked very hard over the last three years to try to improve the Northern Territory. When one of our ministers was explaining how hard they had been working and some of the improvements they made over the last couple of Question Times, the Member for Araluen called out 'boring' across the Chamber.

Hard work is boring; government is sometimes boring. It is hard work and we had to put our shoulder to the wheel and do some heavy lifting over this term of government. We started from a much lower point than the Territory had ever been in before. Make no mistake, the days of the Territory getting the type of handouts they got, when the CLP first came into power and self-government first became a thing, are gone. Those times are done.

It is fantastic to have big and bold ideas and look back at some of the marvellous infrastructure projects that were put to the Territory and were funded back then. They are great things. Nobody would deny that something like the railway is not a great thing for the Northern Territory.

What I cannot understand is how the Member for Blain saying, 'Well, that was revolutionary. That was outstanding thinking. It was a wonderful thing the then CLP did. That is fantastic.' But to then try to say that a project like Sun Cable, which incorporates new age technology by transporting the best sunshine in the world overseas, does not stack up, is not worthwhile or will not improve the lives of Territorians is an astounding comment.

I am happy to debate whatever we need to debate, but we also need to understand that sometimes the mechanics of government is hard work. We are getting on with that hard work.

I will not be agreeing with the motion. We have backed the Territory and we admit these are tough economic times. If anybody thinks it is just the Northern Territory doing it tough, they need to go for a bit of a trip down south and see how the retail industry is tracking in other parts of the country. Real Estate is also very tight in other places around the country.

We knew we had hard work to do. We have a plan and are working through it. A big part of our plan has been creating jobs for Territorians, to bring more people to the Territory and drive business and growth through the Territory. I am happy to expand on—in my portfolio areas and through the CBD—what we have been working on over the last couple of years so that we see a brighter future for the Northern Territory.

I had an opportunity over the last few days to expand on the mining sector, so I will not go into that in too much depth. Our minerals industry and our sector contributes over 18% of our gross state product and directly employs over 4400 people through the Territory workforce. I am extremely proud of that, and our government has put a lot of hard work into that \$26m Resourcing the Territory initiative, which is the biggest spend by a government into backing our resources across the Territory.

The Opposition Leader joined us at the Mining Club—we had a brief luncheon there as we had to leave before the speeches had finished. The people from the KGL company are hopeful that they are working their way to getting the Jervois project off the ground. It is interesting outside of all the conversation and all the fluff, and everything that goes on in the Chamber, to sit with those people and honestly ask them how the project is tracking, how it would be tracking if they were trying to get it off the ground—would it have cost more, taken longer or been any more rigorous? Are we putting blockers in their way? Those are all the questions we ask.

Some people are working through processes for the first time and will take a bit longer, but it is nice to hear seasoned campaigners, like those at KGL, say that they are working through things and are positive about how their project is progressing. If they were trying to get this off the ground in any other state in Australia they would have a lot more trouble than they are in working with the Northern Territory Government.

I am buoyed by knowing people can work their way through the legislation and regulations that are in place. We have put things in place and worked extremely hard to make sure we protect our pristine environments as well as support jobs in mining and other industries. It is a defined balance we need, but we will make no apologies for staunchly protecting our environment.

I find it amusing to hear the Members for Blain and Araluen making light of some of the discussions we have had in parliament regarding the environment. If they do not follow what has happened online—the outrage after the bushfires, people’s assertions, the close affiliation of people with the bushfires, things about climate change and why we need to protect our environment—and they accuse us of living in a bubble, but if they are not really clear on how close that alignment is and how much the public expect us to look after our environment—then they are the ones living in a bubble.

Exploration through minerals, as mentioned in the September quarter, was up \$36.4m, 12% on the same quarter in 2018. The Treasurer touched on that record—\$4.9bn of mineral production in 2018–19. They are high numbers, and it is a wonderful improvement under our Labor government.

We can stand up on each side of the Chamber and say we know things are tough—no one is denying that—we also have things to be proud of. I am more than happy to spell that out.

We have had three record production years of creating jobs across the Northern Territory. There were no plans in place on the back of the INPEX project. There was nothing on the horizon, but we are working hard to make sure there are a number of potential mining development projects in various stages of approval. A large focus of my department is to make sure we give every assistance we can to major projects to get them across the line.

When we get some of those projects over the line, there will be a bevy of small projects that will be job-creating projects behind them.

We have had some great opportunities to talk up our gold sector recently and it is lovely to see the prices stay up. It is fantastic to see the confidence through some of those large players in the Northern Territory. We have spoken before about the Newmont Tanami gold mine being an \$800m investment and you do not do that if you do not have some confidence and some certainty in government.

As I said governing is not all about big and flashy new ideas—do not worry we have some of those up our sleeve—but a big part of it is getting your nose to the grindstone and doing the hard work and then investor confidence and those commitments coming on the back of that. The investment in the Tanami gold mine by the Newmont people is exactly that.

The Kirkland Lake Gold is a smaller but just as important story to the Northern Territory. It is a wonderful region Pine Creek. They are very proud of their mining history and what I am most encouraged about is the local people tied up in that project, getting those mills running and will shortly be back into mining as well. They are so invested in that Pine Creek area. They are so keen to make sure that area returns to its boom days and make sure that they can employ as many locals as they can in that area. They have a nice camp set up for people to stay in when they are there. It is not a long traverse from Darwin. It is wonderful to see the passion in those people and how keen they are to grow those areas.

I have spoken recently about the geophysical survey that is being undertaken through the Tanami region right out to Barrow Creek and how important that will be into the future. Some of the opportunities that we give people through all the core samples that we keep and access to those hard rocks through core stores, and some of the information that we keep and make readily available for companies, does make it a lot easier for them to do business and it does make the Territory an attractive option.

We look forward to all of those opportunities being explored into the future.

We will be encouraging private investment in the resources sector. We meet with them on a very constant basis. From a personal perspective, the last few months of last year I spent a lot of time on very short, sharp trips overseas with the Chief Minister talking to different people, making sure that they understood that we are open for business, that there is steady hands at the wheel now in the Northern Territory because there is no doubt that investment confidence had gone down over the previous few years.

It is very important for us to get and remind people that there are very long-term, focused and strategic plans being put in place in the Northern Territory now. We did spend a lot of time overseas in those last few months of last year, so much so that my own daughter was calling me uncle when I got home at different times through the later part of last year. We have rectified that, we are able to spend a little bit more time at home now but it is something that we do not apologise for.

We know that is it extremely important for the Territory, particularly in the countries to our north. You absolutely have to be there, you have to grow those relationships. They have to be able to see you and know

that there are steady heads and that people that they are talking to have got long-term and visionary plans for the Northern Territory. That goes whether it is meeting with agricultural people, or through the live export industry through Indonesia, whether it is through the mining sector or more particularly with some of the gas sector businesses that we have met with as well.

We know that we have a good story to tell. People do understand that we have worked our way through the regulations that we have needed to work our way through. As I mentioned before, there are some of the larger companies that will remind us that they have taken the time, they have had to work through those regulations, but they are out the back of those now.

We know that Santos and Origin are getting good and promising results from their early exploration in the Beetaloo. I know there are people that are looking to other regions in the Northern Territory through those seismic surveys they do, they know there is great confidence the Beetaloo is not on its own and that stands us in very good stead.

Proponents and industry people from the United States and other areas who have gone through similar things explained to us that if they had their time over, they would take that little bit of pain at the start of decades worth of gas supply and make sure they get the regulations right.

We have done that and make no excuses for it. We knew we had to do it and bring as many Territorians with us on that journey and we will continue to work closely with all interested parties to make sure we get the regulations right and Territorians have the confidence that we are utilising those assets as best we can.

The Member for Blain stated-it was almost an accusation-that we were somehow being led by the nose by the federal government in relation to gas reservations. The reason the federal government did not find it necessary to impose any type of gas reservation on us is they know our long-term plans.

It is no secret that we will use the gas locally to grow industries in the Northern Territory. People must be almost sick of us speaking about it. We are not being led by the nose by anybody. We are taking charge of this, we are doing it in a sustainable manner. We are doing it in a manner that will look after our pristine environment and create the most jobs for Territorians. We will use that gas to the best of our ability.

I am more than happy to discuss this with the Member for Blain. It is wonderful to see him taking an interest in the gas industry; I have not heard him speak much about this over the last three years. He spoke the other day about opportunistic discussions that were happening in the Chamber at the moment and I will not allude to why he thinks some of these discussions might be opportunistic, but it seems strange that there is an opportunity now for the Member for Blain to all of a sudden start to take an interest in the gas industry and how we are going to step through the next phases.

I am more than happy to offer a detailed briefing through our office and the experts in our department to help step the Member for Blain through anything he would like to know. I am sure we have not denied him any briefings, I am not sure he has ever asked for a briefing. We have a solid story to tell and it is one of long-term prosperity for the Northern Territory.

I note the Treasurer touched on the Conoco backfill project, we probably need to start calling it the Santos backfill project given that Santos has shown so much confidence in the Northern Territory, they have invested a massive amount of money and will be heavily involved in the onshore plant at Wickham Point.

The backfill project will be almost like another major project for the Northern Territory. We know they have proficient and clever people working out clever ways to use batteries and cut down their spinning reserve through power generation. We look forward to working closely with them into the future and their confidence about where the Northern Territory is heading is solid.

Another sign of how confident in the Northern Territory some of the major players around the globe are, is when INPEX knew their offshore facility was about to start producing for them, they had the opportunity to think about where their next investment might be. Where did they look? Back to the Territory, in the onshore industry, because they knew they were in safe and steady hands in the Northern Territory.

We welcome their investment and long-term relationships that will continue to flourish. It was a pleasure to have their board in Darwin last year for the first time they met outside of Japan. It was wonderful and we had the Japanese Consul from Sydney here today for the bombing of Darwin commemorations. I was hoping to be able to meet with him but we have been tied up in the Chamber. I will hopefully get to meet with him very

shortly. We take our relationships with the Japanese and with business extremely seriously and we know that they have a good business ally in us.

**Mr McCARTHY:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move that an extension of time be granted to the member.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr KIRBY:** We had record mango hauls last year as well. It is not just the mining industry that is strong and confident through the Northern Territory. We work extremely closely with the mango growers to assist them in opening up markets interstate and overseas. Our agriculture sector work closely with traditional owners. There is nothing we would like to do more than open up some more agricultural opportunities on Aboriginal land. It is a passion of ours to work towards.

We have spoken about the barramundi farming industry in the Northern Territory and how well they are progressing. The recent and relevant issues that some of our near neighbours have with diseases and things like that highlights the strength of the Northern Territory to grow things and farm things and be disease free. Other countries just cannot buy that. When we have discussions with Singapore and places like that, our clean food and clean fuels is why they continue to look to us now that they know there is a legitimate and stable government in place.

We have spoken about the prawn farm and what an exciting venture that will be. As they work towards financial investment decisions we know there has been—as the minister for infrastructure explained in Question Time today—some great local contracts that have been let. They are employing people at the moment through the Northern Territory and they are doing a great job.

We have a bright future whether it is through the solar industry, gas industry, or farming and agricultural ventures. I heard the Member for Nelson talk about hydrogen. He keeps mentioning it and often points to the Member for Barkly who has very early in the piece called hydrogen one of the future fuels for the Northern Territory. It is the case. We are having those discussions.

Large companies and the multinationals are not there yet. The figures do not stack up yet but they will in the future. When they do there will not be a place better suited for it than the Northern Territory with our gas supplies and our sunshine. We will be in a prime position to supply a lot of those energy needs into the future. It is an exciting time.

We have some marvellous opportunities to get some mining off the ground in the Northern Territory. Some of the rare earth and minerals that we have an abundance of in the Northern Territory will contribute to solar panels and other things to provide a better environment. You have to get them out of the ground. Sometimes people forget that. We are in a wonderful position and we have the ability to produce a lot of those minerals but we have to get them out of the ground.

It is not just about the mining industry. We have fantastic opportunities in agriculture and even our black-lip oyster program so we can employ Indigenous people across the Northern Territory and grow some industry that they can have on their land and in their waters. It will be a wonderful thing and we are working very hard. I commend the great people at Channel Island for the work that they do.

The work we have invested as a government around the city itself—people will have different things to say about the underground car park. Those conversations will be completely different in 12 months' time when all the old bitumen car parks are dug up and greened. People will start to see why it was such an important first part of the jigsaw, in cooling this end of the city down; giving us the opportunity to have a liveable city; and beautiful state and civic square precinct that can be a wonderful and inviting area to have major events in.

People have spoken about how proud we are of the Darwin Festival and how much of an entertaining and driving force it is in tourism, ensuring that people still have a reason to come back after the Darwin Cup. We hope and pray that one day it will not fall on a sittings fortnight and we will not be able to get to some of it.

I thank members for their indulgence and the opportunity to spell out why we will not be supporting this motion. We have been doing the hard work; there are no simple and easy answers; there are big ideas, make no mistake—we are not just looking at what we need to do here and now to support, but looking to the future and the visionary projects. We will back ourselves in to continually work hard for Territorians and make sure we provide the best future we can. That is why we will not be agreeing with this motion.

**Mr McCARTHY (Local Government, Housing and Community Development):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this important motion, the Territory Economy. It was brought forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There has been some interesting debate—empirical and anecdotal evidence, and mainly anecdotal evidence from the other side of the Chamber. A very political position to push.

I reflect on comments from my colleague, the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources who, in an historical context, spoke about the days of handouts being over. Our Treasurer was reminding the house about the tough fiscal times across the nation in relation to radical changes in the GST, the contemporary tax brought in to our country that changed the nature of the federal–state relationships and taxation; and the environmental, community and financial challenges in relation to global pandemics like the coronavirus.

These challenges are with us and the handouts are over. It is a good theme to base off, because the CLP continue to champion anecdotal scare campaigns in the community about economy and Labor's management of the economy.

Let us go back a bit in time and look at self-government. In this House, the CLP did the hard yards in partnership with Territorians and secured self-government. They took government in 1978 and inherited the era of prosperity. There was no doubt about that. They rode into self-government off the back of the commonwealth investment.

On this side on the House, when you are out doing the hard yards in the bush—the Labor Party looks after all Territorians—we reflect on the story of the outstations and the homeland movement. The incredible investment in infrastructure. But that dried up under the CLP. They cashed in a 10-year with their federal Liberal-National mates and walked away from homelands in the Territory. They left us holding the homelands policy and future in our hands. I am proud to be a member of a Labor government that stood here and has maintained homelands and continues to fight for them. The only way we will get back to continuing to develop homelands for traditional owners and Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory with the support of the Commonwealth Government.

That was one example of those days of prosperity. The days of infrastructure and investment from the Commonwealth were under the jurisdiction of the CLP. There may not be members in this House as old as I am. I was a public servant in the Northern Territory for 30 years. I remember well, and it can be simplified, that after the days of prosperity, the CLP sent the Territory broke.

I mentioned an anecdote in here that lives loud and strong in my psyche. When I became the Minister for Lands and Planning—to understand that, in 2001, when Labor took government after the 27-year regime of the CLP that the minister for Lands did not have the budget to mow the grass on the road reserves of the Territory highways.

There were only three highways. They needed management. One of the first challenges for the Labor minister was to mow the road reserves to deliver road safety outcomes. That was the degree of how broke the Territory was under the CLP.

Territory Labor worked for many decades to get government in the Northern Territory. You cannot imagine a harder task. They finally achieved it in 2001.

There is another anecdote that came to me, once again through that incredible portfolio of Lands and Planning. It was about the construction sector of the greater Darwin area. They were literally starved. There was no infrastructure investment. They were telling the CLP, who they supported for all those years, 'You have to invest in the construction sector because that puts bread on the table and feeds our families'. When they used that metaphor, it was about an economy being fed, how a government has to make sure it stays in close contact with the sector to have that important investment that will translate across building suppliers; contractors; transport companies; suppliers materials and equipment; cafes that sell lunches to construction workers; and, of course, the association land servicing industry's surveyors, architects and engineers.

This is an industry that spreads the investment evenly and holds the economy together. By 2001 that sector had lost complete faith in their tradition conservative government and threw them out. That relates to the Territory's political history of how the northern suburbs in those days defined the government of the day.

In 2001 they threw them out. The CLP had sent the Territory broke. From 2001 Labor had a real struggle. It had to pick up the economy, create jobs, invest in the Territory and get the economy back running and into shape. And they did. There were Treasurers like Syd Stirling, an ex-Labour Member for Nhulunbuy, who

delivered, all up, six surplus budgets. I am not sure how many that Treasurer Stirling delivered. I will not put that on the record. Syd, we remember you as a great Labor Treasurer with a great dynamic team that delivered surplus budgets.

Being Labor, and being all about Territorians, they used that money wisely. They were not about banking money, they were about investing money. We started to see investments across the bush.

When you come off the back of 27 years of a government in the Northern Territory that made sure not one secondary education program was delivered in the bush, where secondary schools were not ever to be located in the bush, those were hard yards. That was criminal, in terms of denying investment into regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Labor had to invest in an enormous amount of areas to get the Territory the equality it deserves across the city, towns, regions and remote areas. That period of Labor governments was a very strong period in the Territory economically. By 2007 and 2008, the Global Financial Crisis had hit. That was a massive hit globally. The history in Australia is well documented politically and fiscally. It was a federal Labor government that knew it had to invest to stimulate the economy. It focused on a number of policy positions, but one was infrastructure, investment, construction and transport—a good spread of government investment throughout the states and territories into the communities so the country could survive a global situation.

The history says a lot of nations on this planet are saying, 'Australia, as a well-developed Western economy, came out of the GFC in one of the best possible shapes that could be achieved'. That was a Labor policy, Labor economic management, that put us in a position to survive. It was about protecting jobs and our economy. It was about holding us together while the world started to crumble. There are lots of examples across the nation where their economies are still struggling with the effects of the GFC.

Unfortunately for Labor, we lost four seats in the bush in 2012 when the CLP took over. They almost forbid anyone to talk about it now. They do not want anyone to talk about it; we have to forget about it. They are right in that respect; it needs to be forgotten because it was a seriously bad time in the Northern Territory.

When they use their anecdotal macro-economic commentary in this House—when they inflate their numbers about how bad the economy was—they neglect to say one thing. That is, they make an assumption that nothing was being done. They assume that on their inflated figures as if this is the case if nothing is being done.

They had the opportunity to do things, and they did. They cut, sold and sacked. That was exactly what happened in the late 1980s and 1990s under the CLP's economic review committee that sent the Territory broke.

I was a teacher in the bush—I had never been on a charter plane in my life, and suddenly I was told on HF radio, by telegram over the Royal Flying Doctor Service, that I would be picked up and flown to town on a charter plane. Lo and behold, Dawn pressed my shirt. When I got on that charter plane and ended up in Tennant Creek there was a forum full of colleagues. Then we got the story: 'It is all bad news, ladies and gentlemen. We are going to sack, sell and cut.'

We were completely stunned. This charter flight, my first—I had an ironed shirt, was in the middle of town and being told the game was over. Sure enough, the Territory went broke under the CLP.

In 2012, one would have expected that someone would have that corporate knowledge still in the tank, but no. There was no knowledge about that and no one wanted to talk about it. Like they tell us here in the House, 'We do not want to talk about it; don't remind us.' In 2012 no one remembered, because the CLP used the same macro-economic theory. They implemented the same micro-economic reforms and basically headed down the drain again.

It was not the shenanigans so much that they are embarrassed about. It was their economic performance. They had an opportunity to turn the Territory around, but it was the wrong economic policy.

We have a motion in front of us today and they want to debate us on how Labor is so bad, and Labor's poor economic management. When in fact the history shows the CLP from the years of prosperity sent the Territory broke. They were in the wilderness for ten years when Labor rebuilt the economy. They got their chance, they got the absolute honour of getting back into government and there we go again. We are spiralling down into depths of pathetic economic management and they have the cheek to bring that back into the House today.

Once again they are using the same cheap political tricks and fear campaign. Trying to get it out into the community from their benches on the other side. This goes to the conservatives supporting them, and that is the Mills regime that is on the build, they are the same economic footprint. They are the telling the Territory about this gloom and doom story. But once again the political trick in their argument is they make this assumption or they do not tell the public.

They assume and create the smoke and mirrors that nothing is happening. They have these big ballooning figures they use in their big projections but they do not tell the public about what is happening. That is why we had speakers on this side stand and say, 'well it is about protecting jobs again, creating jobs again, infrastructure and the stimulus needed for the economy, brokering private sector investment, leveraging that investment across the economy and it is about holding the Territory together so we do not see this mass migration across the border'.

Now when the CLP were busy in Japan, in bathrooms and in terms of their shenanigans, what was happening in the Territory was people were leaving and businesses were closing. For an ex-treasurer, like the Member for Araluen, you should remember it got to a point where 120 businesses had closed their doors in Alice Springs alone—under your watch, under the CLP watch.

The members of parliament are telling the Territory, 'hey give us the go, we are the one who can manage the economy and lead you into the land of milk and honey'. Well unfortunately your history does not back that up. In terms of cross-border migration I can remember being on the crossbenches and debating treasurers, and anybody else who was in a cabinet role. It was pretty fast revolving door and hard to keep up with the letterheads let me tell you.

I can remember debating them at a stage where 9000 Territorians had packed up and left. I had people in Tennant Creek who coming to me and saying, 'we run local businesses, we run local cafes and public servants have stopped buying sandwiches for lunch because they are terrified about the security in their jobs'. These guys are telling us they are the economic managers for the land of milk and honey. Well it does not stack up historically, politically and all you have to say—and where is my mate in the gallery—is well tell us what you are going to do. It is a classic political rhetoric. Tell us what you will do. Do not come in here and bag it out, carry on and deny history and the truth. Tell us what you will do.

Member for Arafura my fear is the first thing they will do is stop the remote housing program. They will stop it and that is a disaster. That is immoral and unethical to even think about that and they will not say 'boo'. They will not talk about it because they have already started to do their micro-economic sums: 'what can we cut? Well we will cut the housing program for a start'. What does that say? It is a repeat of history. It is going deny people the generational change this government is delivering.

Debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

**Ms LAWLER (Drysdale):** Mr Deputy Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to get up and speak about the schools in my electorate. I have Moulden, Gray and Driver Primary Schools that I am going to be talking about tonight and they are just wonderful. I am very lucky, probably the luckiest local member to have such wonderful schools.

I do not know which one to start with but I will start with Gray Primary School and say congratulations to the school captains. Probably like a lot of local members we have been at our schools and shaking hands and handing out school captain badges and student representative council and sports captain badges to the recipients, the wonderful children who usually by the time they get to Year 6 they get to be the top of the pile in their schools.

Gray Primary School the school captains are Taj Robertson and Leah Randall and vice captains Max King and Tyla Rose. Fantastic schools captains and vice captains. At Gray they are the ones that lead assemblies, they are doing extra jobs and they are just wonderful. Congratulations to the school captains and vice captains at Gray Primary School.

At Driver Primary School, another wonderful school. As I said it was an absolute pleasure to stand up at assembly and hand out their captains badges about a week or two ago. Joshua Buchanan, as I said it is lovely to see these kids grow up, in the last four years as a local member I have seen Josh just get taller and bigger and now he is school captain. Congratulations to Joshua. I know his mum Alison who is assistant principal out at Driver too is very, very proud.

Miharna Ward as well, so Joshua Buchanan and Miharna Ward as captains at Driver Primary School and vice captains Wilson Nichols and Bella Lee, two of the most beautiful kids you would ever, ever meet as well. Again Wilson's mum will be very, very proud of Wilson. Serena Dalton is one of the great people who works so hard for the Palmerston community and Wilson is her youngest little boy there. Wilson, very proud to see you being the vice-captain. Bella Lee is—obviously—a daughter in the Lee family and the Lee family are traditional Larrakia owners in Darwin and you will often see the Lees doing their welcome to country and Bella has been doing that as well. Bella and Wilson two fantastic vice captains at Driver Primary School. As I said very proud of those captains and vice captains at Driver.

At Moulden Park Primary School they have their sports house captains and vice captains have just been announced. For Brolga they have Jordan Taylor and Izzenah Taylor; with Jabiru Kirralee Karklin and Harmony Lacey; Jacana Matthew Mijota and Kacee Pitkin; and Corella Navaeh Fraser and Amber Quinn. Congratulations to those house captains and vice captains. Those Moulden students were in the House—it feels a long time ago—Tuesday they were and it is fantastic to have the schools visit us in parliament.

The class representatives from Years 3 to 6 are Tommy Risk, Mia Wilson, Phum Lueangthongkham, Eli Nelson, Sophia Olsen, Lindsay Cleary, Kayla Wardle, congratulations. At Moulden their classes or areas where their classrooms are, or a hub, they have a representative as well. To Moulden Park School, fabulous school in the Drysdale electorate.

The three primary schools saying congratulations to the captains, the school captains, the house captains, well done to them because you know what, they will be the people, the future leaders in Palmerston. They will be the ones that will be representing Palmerston in the years to come. Well to all of you, very proud of what you have achieved.

**Ms PURICK (Goyder):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a couple of small items I would like to raise in the House tonight. One is to acknowledge the good work, the endeavours and the commitment of a teacher, senior teacher, acting deputy principal Rob McIntosh. Rob was with Taminmin College until recently and I honour his outstanding contribution since 2009 to Taminmin College and the students.

It is difficult to imagine Taminmin College without him. He has been there for quite a long time and back then, Taminmin College did not have the values, culture, wellbeing, behaviour, infrastructure or opportunities and support for all students to achieve, as it does today.

It was evident early on that Rob Macintosh wanted to help make things better and he sought every opportunity, both in hours and thousands of after-hours' work, to contribute to make things better.

Rob's hard work and commitment helped the college move through those tough times when they could not afford sporting equipment, teachers were boxed in their little desks like a third-world call centre, the one yearly musical could only be funded with \$500, classrooms were overflowing with students because there were not enough classrooms, and they did not have the high quality and span of teachers they have today.

Rob also devoted hundreds of hours of service to the board of Taminmin College over the past four years, where he influenced funding and programs for the benefit of all students. The best thing Rob brought to Taminmin College was stability. It is increasingly rare, not only in government but also private industry, and stability and leadership is what delivers long-term results. You have to be invested in something for the long haul or it is easy to give up when the going gets tough.

Importantly, Rob brought integrity and doing the right thing when no one was looking or no one knew. Rob has been invested in Taminmin College for the long haul, communicating the shared vision so everyone in the college community can see it and believe in it, developing others so that everyone's strengths are being utilised and walking the talk in the community, valuing partnerships with families, the community and industry and showing everyone what respectful relationships look like every day.

One example was his commitment to the major community engagement which was the Fred's Pass Show. Taminmin College has, for the last five years, operated or run the gates, so they have to be there at the crack

of dawn to get the tills set up. He took that on with gusto, along with the college Chairman, Beverly Rati. He was there at the close of the show and then back the next morning.

Rob was proud of his achievements at Taminmin College and all the students wanted to see him and enjoy his company. His focus has always been on the students. He calls them 'our kids'. Rob has always believed you deserve every opportunity to be the best you can and he respected all the students.

He expected the students to respect the college. I attended a couple of the assemblies where all the classes sing the national anthem. Everyone has to rise. At one assembly they were too noisy, so he sat them down and, my word, berated them. 'This is your national anthem, you show respect, sit down, stand up again and quietly sing the anthem'. And they did.

And so they should! He is a big fella, Rob Macintosh. He is six foot five. I sat down and stood up again too.

He is one of those teachers who got the students enthused and encouraged for NAPLAN and things of that nature. He is a special educator, a leader and a great human being. His passion for student and staff wellbeing has been inspiring, knowing it is the foundation of all other successes with Taminmin College.

He has played a central role in building the culture of Taminmin College and the values they have today; the Taminmin-osity awards, as they call them. Rob has been innovative in using resources to enable the flexible learning centre, the responsible thinking process and building the student leadership voice and capability is something that he should be very proud of. I am sure he is, but he is a quiet achiever so he probably does not talk about it.

Rob has always been a caring kind of teacher. He listens, but most importantly, he has capability and leadership. It is not about being the best, but about being the best you can be. Rob has gone on to Sanderson College, but we are trying to get him back. Everyone wishes him well at that college. You have a great Principal there, but perhaps he might come back to Taminmin because I know he would be welcomed with open arms.

The new Principal appointment is for a six month term, so maybe when it is readvertised in that wonderful system of education, Rob might put his hand up again because he is amply qualified for the job. He is a wonderful person. He lives rural, so he has to be good. I wish him, his family and his loved ones the very best, but I know he will stay in contact with Taminmin because it is part of him and we are all proud of him. Thank you Rob Macintosh.

**Ms UIBO (Arnhem):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about some of the school visits I have been privileged to do over the last three-and-a-half weeks—we are now in week 4 of the school term—and acknowledge the principals and some of the school staff for their great welcome and the wonderful work that happens in schools, particularly at the start of the school year. It can be very tiresome and exhausting after that six-week long Christmas break. Our schools are always ready to go and our principals, teachers and our school staff make sure that the transition from the holiday brain back to learning activity and education brain for our students and our young people across the Territory is a good experience and they are supported.

It has been a busy couple of weeks visiting schools whilst I have been in and around Darwin and Alice Springs. I acknowledge the schools that I have been to and some of the activities and initiatives that have happened in those places.

The Zuccoli Primary School—the Northern Territory's newest school—was officially opened on 28 January. Thank you to the Principal Carolyn Edwards who was working for several months in the lead-up to the school's opening and now has a cohort of new students from the Palmerston area attending Zuccoli Primary School. It is a great news story for our parents, families and children in Palmerston.

I popped out to Jabiru Area School and I thank Learne Dunn, our school principal out there, and the very passionate school chair, Justin O'Brien, for their work and the walk-through the school. I love going out to Jabiru Area School. Good luck to the students who will be going through their school captain elections. I had some good questions from some students and one very confident young woman who I heard speak at the Stars Awards last year. She said she was going for school captain and asked if I would be there to listen to the speeches. I said I was not sure and I would talk to Learne. She said maybe we can record it and show you when you come back. I said I would love that. I am really looking forward to seeing that and hearing the results.

They have done a great job out there. Thank you Leanne. I know you always work hard. It is quite a complex place. Jabiru is going through a transitional period with this being the last year of the Ranger mine before they transition into rehabilitation and the closure of the mine next year. The transition of not only work and organisations but some of our families and our school population. Leanne has been a steady hand there and I wish her luck for this year. I look forward to popping in again. I always feel welcome and she is always very generous with her time as is Justin O'Brien who is very proactive in supporting the parents, carers, the school community, the principal and the staff there.

An exciting thing about Jabiru Area School is that they are working to have a satellite school in partnership with Namarluk School to support the students with additional needs in Jabiru. They are looking at utilising an under-utilised space in Jabiru being the old school library and making some transition plans to use that space to support those students with additional needs in Jabiru and who come in from the Kakadu homelands. I am looking forward to seeing that project get underway. I wish the Jabiru Area School and the school council the best throughout this year.

I had the privilege of going down to the dry heat of Central Australia—which I know you love Mr Deputy Speaker and you suffer greatly when you come here to this humidity. I spent some time in Central Australia and saw yourself and the Member for Brainting and visited several schools in Alice Springs. I acknowledge Bradshaw Primary School, Penny Weily and her team. It sounds like they are building an amazing school culture there. I went into every single classroom possible and everyone was very welcoming. I had some very articulate and savvy school leaders from the Grade 6 cohort leading me along at the beginning of their leadership period in their last year of primary school. Thank you Bradshaw Primary School for making me feel so welcome on my first visit there.

I visited St Philip's College. I thank Roger Herbert and his team. It was my first time visiting the campus and meeting the students and staff. I met some of the boarding students and heard the Year 12 stories of subjects they are doing and what they aspire to do in life after school. It was a great visit and was interesting to connect with those young people, hearing about the places they come from across the Alice Springs and Central Australia area.

Next was St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre. They have a co-principal model. I thank Anne Marie and Beverly for their invite and the visit on-site. It was great to attend the yarnning circle and community circle. I was welcomed into that with Rob Picton, my chief of staff. It was run by some of the young people, which was great—building confidence, leadership roles and responsibility. There were also some students from Yirara College who were doing a hospitality course. They cooked lunch for everyone to share. It was perfect timing because I was quite hungry at that point.

St Joseph's have a great model. I am passionate about the flexible learning models. I did teacher prac at a flexible learning centre in Queensland when I was studying. It is great to have those options for our young people to support them in the community. They are looking at some economic development opportunities for students in regard to pathways and training. Hopefully, particularly with the art exhibitions—the idea of selling the students' art to the community and getting community members to see the program and support the young people, but also the development of the enterprise, is fantastic to follow. Good luck to them with that initiative.

I had a very kind invite by Aboriginal Congress to visit its preschool readiness program. I thank Donna Ah Chee and Dr John Boffa for showing me through the facility. It is fantastic to see that we not only have our school and education structures supporting our students, particularly early years learning area between zero and five, but a dedicated program through Aboriginal Congress to support families with wraparound services provided for the preschool readiness program. It is a beautiful facility with fantastic staff. Congratulations. I am looking forward to visiting again.

Centralian Senior College—I thank Tony Collins for walking me through the school site. We popped in to several classes and said g'day to the Stars and Clontarf program staff. It was great knowing they support students in the senior level and hearing some of the great programs being worked on there.

In Darwin over the last week-and-a-half I have visited Anula Primary School. I thank Melinda Kealy and congratulate them on the Rooftop Solar in Schools program. They have a great sustainable learning curriculum there. It was nice to visit Melinda again. I was there for the handover of her being principal.

Mimik-ga Centre does an amazing job supporting young people with additional needs as well as families, providing support services. I thank Greg Robson and his team for his time.

I thank Pam Erfurt for her time at Moil Primary School last week. I also thank Alawa and Namarluk principals, Sandy Cartwright and Lorraine Hodgson. They hosted us when we proudly announced an investment of \$570 000 to alleviate traffic congestion for the car parking issues at Alawa school. Alawa will receive 30 new car parking spaces and Namarluk will receive 12 new spaces.

Thank you to all of the principals, school staff and students for their time over the last four weeks.

**Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin):** Today, on the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin we stopped and took a moment to reflect and pay respects to the many lives lost, not just on that day, but during ongoing raids that came to Darwin over the next year or two.

On 19 February 1942 just before 10 am our beautiful city of Darwin was directly attacked by enemy forces in the first of two air raids by enemy aircraft on Darwin and probably on Australia. It is amazing to see the commemorations and the set-ups going up. Congratulations to the City of Darwin. The event has grown over the last four or five years with the size of the marquees, the sound systems and the big-screen TVs so that people can see what is going on. There were also large fans to get some air moving, because as everybody knows it is the warmest time of the year, or can be, if it is not raining.

It is a tough time of the year to do it. For me, that only gives more of an awareness for what must have happened here in 1942, where there was no air conditioning and people were doing it a lot tougher when the war came to our doorstep as it did, on this day, in 1942. Today was a historic day.

I stopped last night to take a photograph of the cenotaph on the Esplanade with the sun going down behind it. It was one of the most remarkable sunsets, although every sunset in Darwin is beautiful, but it was a particularly colourful sunset. You cannot help but wonder what people thought on 19 February 1942. The night before they would have seen the sunset and thought that not much was different and on the 19<sup>th</sup> their lives were changed forever—the servicemen and women and the civilians who were around.

Historians have never been able to confirm the exact number of lives lost on that day but it is estimated that there were more than 240 people killed, including civilians and Australian and US Defense personnel. Eight ships were sunk in Darwin Harbour including USS Peary, which was hit with five bombs devastatingly killing 92 servicemen.

The Treasurer and I were at the USS Peary memorial, which is about halfway along the Esplanade, where a gun turret points out over the resting place of the USS Peary in the harbour. It is always warm and touching to hear the US Marines come out in force and commemorate the loss of their servicemen.

What was touching this year was that there was a gentleman whose father was on the ship, who had survived it. This guy had an amazing story to tell. He did not tell as much of it today, I have heard him on radio over the last few days. His name is Sam Logan, I was lucky to get a photograph with him and Luke Gosling after the event today.

It was lovely to meet him. He broke down during his explanation about the importance this day has to him. His father had impressed upon him how much care the Australians gave him after the tragic bombing. He was born some three years later and knew he would not have been born if the Australians did not look after his father as well as they did.

I commend the Australian American Association and the Northern Territory for always providing a very touching and wonderful event. It is always a nice opportunity to show your camaraderie with the United States—as I mentioned, the Marines who attend there.

From there the Member for Barkly, Member for Braitling and I went down to the Stokes Hill Wharf to pay our respects. For people that may not know that is where the first bombs fell, at the Stokes Hill Wharf. I always find it very chilling. Somebody said to me once while we were standing out there after the siren had finished—and the air raid siren played again today—just turn around and look out over the harbour and can you imagine what it was like to see planes coming in. To think in that first instance they were our guys coming in and realise they were not and they were probably hundreds of metres from any shelter or help. They realised they were in a lot of trouble. It makes the hair stand up on the back of my neck any time go out there and think about that.

It was lovely to be able to have the opportunity to say a few words out there, to acknowledge everybody that does the hard work in putting that event together. As small as it is, it very respectful.

Also the Member for Braiiling, her Grandfather in Darwin on that fateful day when it was bombed. I believe he was already in hospital and then got shipped out to Alice Springs, which I understand he did not like too much. Thankfully you did, Member for Braiiling, when you went back there and we hope for a lot longer.

It is extremely striking and it does just hit you in waves. There was a couple of stories that were told down there. There was a story of young lad who offered to be picked up. There was a guy in a tinny and going around picking up survivors out the harbour. This gentleman had somehow ended up in the water on a makeshift raft but he had a beer with him, somehow that he had from somewhere. So he was okay and did not want to be picked up. When he told that to the guy that was driving the tinny picking people up they did not expect to see him again. Well they did see him again about two days later apparently in the Vic Hotel. The Territory is full of amazing stories and that is one of them.

One of the other amazing stories I have, one of the most heartfelt things that has happened to me as the Member for Port Darwin, was at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was to be able to meet a gentleman called Keith Dwyer. His son was pushing him along in a wheelchair. In Darwin I met up with them. But Keith was actually a teenage lad working on the harbour. They were refuelling and stocking the Qantas seaplane. It was due to fly out to go to Townsville that day.

They were filling it up when they heard a lot of commotion on land and did not realise what was going on. When they saw flags being waved and people screaming at them, they turned around and saw the planes. Keith, now a man in his 90s, was able to recollect with absolute clarity when as a teenager he saw the bombs drop out of the bottom of the plane and how shiny they were in the Territory sunshine as they were making their way to their devastating destinations.

They knew that they had to get away from the seaplane. Being around that, if it got hit—it had extra fuel and extra payload on it so they had to get away from that. They just rammed their tinny into the mangroves and hid in there for a few hours until they had hoped that the raids were over and they came out and helped as much as they could.

It makes me remember dear old Keith and how lovely it was to be able to catch up with him in 2017 when he was here. Hopefully we will get to see him in a couple of years' time.

It is also great to know that the bombing of Darwin is part of the curriculum taught in our schools. We whether it is a wreath or a book and today we donated a book at each of the ceremonies to make sure that the primary schools in our electorate got the book called *Darwin Bombed* which is a reasonably new book by Doctor Tom Lewis.

He specifically aimed it at school kids to help them understand in language that they can read so they can understand the bombing of Darwin and why it is so important for us to commemorate it. I acknowledge all our returned servicemen, the students who took part in today, the returned servicemen, the Australia-America Association of the Northern Territory, the City of Darwin—they do a marvellous job, as it is a massive event—and the Maritime Union, who commemorate the maritime workers who lost their lives on the wharf that fateful day, as well as all the other union members who paid their respects.

I pay respect to all those who lost their lives in Darwin. May they rest in peace.

**Mr McCARTHY (Barkly):** Mr Deputy Speaker, on the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin I wish to convey my sincere condolences to the family and friends on the passing of Clifford Sidney Taylor, a World War II Australian Army veteran who defended Darwin, the Northern Territory and Australia.

As a teenager growing up in Sydney I had no knowledge of the Bombing of Darwin in World War II. It was years later, living and working in the Northern Territory, that I learned about the Second World War coming to Darwin and northern Australia and began to understand the incredible story of our courageous Defence Force, men and women, citizens and Aboriginal Australians who defended this great nation from our shores.

Through a valued friendship with Gary Taylor, I became aware of his father's involvement in the defence of Darwin and northern Australia as a Sergeant posted to the 19<sup>th</sup> Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery AIF located at East Point.

Through this connection I developed an inspirational insight into the life of Clifford Sidney Taylor born on 3 March 1923, and passing peacefully aged 96 years on 25 December 2019 as an Australian who served both his community and country.

As an Australian war veteran, Cliff Taylor supported the advocacy campaign of Prime Minister Paul Keating for those who defended northern Australia to be awarded the 1939–1945 Star, in recognition of wartime service, previously refused by the Australian Government, finally awarded in 1998.

Inspired by Cliff, I conducted my own search in Darwin for the anti-aircraft site acknowledging Sergeant Cliff Taylor's story, where an Australian soldier collecting fish from an improvised fish trap in Fannie Bay stepped up onto a log in the water. However, the log moved and was consequently identified as a five-metre saltwater crocodile.

The signage reflects a classic Territory crocodile encounter with humour; however, the military sites across northern Australia stand in stark contrast where Australian troops endured over 100 air raids by Japanese Imperial Forces in two years, directly invading Australia.

The 19th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery historic site represents four gun emplacements and a command post, highlighted by two interpretative signs, the first explaining its strategic location and the living conditions of the troops depicted by the crocodile story quoting Sergeant Cliff Taylor.

The second interpretative sign, 'Fannie Bay Ack Ack', displays construction photographs with a supporting text:

*This remains the only A-A site in the immediate Darwin area, the other Quarantine A-A site is located at East Arm.*

My first visit to the 19th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery site confirmed Cliff Taylor's concerns the site risked being forgotten and after pushing through thick coffee bush and undergrowth shrouding these important antiquities his concerns were realised.

In a twist of fate, I became the Northern Territory Minister for Arts and Museums with carriage of delivering the Defence of Darwin Experience interpretive military museum for the 70th commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin in 2012, dedicated to those who defended Darwin and northern Australia in World War II.

The Defence of Darwin Experience project also integrated government policy toward further restoration, interpretation and promotion of our World War II heritage sites focused on important global war trail tourism inclusive of the Australian frontier.

I was honoured to host Cliff Taylor at the 70th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin and the opening of the Defence of Darwin Experience by the Governor-General, where he recorded one of the first video messages into the museums interactive visitor archives.

Throughout this fascinating journey both designing and building such an important commemoration of our history, the real learning came from hosting the visit of, Sergeant Cliff Taylor who served in Darwin during the Second World War and returned in his 90th year to pay respects and remember his mates.

However, it was the people over those three memorable days of commemorative functions that stopped on the streets, paused and thanked Cliff for his service defending Darwin, defending the Northern Territory and defending Australia that remains etched in my consciousness as an Australian.

Cliff Taylor continued his strong advocacy of all tiers of Australian Governments, for the recognition and acknowledgement of the service personnel and military sites on the front line of Australian defences, including securing a street sign directing visitors to the 19th heavy AA battery.

Upon leaving Darwin for the last time in 2012, Cliff was warmly embraced by two senior Larrakia women at the airport in an emotional encounter, thanking him for protecting Larrakia country during the war.

The Bombing of Darwin is now honoured as a day of national observance and the defence of Northern Australia in World War II is now included in the national schools' curriculum, paying homage to all those Australians who served and many who lost their lives.

Clifford Sidney Taylor, one of nature's true gentlemen, a loving father and grandfather, notable citizen, formidable political advocate and Australian digger is part of that important history. May he rest in peace. Lest we forget.

**Ms WAKEFIELD (Braitling):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I echo the sentiments of the Member for Port Darwin about the wonderful service we attended this morning to commemorate 78 years since the bombing of Darwin, and thank the MUA for putting on such an important service that is focused on the fact that we lost many people that day.

As the Member for Port Darwin mentioned, my grandfather was here during the bombing of Darwin. He was in the coastal artillery service. He never attended Anzac Day or any formal commemorations in his lifetime, so it was the first time I have been in Darwin on the anniversary of the bombing of Darwin. I felt very comfortable going to the MUA's event which was focused on the workers and the people that were there.

It was chilling to be there with the air raid sirens sounding so loudly, looking out over the water, imagining what it would have been like and knowing that was an experience of many men who did not make it that day, including civilians.

Thank you and may they rest in peace.

I acknowledge some Alice Springs events I attended recently, including Araluen Art Centre's launch of the yearly calendar. Araluen Art Centre is an important part of our Alice Springs community.

It is a community hub and we have spoken about this in the Chamber; it has been a difficult start to the year in Alice Springs, with dust storms and a lot of concern around the community as well as broader issues such as the impact of coronavirus on tourism.

It is at those times that our artist community steps up. We know the importance of the arts to bring the community together, give that focal point for expressing anxiety and collective experiences and also to bring people together with joy and in artistic expression.

There are the usual events within the calendar, which are well and truly part of the rhythm of our community. They bring people together. Desert Mob is on again this year at Araluen, as well as the Alice prize. We are fortunate to have Bell Shakespeare coming back again this year.

Also there are some new and exciting things in the program. GUTS Dance Company, a local dance company started with a base funded by the Northern Territory Government. When we came to government the dance space in Araluen was being used for dinosaur bone storage, which is clearly not ideal for the dance industry and it was a wasted space. It was set up purposely in the arts centre to be a dance space with a properly sprung floor and a space for people to use it with the set-up of the megafauna exhibition in the mall. We have been able to move those bones out and return that space to what it always should have been, which is a dance space.

We are very proud that that is a part of it and through that there is now a partnership between GUTS Dance Company and Araluen which means that artists have access to that space and from that space will be coming new works that will be premiered in Alice Springs. I am really looking forward to. The quality of the dance that has been put on display in Alice Springs from this company over the last few years has been extraordinary so I am really looking forward to that during the year.

There are also kids' events. This is one of the things about Araluen is it does represent the whole community. There is the Ukulele Kid's Show coming to play the ukulele orchestra in Alice Springs which I look forward to, as well as some other kid's events. Also music and film right throughout the year. We are very fortunate in Alice Springs.

I do just want to make a shout out to Friends of Araluen. I joined up again on the opening of the calendar. We know that Friends of Araluen play an important part because they are often the link between the arts centre and the community. They raise important funds. They have been the lifeblood of that organisation. We would not have an Araluen Arts Centre if there was not a Friends of Araluen formed in February 1976. That shows the depth of the commitment to art within our community in Alice Springs with the Friends of Araluen running that long. I do not know if there would be many regional arts centres that would have that depth of community support and advocacy.

We are a very creative place in Alice Springs. We have more than our quota of creative people per head of population that is for sure. We also have people who passionately support the arts which is the most important thing because they drive artists to do better but also provide artists with opportunities to meet their full potential.

A big year at Araluen and I am really looking forward to the dance in particular because this government has really provided the space for that type of work to happen. We are a government that has always supported the arts, particularly in Alice Springs. We know the importance of the arts and we look forward to joining in with the community to celebrate at those events throughout the year.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

DRAFT