

Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

**STATEMENT BY SPEAKER
World Multiple Sclerosis Day**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, World Multiple Sclerosis Day took place yesterday. This is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis and strengthen the network of people living with MS across the world. The international theme for World MS Day this year was independence. MS organisations all over the world will be celebrating all the ways that people affected by MS maintain independence and get on with their lives. This might be thanks to support from family and friends, adjustments and flexibility in the home and workplace, support from MS organisations, effective treatment, lifestyle choices, a steady income or even just a shift in attitude.

Hence the items on your desks this morning.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of two Year 5/6 classes from Woodroffe Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Ashley Gilles and Elyse Borlini. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION

**Establishment of Estimates Committee and
Committee on Government Owned
Corporations Scrutiny**

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that an Estimates Committee and a Committee on Government Owned Corporations Scrutiny be established, with the terms of reference set out in the Notice Paper, and seek leave of the Assembly to have those words incorporated into the Minutes of Proceedings.

The associated notes were circulated yesterday, and I think they were also circulated a little earlier. They are not a substantial departure from what was done last year. I have not received any feedback over the last 24 hours that there are any problems with it. It was in accordance with the request sent to me by the member for Araluen, who is the chair of the committee.

This has the effect of establishing the Estimates Committee process going forward, should the second reading of the Appropriation Bill come to its completion today.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, as the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee I wrote to the Leader of Government Business a few months ago, asking what the intention of government was in regard to the formation of the 2016 Estimates Committee. At that stage the member for Port Darwin informed me that the Estimates Committee would comprise the Public Accounts Committee.

Everyone in this Chamber would be aware that the Public Accounts Committee, over the last seven or eight months, has had two vacant government seats. The government, in its wisdom, has not identified people from the government to sit in those positions. We have been functioning with four out of the six allocated member positions, which is inadequate, and unprecedented in the history of Northern Territory government. The government has always had members sitting on the Public Accounts Committee.

The unprecedented nature of the situation in the Northern Territory was brought home during an Australasian conference of the Public Accounts Committee which we held in Alice Springs a few weeks ago. Members from Public Accounts Committees across the country attended the conference, which I facilitate and chaired. In the process of that committee we talked about what is happening in the jurisdictions of Public Accounts Committees around Australia. I was in the position of explaining to my national colleagues that the Northern Territory government had not provided members to our Public Accounts Committee. The response was shock. Why would a government not provide members to the Public Accounts Committee?

In the April sittings of parliament the Chief Minister gave the explanation that no one from the government wanted to work with me, the member for Araluen, which was why he had not allocated two people to the Public Accounts Committee. I interpreted the Chief Minister's comments as a personal slur against me and not necessarily the truth.

We have moved on from then. The letter from the Leader of Government Business advising me that the PAC would become the Estimates Committee has morphed into the event of having two government members on the Estimates Committee, which is a mature and responsible decision, finally. I welcome the two members who have been allocated, the members for Katherine and Greatorex.

I have heard a whisper that those two members may not intend to be there throughout the whole five-and-a-half days of the Estimates hearings. I ask that if that is the case that they let me know. I

would be very disappointed if they do not turn up to the five-and-a-half days. Two of the other members of the committee have small children to whom they are sometimes required to respond as parents. We need to have a quorum; we need to have three committee members sitting at the table in estimates at all times.

Madam Speaker, I qualify my thanks to the government. It has been difficult over the last eight months to function as a Public Accounts Committee should. I am very pleased the government has finally come to its senses and allocated two government members to the Estimates Committee. I look forward to the estimates process for this year.

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, speaking on behalf of the opposition members of the PAC, we welcome the establishment of the Estimates Committee and the Government Owned Corporations Scrutiny Committee. It is important that we go through the estimates process. It gives the public a good opportunity to see some transparency in the expenditure of government money, and the performance of government.

It is an important process and an annual health check – how I like to look at it – of government and how it is going. Most importantly, it gives the public an opportunity to look at each department in detail, how they are going, how some of their major initiatives are going, where the challenges are and where the opportunities are going forward.

Madam Speaker, I join the Chair of the PAC in welcoming the two members of the government to the PAC. It will be a productive process and I look forward to having the members for Katherine and Greatorrex sitting with us through that process.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I respond to some comments made by the member for Araluen. This government has not been supportive of the PAC since that quirky decision was made to put the member for Araluen in the chair of that committee. Fundamentally, that decision has politicised the PAC, which was demonstrated by the inquiry into Richardson Park. That stepped outside the boundaries of the terms of reference for the Public Accounts Committee and it was nothing but a political beat up. Let us be honest about that.

Government has been very generous in deciding to support the Public Accounts Committee through the estimates process because we know that you guys on the other side would like to have a toilet break every now and again, but the decision was made with some reluctance. As the member for Araluen said, it is unprecedented that the government finds itself in the position of having a

hostile chair, someone who is committed to politicising the PAC to undermine government.

In the upcoming estimates process there will be a lot of scrutiny on the shenanigans and carry-ons of the chair.

Members interjecting.

Mr TOLLNER: You can all giggle and carry on but we, on this side, know what you are up to. Estimates is an important process of good government, providing it is carried out in a proper manner, which is something I do not have confidence in with the current Public Accounts Committee, particularly the chair of the committee.

If we wind our memories back to when this committee was established, the member for Araluen was instrumental in the establishment of the committee in its current form but she refused to speak.

Mrs Lambley: You are a minority government.

Mr TOLLNER: The member for Araluen interjects saying, 'You are a minority government'. That gives her the ability to be a hostile chair and to use and twist the Public Accounts Committee to her own ends. This is not about good government or holding government to account. This is about the member for Araluen going on a jaunt of her own in support of her Labor friends and others.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: relevance. The Estimates Committee has been operating for 15 or 16 years.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr TOLLNER: My contribution has been very relevant to the motion. We on this side of the House will be taking careful interest in what the member for Araluen does in her role as chair of that committee.

Mrs Lambley: Bye, Dave.

Mr TOLLNER: I can see it now; she is trying to politicise it by saying, 'Goodbye, Dave. I don't have to contend with you anymore.' You do not, member for Araluen, but do not think that gives you free rein because there are other members on this side of the Chamber who will also scrutinise your actions. Good luck with it. I hope you can run a proper committee, but based on past performance you have not demonstrated that you are capable.

I am happy to support the motion from the Leader of Government Business.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I did not plan to speak on this debate but following those comments from the soon to be ex-Treasurer, the former member for Fong Lim, it is important to point out that I have been involved with the PAC since first being elected to parliament nearly four years ago. The PAC and the estimates process were introduced in 1999 or 2000 by the then CLP government, and continued under Labor. As my colleague, the member for Wanguri, pointed out, it is an opportunity to scrutinise government. Yes, it is based around the Appropriation Bill, but everything to do with government is based around that budget. It is wonderful to have ministers there to be able to ask questions and to follow through with those questions.

During Question Time in the House we have the opportunity to ask a question and we receive a response. We do not have the opportunity, apart from one supplementary question, to follow up. At estimates you have a continuous line of questioning. We welcome the members for Greatorex and Katherine to the committee.

The committee has been very productive during my term and continues to be productive under the independent leadership of the member for Araluen. We have put out numerous reports. I thank the staff of the PAC as well. They help us and drive a lot of that. It is not politicised but it looks into issues that are important to Territorians and the Northern Territory government. We saw that with the housing report that was tabled this week.

It is interesting that when the PAC looks at something we then see reaction from government, and that highlights the effectiveness of the Public Accounts Committee. We saw it with Richardson Park and now we are seeing it with remote housing.

The member for Araluen is independent and independent in that role, as is the member for Nelson. We welcome having the member for Greatorex and the member for Katherine on that committee. The members for Drysdale and Blain have been on that committee.

Mr Tollner: She was once part of government and now she is not; she has an axe to grind.

Ms FYLES: Dave, you are just jealous that you will not be part of government post August.

Anyway, we will move on. I wholeheartedly support this motion to establish the committee. I look forward to the opportunity to scrutinise and ask questions. All of us are on or have been on committees and understand the work of committees. It is a really important part of our

parliament, particularly with the one House, that we have that opportunity.

It is not political parties; it is looking into detail for the best interests of Territorians.

I look forward to the Public Accounts Committee and it will be good to have the full complement of six members. I thank the member for Araluen for chairing that committee and the member for Nelson for deputy chairing it. I support this motion.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I was surprised. I could not leave the comments from the member for Tollner alone.

Mr Tollner: Member for Tollner?

Mr WOOD: I am called the member for Wood occasionally.

The member stated that Richardson Park was a political inquiry. Nothing could be further from the truth. PAC stands for Public Accounts Committee. If the government intends to spend a lot of money on any project it is the role of the PAC to investigate whether that money is being spent wisely. That is not political.

The issue of Richardson Park was very much a concern of the community. Many people in the community were concerned about whether money should be spent on Richardson Park. It was appropriate to look at it, and we believe there had not been proper due diligence when decisions were made to invest that money into Richardson Park. That is simply what it was about.

We have before us a report on repairs and maintenance on town camps. It is good that this has come forward because now the government has said that it will have a review of town camps. It does do good things, regardless of who is chair.

Our Speaker in this parliament is not a member of the government and, from time to time, I do not think she agrees with the government. You could say she actively opposes some of the government's policies. Does that make her unsuitable to be the Speaker? There are other Public Accounts Committees in Australia where the chair is not a member of the government. I sometimes think that is a healthy process.

In all the Public Accounts Committee meetings I have attended, except for last year – one could say that sometimes having a chair belonging to the government restricts the debate by the chair siding with a minister. When asking a minister for information you can be cut off and told that it is an inappropriate question, etcetera.

The arguments can be thrown around either way if you want to. It should not be a judgment based on who the chair is but on the quality of the questions and answers, and sticking to the principles of the Public Accounts Committee, which are to scrutinise the budget and government spending, and to look at outcomes, which is very important. One of the great things about the Estimates Committee is that it does not necessarily tie itself down to dollars; it looks at outcomes. If money is being spent on the Palmerston hospital, for instance, in the following years we would like to see the outcomes of that. Has it improved the health of people in the Palmerston and regional areas? That is what is good about a Public Accounts Committee.

Whoever is chairing it is irrelevant. It is a public process; it is in the media. If there was any extraordinary bias it would be picked up pretty quickly and seen for what it is worth. Instead of concentrating on who the chair is, let us sit down quietly and go through a process that is important. We are there to scrutinise the government and we do it in a public way. Some of the debate about this and that does not do the whole process any good.

Madam Speaker, I support the PAC and hope it does well at the end of next month.

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I think I have just learnt the definition of furious agreement.

It is interesting to listen to this debate. Perhaps one of the good things about being a dinosaur and moving on is that I hear these debates from time to time. I have sat on both sides of the House and debated. I listened to the impassioned pleas for the Public Accounts Committee to be allowed to go about its job, particularly from the members of the Labor Party. It was not that long ago when there was a Labor government and the Public Accounts Committee had a minister sitting on it. Chris Burns used to occupy a seat on the Public Accounts Committee. You were around at that time, Gerry. At every meeting I objected to the notion that the very ministry we were investigating had a minister on the Public Accounts Committee. It was not a good look, and it flew in the face of everything the hierarchy of the parliament over the executive tries to achieve.

Now the members of the Labor Party are the great champions of democracy and we are being painted as the villains and perpetrators of all things wicked and evil. I suspect that if we change government and the members opposite form government they will suddenly revert to type and we will see things like ministers being on the Public Accounts Committee.

Ms Lawrie: Rubbish.

Mr ELFERINK: That is exactly what happened. You had a spy. Actually he was not a spy because he was out in the open. How can you put a minister on the Public Accounts Committee? Seriously?

Ms Lawrie interjecting.

Mr ELFERINK: I understand why she is trying to defend it, because the record of this person as a Labor minister is atrocious. Who did we spend most of our time looking into to? The former Treasurer of the Northern Territory. Why? Because we smelled a rat.

Mr Giles: Dodgy Delia!

Mr ELFERINK: Subsequent to that time ...

Ms LAWRIE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 32: offensive. I ask the Chief Minister, who shouted out, 'Dodgy Delia' to withdraw that. Get out of the gutter.

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, if you did say that then please withdraw.

Mr GILES: I withdraw.

Mr ELFERINK: We knew the way the former Labor government operated. I remind honourable members of the Stella Maris arrangement, which was not offered up by a member of the Cabinet who happened to be sitting on the Public Accounts Committee. Do you reckon the minister, who would have been aware of what was going on as a result of his presence in Cabinet meetings, sitting on a Public Accounts Committee, the very committee of this parliament which oversees government expenditure, did not have a role to say to the Public Accounts Committee, 'There might be something of interest, because we are currently involved in the process of ...'

Ms LAWRIE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Digression from subject. He well knows that the minister was not on the Public Accounts Committee in the last term of parliament.

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. Minister, return to the point of this motion.

Mr ELFERINK: I am astonished that she has the audacity to stand up. Defending the indefensible has done so much damage to the member for Karama. As far as I am concerned ...

Ms Walker: All you want to do is beat up on women.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, member for Nhulunbuy!

Mr ELFERINK: If that is the criticism then, unfortunately, we would be unable to criticise half the people in this Chamber. I will not be cornered into such a facile trap.

Having made that observation, I will be critical of members, particularly members who do dodgy deals and try to give their union mates public property for nothing. That is precisely what that arrangement was and nobbling the Public Accounts Committee was part of the process that the Labor Party was quite happy to use.

Point made ...

Ms Lawrie: Thank God we saved Stella; you hate that don't you? You are trying to cover ...

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ELFERINK: Okay, thank God we saved Stella. You intended to give it away for free to union mates so they could use Harold Nelson Holdings, which was an arrangement with the union movement to redevelop a block worth tens of millions of dollars. They did not have to pay rent. You saved Stella. At the last election the Territory saved us from you.

I thank honourable members for their support. I am disappointed that the member for Karama continues to delude herself about her wicked actions. That is a matter for her going forward. As far as I am concerned I look forward to the estimates process.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL (Serial 170)

Continued from 25 May 2016.

Mr GILES (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to talk on the budget in reply. It would be hard for me to start a budget-in-reply speech by not acknowledging one of the most tragic events, which I heard of this morning. That was hearing the federal Opposition Leader, billion dollar Bill, in the media this morning talking about his lack of knowledge of the history of this nation, the bombing of Darwin, the bombings of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and its interplay with World War II in defending this nation.

When he said on radio this morning that he did not realise more bombs were dropped on Darwin than on Pearl Harbour, I thought that was the most offensive thing you could say to the RSL of

Australia, the RSL of the Northern Territory, diggers past and present, and Territorians. It was outrageous.

Of the hundreds who were killed there was the lone man in Katherine, the 88 people who were killed in the Aboriginal community of Millingimbi and Matthias, the man who caught the first Japanese pilot on Australian soil in the Tiwi Islands.

For the Opposition Leader of this nation not to know of the war time history of Australia is a disgrace. I call on Bill Shorten to publicly apologise to Territorians and Australians for this disrespectful nature that has been presented to them.

I am unsurprised that the RSL is outraged that someone who wants to lead Australia does not even know the war time history of this country. It is a disgrace. As he parades himself around with Pat Dodson ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: relevance. We are talking about the Chief Minister's budget and you would think that he would want to share that with Territorians, not have a rant.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chief Minister has all public affairs under his portfolio so he has some latitude.

Mr GILES: Thank you. What you might see in the budget, member for Nightcliff, in your naive attempts to divert the debate and its attention, is funding for a program called The Territory Remembers. Money is going towards next year's 75th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin, which is in the budget; I am sure you did not know that either. Part of The Territory Remembers campaign is building a statue of Matthias on the Tiwi Islands to recognise the contribution he made to this country.

The Tiwi Islanders know more about the defence of Australia than Bill Shorten. Billion dollar Bill is racking up credit card debt everywhere. He should apologise to Australia, Northern Australia, the Territory and the RSL. To do anything less would show that he does not have the ability, demeanour or confidence to be elected as Prime Minister of Australia.

It is highly offensive. I will not talk about The Territory Remembers; I will leave that to the Minister for Arts and Museums, in whose portfolio that sits.

That multimillion-dollar campaign is about parading part of our history to the rest of the nation. It is something all Australians should

know, particularly the person who wants to be the Prime Minister. It is highly offensive.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition is parading around the Territory right now. He has rolled out Nova Peris while they try to find a replacement. He has Pat Dodson, the new Labor Senator for WA, over here. I encourage Pat Dodson to return to Western Australia and start developing policies there instead of having a lack of investment in WA, dislocating remote Aboriginal people and sending them all to the Northern Territory to live on our streets. Pat Dodson should return across the border to WA and start doing his job over there. He is creating turmoil for Territorians living in urban areas. He is creating turmoil for Aboriginal Territorians living in other parts of the Northern Territory as they are being given a bad name because Western Australians are coming over here and living rough. That is because of the poor policies of people like Pat Dodson. So go back home! I will tell you the schedules of Airnorth, Qantas or Virgin to return to WA, do your job over there and stop letting down Western Australians.

I may have digressed slightly from the budget. I have said a couple of times this week that this budget is about choice. It is about choice on 27 August at the time of the election. This budget is not just about the 2016-17 financial year; it is about the last four years and the next four years. It is a budget that recognises that when we came to government Labor had left us with \$5.5bn worth of debt and a deficit well over \$1bn.

We were not just left with numbers, but with a broken community and society. I spend six nights a week in Darwin in my role as Chief Minister, but I am still a resident of Alice Springs as my electorate is there. I knew when we were in opposition how Labor treated everybody outside Darwin, the old story of the Berrimah line. Berrimah Road goes across just outside of Darwin and leaves Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and all the communities on the other side.

Labor's approach was to have a divided Territory. But it did not just divide it by the Berrimah line, it divided it between black and white. It was not supporting Aboriginal people in the Territory either. This can best be demonstrated in two ways, although there are many other ways. One was when it shut community councils and brought the shires in and the other was when it took all the housing from the communities and centralised it in Darwin. There are many good people working in the Department of Housing and they do a tremendous job, but in this era and cycle of wanting self-determination, why would you take ownership away from people? You should be giving it back, improving governance structures

and training, and giving people opportunities. That is what we have done in the last four years.

We are committed to giving all the Territory health centres back as community health centres. It will take time, but that is our policy. We are committed to supporting local councils and we have already established regional councils. We have moved from the shires to regional councils. We have split the Victoria Daly into two regional councils. We said that we want communities to be having a say. There are 73 large communities in the Northern Territory. So far we have set up 63 local authorities. Minister Bess Price has given \$5m to the local authority model so each community receives money to spend in their community, will have a say on what is happening and can feed that up through the ranks.

In the budget we have \$1m set aside for the establishment and creation of the regional housing development authority and we are taking our time to build it. There is \$1m over a year, consultation, a few reports, community meetings, etcetera, so we can work out a model of providing independence, in an authoritative sense, to Indigenous housing in remote parts of the Territory, but not just Indigenous housing; it is also for town camps and homelands, or outstations, as you may call them.

It will take a year to develop but this is about giving it back. This will be an Indigenous-governed authority with regional bodies underneath, feeding up. It will design policies on housing, rent, allocation and employment, and it will guide the development of housing in the Northern Territory. It will be the biggest reform of Indigenous housing in the Territory's history. It is about giving back to Aboriginal people, and not just saying there is a problem but a coordinated structure that improves governance and efficiency.

I could talk about Aboriginal affairs all day because I have been a champion of it. We are leading the nation in Indigenous economic development, governance, reduction in imprisonment rates and recidivism, and we are leading the nation in employment. This continues throughout everything we do in government, from me at the top of the tree right down to the bottom where people at the department level are trying to do the right thing. It is working, whether it is putting \$400 000 into building new crocodile pen hatcheries at Ramingining, more than \$5m into building 21 bakeries across communities to establish regional economies or putting employment participation into the more than \$550m worth of roads we are building across the Territory so we connect people.

My home town of Alice Springs looks like a pinwheel with all the roads that come out of it. I

see millions of dollars going on the Santa Teresa Road and now another \$16.5m to seal the first 20 km of Maryvale Road. We still have \$45m worth of roads for the Outback Highway being rolled out between Docker River on the Western Australian border through Uluru-Kata Tjuta, then along the Plenty Highway to Harts Range. We have new money for the Sandover Highway to connect the people living around Utopia and Arlparra to the health centre. We have more money than ever before going to the Tanami Road in the member for Stuart's electorate. In Alice Springs we are building roundabouts at Lovegrove and Larapinta, or the Tom Brown roundabout.

It is not just Central Australia that has been successful; there is also the Carpentaria Highway, the Tablelands Highway, the Lajamanu Road, sealing the Port Keats Road, the Arnhem Link Road and the Arnhem Highway, and bridges over the Roper and the Wilton. There is \$27m for the Tiwi Islands in this year's budget as part of a \$33m budget to build and seal the road between Pickertaramoor and Pirlangimpi. We want to build roads because they connect people, connect business and create economies.

That is not all we are doing. We are also putting money into telecommunications. The budget talks about \$5m going into telecommunications, but that does not tell the full story. Right now there is a \$45m program going on in telecommunications, building mobile phone towers and broadband towers. Minjilang is the first, again in your electorate, member for Arafura. The second one will be at Umbakumba, in the member for Arnhem's electorate. This is about connecting people too. It is a three-year program with \$5m this year. We have experience here; over the past couple of years we have spent \$6m on connecting 16 communities, but this will do more. It is a fantastic achievement.

It is not just about the regional and remote roads; it is also about Fog Bay Road. This budget will see the full sealing of Fog Bay Road so you will no longer be cut off. All the bridges and road sealing will be done out of this budget. We are doing roads such as Vanderlin Drive and its duplication. We are finishing Tiger Brennan Drive right now.

One good thing I have not mentioned is the \$16m to do some work between Ramingining and the Central Arnhem Highway. I am not sure if many people in this room have ever driven that road. It is quite a difficult road. I am sure, Francis, that you have driven that road once or twice.

Mr Kurrupuwu: Yes.

Mr GILES: It goes up through the hills, through the trees and a couple of creek crossings. It is very hard. There is \$16m for that road and it will

mean people at Ramingining will have better connectivity to travel to Gove to reach services or go the alternative way to Maningrida.

But Ramingining does not just receive money for crocodile hatcheries and roads, member for Arafura. It is also having a cyclone shelter built as part of the school – equipment for the school, and a cyclone shelter.

There are a lot of things happening. Anyone watching my Facebook page would have seen a story about how I was in Gove last week, at Ski Beach. I was talking to Gumatj people, and some Rirratjingu, but mainly Gumatj, about the cycle of economic development. It is a fantastic story. We were talking about the cyclone recovery happening on Elcho Island, which is geographically close to Gove.

We said, let us build the 40 houses, half of the 80 houses for you, slowly, and let us use a lot of Indigenous labour and Indigenous content. We have reached a point where, to cut the story short, the local traditional owners in Gove now have their own quarry for mining their own sand, and their own brick-making machine so they are making their own better bricks. They are making their own concrete from their own concrete batching plant, cutting their own timber from their own country and milling their own timber, and all of it is being sent to Galiwinku. The house blocks are being used in the houses, the timber is being used in the floorboards and the wood is being used to make the frames and trusses, all of which the traditional owners are making themselves. It is a great outcome; it is about building economies.

If you look in the budget you will see that we have \$28.3m for Arlparra. There is actually a lot more than that; I think it is about \$33m if you include other things such as bakeries, solar panels, telecommunications and the like, and a bit of road funding.

The total of \$28m is designed to give 15 houses to Arlparra, put in some internal roads and upgrade some essential services the community has never had before. I have been there a few times and we have had community meetings. I told them I could bring in people from outside the community who could do all the work really quickly. Or, if we do it a bit more slowly, I could source an outside contractor through a tender process to come in to work with them all, give them all jobs and we can spend a few years doing it so it improves.

For those of you who have never visited the Utopia region, I think it is the worst part of Australia, and this is coming from a person who has been to many communities around Australia over many years. It has never been serviced, and there are historical reasons for that, but it is mainly

because it is a homeland, not a community. We will turn it into a community and give it recognition.

Mr Chandler: A good airstrip.

Mr GILES: It has the best airstrip in Australia, and police station.

These people need change. I want to see it go more slowly for the economic benefits, but there are some very old ladies who live in that area of Arlparra, or Utopia, in the worst conditions I have seen in Australia. They are literally living under pieces of bark and have never had hot water or power in their lives. They have come to me and said they want six houses built quickly. We will build six quickly and then do the other 11 slowly, which will bring a lot of employment outcomes. These are the type of economic opportunities we want.

Being mindful of time, I cannot talk about everything in regard to Indigenous Affairs, but I will touch on tourism. It is great being the Tourism minister. I recognised a long time ago that tourism is where we need to head, from an economic perspective. I became the first leader in Australia to take the tourism portfolio. Since then, Andrew Barr in the ACT, Will Hodgman in Tasmania and Colin Barnett in Western Australia have adopted the tourism portfolios of their states and territories. I think a couple of them see the opportunity and the other sees that other industries are falling down so he has jumped on to tourism, and that is good to see.

In the Territory we have been able to ensure that we invest heavily in tourism. We have the biggest tourism budget the Territory has seen and we are now yielding the best results we have seen for probably 15 years. They started at the bottom of the Territory at Uluru and then rolled through Alice Springs. Tennant Creek and Katherine are now receiving substantial increases. I have talked to people at Katherine Gorge and in Kakadu who are 30% to 40% up on last year. A few of the Darwin accommodation providers will say that business is slower, but we have had about 1500 additional rooms put into Darwin in the last couple of years so room and occupancy rates are not quite as good. However, I am told that forward bookings are looking quite good, and while talking to a few operators over the last week they have said that things look outstanding. It is good to see.

We do have the biggest budget and we are putting more money into a range of things. Not only are we continuing with infrastructure such as the Litchfield Park Road, the Mereenie Inner Loop and things such as the Kambolgie Creek crossing in Kakadu, we have also put another \$500 000 into the highly-successful Million Dollar Fish campaign, \$15m into Gunn Point Road to help the tourism

and fishing industries, \$1m towards Corrobooree Billabong Road, and \$250 000 as an ongoing upgrade to Point Stuart Road. On top of everything else we have put an additional \$8m towards marketing and \$5m to the Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund.

There is a lot more we are doing in tourism. I focus largely on event-based tourism. We have a marketing arm and a connectivity arm, which is trying to get people here, whether that is by accessing flights, the drive sector or otherwise. We also have the event sector with some tremendous events in the Territory that we need to do more to promote, including the Beer Can Regatta, Henley on Todd and the Camel Cup. We also continue to have the V8s, the Darwin Cup, the Red CentreNATS, and the inaugural Indigenous lights show in Alice Springs, which is in September at around the same time as the masters.

Event tourism is really important and I want to see it continue to grow and expand, similarly, I want to see tourism product develop and redevelop so there will be more exciting things on the agenda. I am working on a proposal to get jet boats and Jet Skis, and hopefully a waterski park at the waterfront. These are the type of things that attract more people and give tourists an added opportunity.

There is one other thing regarding tourism which is more in the portfolio of Parks and Wildlife, but I will quickly touch on it. An amount of \$3.97m is going towards the Alcoota fossil site, which has been under government administration for many years. For those who do not know, it is geographically located just past Gemtree on the right of the Plenty Highway. It is the largest megafauna fossil site in Australia and most of the world; megafauna perished 8m or 9m years ago. It is an ideal opportunity to develop it into a tourist attraction, particularly something to showcase to school students. Although the site is on government land it is also in the vicinity of traditional owners, particularly many who live in Engawala. We have had initial meetings with traditional owners from Engawala about it. We want it to be in partnership; actually, we want it to be an Indigenous venture but we have put the money towards it. We will spend a fair bit of time consulting to make sure we get it right. We see it as being a major tourist attraction in Central Australia.

We have already said that we have the biggest education budget in the Territory's history, as well as the highest enrolments and attendance, and the best results we have ever seen. I will not go through the Education minister's portfolio, but I will say that he has done an outstanding job. I will comment on the Knowledge Territory initiative.

This comes from me saying that every dollar of gas royalties will go towards education in the Northern Territory. It will not substitute the current spend on education; it will all be new spend.

Originally the gas was to flow in its main from 1 January 2019, but I now believe it will flow from 1 January 2020 because of Labor's gas moratorium, which has scared people even though Labor does not tell anybody they are secretly meeting with the gas industry. We already receive royalties from current gas developments in the Territory, which Labor wants to shut immediately. Of the current royalties – I cannot tell you exactly how much because of tax law, but we are spending \$400 000 for a Knowledge Territory cadetship.

We will fund private businesses to provide university students with a salary in the three months off at the end of the year so they can gain work experience. Initially there will be 10 cadetship places but we expect that to grow to 200 once the gas is flowing fully. The royalties will pay for 200 cadetships each year.

The amount of \$600 000 for the Knowledge Territory Higher Education Scholarships will see 40 top students in the Northern Territory receive scholarships to study in the Territory, increasing it from \$5000 to \$10 000 to ensure we give the best opportunities. That is an expansion of an additional 20 places to help disadvantaged students. They have to study in the Territory, but we are giving them scholarships to ensure we have the best and brightest. We have \$1m set aside to support apprentices and trainees, which will help with the cost of enrolling in courses, and becoming tooled up and equipment ready.

We have set aside \$1m for the Office of the Chief Scientist, which has not received as much media attention as it deserves. I have heard the Office of the Chief Scientist described as someone who looks at education opportunities. No, this person will have oversight of everything they wish to on a scientific basis. I will particularly target them to look at the gas industry in the Territory and provide independent scientific analysis, reportable directly to parliament if they choose to do that. They can look at water, mining or the education industry, but it has to be science based. This will be the first time the Office of the Chief Scientist has been put in place in the Territory, which I think will provide a major shift in the way things are done in the Northern Territory.

We have the biggest health budget in the Northern Territory's history. We continue to be leaders in mental health and disability services, which the former Labor government did not focus on.

I point out the extra money we are providing, the \$10m to Carpentaria Disability Services and \$470 000 to finish the Somerville Community Centre in Palmerston, and I particularly acknowledge the money in the budget where I signed off on NDIS. NDIS will see an additional 1500 jobs in the Northern Territory to service the disability sector, which will be a major benefit in the Northern Territory.

It would be remiss of me to not talk about Central Australia so I will mention a few things of note. There is the continuing money for the construction of the Larrapinta Child and Family Centre, and \$300 000 in operational money each year to manage that centre. We are currently building a preschool at Braitling Primary School, and we are putting money into the next stage of development of Braitling Primary School. We are putting \$1m towards supporting the expansion and enclosure of a hall at Ross Park Primary School, which is now in the Braitling electorate. I welcome that funding; it was great to be able to secure it. Also, there is \$2m for Sadadeen Primary School, an Alice Springs school that does it pretty tough; any money going towards upgrading the amenity of that school will go a long way. Centralian Middle School, in the electorate of Araluen, has an athletics track and new bus stop being built.

A roundabout is being built at the Lovegrove/Larrapinta Drive intersection and we are investing in upgrades at Tom Brown roundabout. We are putting more money into the Stuart Highway so we can see the expansion of open speed limits between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. This is something Labor has committed to getting rid of, which would really upset some of the residents in Tennant Creek. I walk talk more about Alice Springs at a later date.

From a police perspective, it is great to see that we are now 115 police above the establishment of when we came in. We said we would put 120 extra on the decks. We are now 115 up and on Monday there will be another graduation squad of 30 police, which will see us over the 120. People do come and go on a regular basis, allowing for retirements and becoming sick, but we will have well over 120 from Monday. It is great to be able to invest in upgrades for the police. There is the new social and emotional wellbeing and training centre for the Peter McAulay Centre. We are also spending \$12.6m on replacing the ultrahigh frequency radio equipment. We are upgrading police facilities at Alyangula and Angurugu; we continue to do work at Wadeye, and we have \$12m for Ngukurr and \$16m for Maningrida.

We are putting \$1.9m towards replacing the Bronto – the aerial firefighting crane – in Darwin, and \$570 000 for police to expand the use of facial recognition technology. Some police

officers wear video cameras on their vest. We will be supporting police officers with \$2m for rolling out body worn video systems for every frontline police officer in the Northern Territory.

Housing is an issue that continues to present concerns for people. We have worked diligently to reduce the cost of housing in the private sector, which has reduced the cost of living in the Northern Territory.

I do not need to talk about petrol; I think everybody knows that the Giles government has been the most successful government in Australia at reducing the price of petrol. I thank the fuel companies for working on that with us.

I have already announced that we are spending \$350m on Indigenous housing across the Northern Territory, upgrading some 1300 homes, finally finishing off the legacy issues of 256 houses, that is, 256 houses in the Northern Territory that require demolition and replacement ...

Mr CHANDLER: A point of order, Madam Speaker! In accordance with Standing Order 43, I move that the Chief Minister be given an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr GILES: Thank you very much, member for Brennan. There will be 256 replacement houses, which will mean that every legacy house will go. We removed the alliance model, where Labor brought in foreign contractors from interstate to do the Territory's housing work. We have stopped the \$1m houses that Labor was building and are now building houses for \$450 000, which allows us to put money into new houses. In Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory there are currently 152 serviced blocks. We will build 152 houses in those communities. There is a big challenge ahead of us, but that is our direction for Indigenous housing, in conjunction with the model of the remote housing development authority.

Last year and earlier this year, the Minister for Housing, Bess Price, worked on developing a new housing strategy. The strategy has not been launched yet, but there is a lot of money in the budget to support it. I will read through a few – this is record-breaking in regard to public housing in the Territory:

- \$101m to demolish and rebuild existing public housing and to build new housing stock

That alone is a first; \$101m has never been spent on public housing in the Northern Territory.

- \$18.5m for a targeted refresh program for existing stock
- \$17.6m for social housing and head leasing.

You can see this money going into housing. As minister Price has announced there is:

- \$2m to build new public housing in Elliott and Kalkarindji – two houses in each community
- \$29.3m for repairs and maintenance of existing government employee assets
- \$28m to upgrade and build new government employee housing

I have heard people from the social services sector saying there is nothing for housing. I just identified almost \$150m going towards new public housing in the Northern Territory – hundreds of additional houses for public housing across the Territory. That is a great thing. We have reduced the waiting list for public housing; it has not disappeared, but we have reduced it and we are providing more public housing.

Returning to the budget in a broader sense, it is a big budget; at \$1.7bn it is the second-largest infrastructure budget ever, only beaten by Kevin Rudd when he was Prime Minister and throwing out confetti, at \$1.8bn. But it is not a competition; it is about good fiscal management. It is about saying we have the budget right and we have caught up on debt; we have reduced Labor's \$5.5bn debt down to \$1.9bn and reduced Labor's deficit substantially. We have reinvested money into economic opportunities and diversified the economy so now we do not just rely on Canberra for money, as we can gain money through the private sector. That is a very important issue regarding having choices.

We will continue to stimulate the economy, whether it is through the \$100m boosting package or our tradies or toolies voucher, which gives \$2000 to every Territory owner-occupier.

Mr Chandler: What is the uplift?

Mr GILES: I just heard an interjection asking what the uplift is. The Treasury's analysis is that the \$2000 voucher could generate a \$67m multiplier, but I will tell you what I think. This will be hard for the Leader of the Opposition, a bloke who has a hard time adding up because he has never worked in his life. If you have 10 000 owner-occupiers in the Northern Territory, and you give them all a \$2000 voucher and the opportunity to spend up to \$20 000 as part of a scheme, I ask whether that is \$67m or a couple of hundred million. It is a hugely beneficial initiative and will have a much better multiplier.

The Leader of the Opposition said he will knock it back, he will not vote for it and he does not support it. He wants to put his money into great businesses such as Harvey Norman to buy overseas-made furniture and not buy local. What is the Leader of the Opposition doing? This bloke was on Mix 104 with Katie Woolf this morning and he told a fib. When he was asked who Labor's Treasurer would be he said, 'I don't know. I'm not sure. Currently I'm the shadow but I'll make those decisions later.' Is it not true, Leader of the Opposition, that you have been busy telling everyone, particularly journalists, that you will be the Treasurer? Did you mislead Katie and her listeners today? I know you did, because I know what you have been saying and who you have been saying it to. Come clean, because we know you have never run a business, worked in the private sector or had a real job. How could anyone who has never had a job run a \$6.5bn budget or run an economy?

He wants to have a shot at Nathan Barrett, the assistant Treasurer and member for Blain, who has run businesses and had real jobs

Members: And has an economics degree.

Mr GILES: And has an economics degree. Someone with an economics degree or someone who has never had a job? I know who I would pick. You have honesty on this side and dishonesty on that side. He was on radio this morning saying, 'I don't know'. I know who he has told and what he said. He misled Katie Woolf's listeners this morning. If that is the way he wants to play it – if he will not be up front – then he is certainly an untrustworthy wannabe leader in the Territory.

It is all about the choice between prosperity – building communities and the Northern Territory – or going back to the bad old Labor way of dumping the private sector and trying to live off Canberra, which is what Labor wants to do.

That is pretty tough in these financial times, when Canberra has taken \$750m of GST from your budget. If you do not have the economy running and money coming in from the private sector – you cannot run everything yourself from government. That is a stark difference between us and Labor.

The other thing that is different about the budget reply compared to me standing here is the way the Leader of the Opposition read platitudes and scripted speeches the whole way through; he could not come up with an idea on his own.

He could not come up with a plan or illustrate anything. He could only say that our budget would be the same as their budget, our surplus

would be the same as their surplus, our deficit will be the same as their deficit and our debt will be the same as their debt. You can plagiarise anything you want but sooner or later you will have to grow some. You will have to create some policies and plans of your own. You cannot just keep copying.

You have this idea of being a small target. That was all good for three-and-a-half years while there was only the Country Liberal side to commentate on, but now it is a two horse race and not a one horse race anymore. People now have a choice and are they are starting to have a look. They are asking who the Treasurer will be if Labor is in. Michael Gunner was on the radio this morning misleading Katie Woolf's listeners.

Who will be the Child Protection Minister? Who will be the Infrastructure Minister? Who will be the Housing Minister? Let us hope it is not the member for Wanguri because she was an adviser to the former Housing minister, who completely mucked up the housing system in the Northern Territory. She has failure written all over her from a housing perspective.

We have the dyslexic member for Nightcliff. Let us hope she is not the Education minister.

Ms MANISON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I do not have the Standing Orders in front of me, but the Chief Minister is saying offensive things about the member for Nightcliff.

Mr GILES: Speaking to the point of order, I said she was dyslexic; every time she tables a statement it has spelling errors in it. I think that is a fair point.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr GILES: I am happy to cop it from you all the time. I am happy to cop the slurs and the abuse, but if you cannot take one or two things then you are not tough enough to be in government.

Visitors

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of a Year 5/6 class from Woodroffe Primary School, accompanied by Kelly Bowen. On behalf of members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr GILES: Good morning, Woodroffe Primary School. I only have two minutes left. This is Nathan Barrett, who is your local member, and he

tells me about Woodroffe Primary School all the time. Enjoy your time in parliament. I will send him up to say g'day to you all in a minute.

Madam Speaker, that is my budget reply. It will be a choice on 27 August about people who are inexperienced and not ready to govern. I will illustrate that bit by bit in time to come. People want to know that there is a plan for the Northern Territory, and there is no plan from Labor.

I commend the budget to the House. I thank Dave Tollner, the member for Fong Lim, for the hard work on his fourth budget. It is not just his budget; it is the team's budget, and it was not just the Cabinet that worked hard on this; it was the whole team.

It presents a very good way forward for the Northern Territory; it is fiscally responsible, it stimulates and diversifies the economy; it builds the community; it builds schools and hospitals; it builds mental health and disability; but most importantly it provides jobs, and certainty in jobs, for the future of the Northern Territory.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, my comments will mainly pertain to my greatest area of interest, which is Central Australia.

On budget day I was asked to make some comments on what little I had seen and read about the budget. My initial response to the budget pertaining to Alice Springs and Central Australia was that I was a little disappointed.

Most of the budget commitments outlined, particularly in the press release from the Chief Minister issued that morning, had already been announced. There was very little that was new in what was announced in the budget on budget day for Central Australia. The list outlined in the media release started with the First Home Owners Grant, which had been announced the week before. That was very good news, but it was old news by that stage and something I had been lobbying for, since I became an Independent member, so for the best part of 12 months. I had already expressed my delight publicly that the government had seen sense and undertaken to introduce stamp duty relief for first home owners intending to buy existing homes.

Going down the list, I was a little surprised to see that \$50m had been allocated to expand the Owen Springs Power Station and upgrade the Tennant Creek Power Station.

In Question Time on Wednesday, budget day, I asked the Chief Minister for clarification on what that meant, because in his original press release on upgrading the Owen Springs Power Station, in February 2016, he said the amount was \$75m.

To me it seemed like a reduction, as it would have to most people reading the press release, from \$75m to \$50m, and did not seem to be a particularly good announcement. The Chief Minister clarified that \$50m was coming from the government and the other \$50m was coming from the power and water entities, which resolved that issue.

The second item on the list of big budget winners in his press release was \$20m for two skywalk adventure tourism experiences. That idea has floated around and been discussed in many forums for many decades in Alice Springs. It is an old idea and to suddenly see it sitting here as the number two item, with a price tag of \$20m, came as somewhat of a surprise and a disappointment when you consider all the other things \$20m could be spent on.

I was asked by the ABC and other media outlets to comment on my impression of the budget. At that point, which was early days – I had not had time to go through the budget papers and do much research – I felt that the opportunity cost of allocating \$20m to a skywalk adventure tourism experience, or two of them, was a little disappointing.

The things on my wish list that would have a price tag near \$20m are, in no specific order, a new bridge across the Todd River giving all-weather access from the golf course estate to the CBD – I see that as a priority for the town – and a complete upgrade of the Todd Mall and CBD has been on the table for at least 10 years. The town has been talking about the need to spice up and modernise the Todd Mall.

Investment needs to be made in the Todd Mall, and having \$20m available to do that would be incredible for tourism, which seems to be the main preoccupation of the Chief Minister these days as he is the Minister for Tourism. That is something the whole town has consulted on widely for many years and would be seen as a positive investment.

A rail overpass at the Larapinta/Stuart Highway intersection has been discussed extensively in the town for many years. The trains coming in and out of town are quite novel and loved by tourists but can be a right pain for commuters, especially those coming from the Larapinta/Gillen area into the CBD. I had a conversation recently with some constituents who were really pushing me to advocate, once again, for a rail overpass built at that intersection. The price tag for that would be approximately \$20m.

Another idea I have had for some time, particularly during my time as Health minister, is a complete upgrade of the Flynn Drive Community Health Centre.

There are many ways we could spend \$20m in Alice Springs and Central Australia, and many ideas that have been consulted on extensively in Alice Springs, that could have been in this budget.

To see that \$20m has gone to two skywalk adventure tourism experiences at the opportunity cost of lots of other good ideas was a little disappointing. My comments to the media on Wednesday were that I was disappointed at the lack of community consultation that went into how taxpayer's money has been allocated in the NT budget for Central Australia. In this respect, the Treasurer and the Chief Minister have let Central Australians down to some extent.

There were some good ideas in the budget. The third item on the big winner list in the Chief Minister's press release was \$8.5m to undertake a smart grid trial to provide households and businesses with more information about energy consumption and assist in reducing power bills. This was a good investment and will appeal to households across Central Australia; it will change their lives and hopefully save money for each and every one of us in the town.

Returning to the expansion of the Owen Springs Power Station, the debate that has ensued since its announcement in February has been about why the government did not look at renewable energy options rather than rolling out a full gas-powered power station? That is a legitimate debate that needs to be acknowledged by the government. The experts forecasted that in 20, 30, 40, 50 years' time these gas-powered power stations will be obsolete; they will not exist. We have to be really clever about how we invest our money, in terms of renewable energy. As everyone acknowledges, in Central Australia we have one of the greatest energy resources, and that is the sun; solar energy should always be considered.

This government, and future governments, need to sharpen their pencils and be more astute in listening to community debate about this type of issue. I too have not been good at listening and taking in new concepts and ideas from people who are far more knowledgeable in these areas than I am. Since becoming an Independent I have had more time to reflect on how I operated as a minister. You seem to be so busy that you do not necessarily have time to listen properly, and the budget for Central Australia reflects a distinct lack of listening and consultation by the government.

This government's budget, although not overly impressive in the first instance, is solid. There will always be debate about how you allocate education funding, but there is plenty of money for it. The banter and debate we hear constantly in this House is just around the allocation of

education funding, and that is probably one of the distinct differences between the Country Liberal Party and the Labor Party.

After having a few more days to mull over the content of the budget, I am satisfied that there is money for public housing. One of my hopes, or expectations, of this budget was that there would be more money flowing to public housing.

I am the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, which has been presiding over the inquiry into the repairs and maintenance of town camps. That has unearthed a huge demand for more money to be put into town camps and public housing right across the Northern Territory.

It is an alarming area of need that flies under the radar for most Territorians, but it is an area of great need. By addressing the problems in public housing you are directly addressing all types of social problems we seem to hit the top of the national list in, including incarceration, health problems, child protection issues, domestic violence, crime, etcetera. If you provide people with good, well-maintained housing, it will make a difference to all those social problems. So, yes, I am pleased to see that the government has invested in public housing.

Another area I was expecting to see some investment in for Central Australia is night time youth services. That is another issue that has been thrashed out in public in Alice Springs for many years. The Chief Minister, who is also the Minister for Central Australia, is very much aware of what this debate has involved. It is very disappointing to not have any new money, spending or initiatives in that area for Central Australia. What we have seen over the last four years is a mistake made by the government in taking away all the night time youth services. There has been an effort to reinvest in that area by funding what is basically a professional taxi service provided by Congress and the Alice Springs Town Council. This has addressed some issues but we still have a long way to go.

Visitors

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of two classes from the Adult Migrant English Program at the Palmerston Campus of Charles Darwin University. On behalf of all honourable members, I hope you enjoy your time at Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAMBLEY: We now have a bidding war between Labor and the CLP when it comes to

assistance for first home owners, including first home owners buying existing and new homes. The CLP came up with \$10 000 to assist for first home owners who are buying an existing home, and the Labor Party has outbid by offering much more assistance. It will be interesting to see who wins the election and just how these programs roll out. This is a debate I have been quite passionate about. At the end of last year I brought two motions to parliament to try to change the government's mind about providing assistance to first home owners who want to buy existing homes. I saw a softening of the government and asked many questions of the Treasurer and the Chief Minister about the issue.

When their pre-budget announcement on this issue was made last week, I felt like it was one of the few wins I have had in the last 12 months. It is certainly a win for the people of the Northern Territory, particularly those in the small centres of Katherine and Tennant Creek, who were seriously impacted by what can only be described as a bad policy decision of the government.

Moving beyond Alice Springs to the Northern Territory in general, the government has come up with a few good ideas, such as the tradesmen's assistance scheme. I am looking forward to having work done on my house. I am sure everyone in the room is casting their mind to parts of their home that they would like to have upgraded, using the \$2000 assistance the government has put on the table. My friends and acquaintances are thinking along the same lines.

This is a great initiative, which seems to have been matched by the Labor Party. The opposition has come up with a very similar package, restricted to first home owners. This is a good incentive that will stimulate the economy and provide an income for tradesmen. I heard somewhere in the media that a lady said she has been waiting for a tradesman to come and do some work in her house for six weeks. This new scheme will create an avalanche of demand for tradesmen, so I hope the demand does not exceed the supply too much because that might become a problem.

I like the idea of the creation of the chief scientist position. It is modern and intelligent, and I look forward to seeing how it rolls out.

Overall the government has managed the economy quite well. In the heady early days of the CLP coming to government, when I was Treasurer, we put enormous pressure on ourselves to bring the budget back to surplus. We made some fairly bold and probably stupid decisions, particularly with power and water, while trying to generate more revenue. To bring the

books back into balance we had to make decisions about cutting different things.

I am a little disappointed that the surplus has been pushed out a couple of years, but I understand why. There are two reasons for that; one is that the economy has slowed, and secondly there is an election soon and all governments spend to try to retain government. I have become a lot more philosophical about government and politics over the last 12 months, since becoming an Independent member. It is fascinating to sit in the middle and take the time to look, in a more balanced way, at how best to manage the finances and govern. My views have changed, but I still remain a conservative politician.

I will, unfortunately, talk about the current Treasurer of the Northern Territory. I listened to him this morning, and I am very disappointed to continue hearing the member for Fong Lim – he is departing this parliament, he is leaving us, and I think it is time. His disparaging, offensive comments this morning focused on me primarily, but I have heard him do the same thing to most of us in this Chamber over the last four years. He has been Treasurer for most of those four years and for the most part has done an adequate job thanks to the amazing staff at Treasury. They are very committed, highly educated and intelligent staff in the Department of Treasury and Finance, and they have carried this Treasurer to some extent. I know he has been a challenging Treasurer to work with. You do hear things – this is a very small jurisdiction – and I know he has been a challenging Treasurer to work with.

It is unnecessary for a man who is about to leave his position as a member of parliament and the Treasurer of the Northern Territory to make such rude and disparaging comments about his parliamentary colleagues.

I have borne the brunt of this man's wrath for too long and I do not expect that I will ever hear an apology for the hurt he has caused me and, I suspect, many other people in this Chamber. I look forward to him moving on. I look forward to, if I am lucky enough to be re-elected, being able to have a less personalised and aggressive approach to politics in this Chamber.

This budget is generally a good budget. My initial impressions have softened; I was disappointed initially. My feedback for the government is to brief the people on the cross benches, like me, in a more proactive way. I spoke to the media with the bits of information provided to me, but obviously that is not always adequate. It is a good, solid budget, and I commend it to the House.

Ms LAWRIE (Karama): Madam Speaker, my perspective is from the people living in Karama and Malak, who I represent, and, as a former Treasurer, a broader economic and fiscal perspective.

First and foremost, I was disappointed to see that this budget does not reintroduce the Day Patrol. When the CLP came to government it scrapped the Day Patrol and the Banned Drinker Register. It came in with its own policies – temporary beat locations and mandatory alcohol rehabilitation – which have been an utter failure across the Top End of the Territory.

Antisocial behaviour is far and beyond the issues that everyone has to confront daily. In Karama and Malak people are calling out for an end to the escalation of antisocial behaviour. I acknowledge and thank the Northern Territory Police Force, which I have worked very closely with, especially in the last few months.

We have seen dramatic escalations in the number of drunk people roaming around our community, through our streets and parks, and clogging up our local shopping centres with drunken, antisocial behaviour.

A multifaceted approach is required to deal with the scourge of alcohol abuse in our community. Various governments have tried various programs for a multifaceted approach. One of the programs that worked effectively was the Day Patrol, which was staffed by Aboriginal Community Police Officers, in dedicated vehicles, who worked throughout the day and were very effective in curbing the escalation of drunken antisocial behaviour across our community. These patrols have been scrapped; the ACPOs were dispersed throughout various places and jobs across the police force.

We have recently seen the CLP government create the antisocial behaviour unit at Nightcliff Police Station. I urge any future government to very quickly look at reintroducing the Day Patrol, staffed by Aboriginal Community Police Officers working with police and the hierarchy of police to combat the issue of escalations in antisocial behaviour.

I have listened very closely to residents of Karama and Malak; they are desperately in need of a significant sea change to bring down the number of people in our community who are wasting their lives on grog. We are confronting a very sad situation. I point out to my constituency that it is not just in our area of Karama and Malak. The feedback from the community is that it is highly prevalent in the CBD of Darwin and around the foreshore areas of Fannie Bay, Nightcliff and

Casuarina. I am very aware of hot spots around shopping centres.

Shopping centres have alcohol outlets, but they also have shelter, air conditioning and toilets where people can clean themselves after living rough in the scrub at night. The reality is that residents run the gauntlet of people who have had a pretty hard night and are looking for the 10 am opening of the bottle shop to start again.

I thank the police for the increase in patrols provided to the shopping areas of Karama, and the non-government hub of Malak. It has been a meaningful improvement. I thank the police for putting the mobile camera base – I call it a spy unit – out the front of the Karama shop on a regular basis. There are three of these units rotated through Darwin and Palmerston, and I am deeply grateful for the response from police in now stationing one regularly at Karama.

I remain committed to the model of police beats. Any future government needs to quickly reassess the issue of police beats. They were closed by the CLP, but local policing works. It is a deterrent as well as a community focus, a point where people can provide important intelligence to police. The community policing model is incredibly effective in small population centres, such as we enjoy in Darwin.

Larrakia Nation received significant cuts to its funding by the CLP government. The Return to Country program was axed, which was a huge mistake. Any incoming government will need to quickly look at what can be done to strengthen and invigorate the Return to Country program. People come into town, spend their money on a drinking binge and are then trapped in town. What is wrong with the Return to Country program being reinstated to the full extent it was previously in existence? Then people could return to the communities where there is no access to grog, to dry out and hopefully become more constructive members of our society again.

I was looking for a few things in the budget that are not there, the Day Patrol, increases and activity around Return to Country and a point-of-sale device. None of that is in this budget, despite the chest beatings of the CLP that they might have a point-of-sale facial recognition device. I guess we will have to deal with the consequences of people on drinking binges, because we have far too many grog outlets across Darwin and Palmerston for the temporary beat locations to be an option. Whilst it is an option in smaller places, like Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, it cannot be a sustainable option here where we have so many grog outlets.

There are things that could have been done in this budget for antisocial behaviour and have not, which is a grave disappointment to me and will mean that our community will continue to suffer the consequences of the program cuts the CLP made when it came to government in 2012.

Another big issue in my electorate is public housing. I was disappointed to see no effort in investing in or creating the programs I called for in this budget. I called for the creation of co-located units across housing, police and the Department of Families and Children to attend public housing sites that are the worst of the worst. If Police, Housing and the Department of Families and Children each looked at their data, and cross-matched and cross-referenced it, they would see the public housing they visit most frequently. In a coordinated approach by officers of the three agencies they could turn up to the house together, deal with the myriad of issues the tenants have, break the cycle, improve the tenants of the home, and dramatically improve the lives of the neighbours who suffer unacceptable levels of violence and antisocial behaviour day in, night in, in rotation.

Visitors

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of two Year 5/6 classes from Moulden Park Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Laura Morgan and Vicky McDonald. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms LAWRIE: Madam Speaker, it is appropriate that the Moulden Park Primary School kids are here while I talk about antisocial behaviour and the needs confronting public housing in the Northern Territory. I have often said that my electorate of Karama, which takes in the suburbs of Karama and Malak, is strongly mirrored by the electorate which was formerly Blain but now, with the changing boundaries, is Drysdale. Moulden and Gray are two suburbs in Palmerston which are highly reflective of my suburbs of Karama and Malak in Darwin's northern suburbs. The antisocial behaviour I have been talking about and the dire need to address the social concerns surrounding public housing are very much reflected in the community of Moulden.

Children, I have the utmost respect for you. As I say to the kids of Karama and Malak, embrace school. It is your ladder to success in life. Everything you get to live and learn through at

school will help you in every way during your life and you can do whatever you want. Thank you for being here today, Moulden primary.

I was looking in the budget for a new coordinated team approach of officers of Housing, Children and Families, and Police attending public housing places together to deal with tenancy concerns and issues. That has not been established in the budget, so today we still have departments working hard in isolation, in silos. Housing, Police and the Department of Children and Families are all doing what they do. They are all under enormous resource pressure. I think that with the funding and resources to team up in dealing with these problems, in a greater coordinated approach, they would have a better outcome.

I say this could work because I had the experience of establishing CAT Force, the Child Abuse Task Force, which co-located police officers with child protection officers, and it worked. The feedback I received was extremely positive from the child protection and police frontline officers. CAT Force is one of the areas that has been devastated by this CLP government. If we are fair dinkum about protecting our most vulnerable children, a future government needs to look at reinvigorating CAT Force.

I have studied aspects of housing interstate and I have read the research. I have always been, and will continue to be, a strong advocate for urban renewal. I thank the CLP for its middle class welfare, the \$2000 home owners can use to stimulate the economy and keep our tradespeople in jobs.

This CLP government has utterly failed the domestic economy. It has failed to create all-important capital works programs, public and stimulating the private sector, hence the middle class welfare of the \$2000 tradie stimulus for home owners. You could have directed some of that into public housing.

In the post-global financial crisis times, a former Labor government knew we had to hold up the important construction sector, because private investment had fled the market as a result of the global financial crisis. We did that by funding an urban renewal package for public housing, literally installing and refurbishing the wet areas of homes, kitchens and bathrooms, as they are really important in public housing houses. Our stock is old; it has significantly aged. Public housing residents know you have struck lotto if you receive a lick of paint from repairs and maintenance.

The importance of refurbishing the kitchens, toilets and bathrooms is significant. It fuels the local tradie market, and you are, importantly, upgrading

rundown public housing stock. The trade program could have been extended to the establishment of sheds and carports, painting houses – inside and out – tiling or improving the electrics.

Urban renewal of public housing has proven to improve the social and economic outcomes of the community. That is a short sentence but behind it sits volumes of studies which prove it works. I will continue to call for an urban renewal program to fix the substandard housing stock and stimulate the economy through the work provided to tradies. It would have social outcomes of enormous benefit to the families living in those houses. Research shows that if you improve the built environment where someone lives, their behaviour improves. There are social programs that would need to dovetail in behind an urban renewal program of housing stock. We have a vibrant non-government organisation sector capable of working with the housing authority to provide those social programs. Sadly, that was not in the budget.

The \$2000 tradie spend could have been directed into a strong foundation for this program to occur while still allowing some home ownership purchase into it within certain criteria. That did not happen because the CLP cannot see in front of their feet.

The urban renewal program would also benefit the homeowners located around the rundown public housing stock; their lifetime investment in their own house will improve because the value increases. If you have your house on the market and a potential buyer sees a presentable series of houses around it, your value holds up; but if it is next to a rundown wreck of a public housing house, your value drops. That is the real estate reality that home owners are confronted with across our suburbs.

The CLP government has failed to understand the importance of directing stimulus funding into improving and renewing public housing stock, just as it has failed to understand the importance of delivering new public housing stock into the market. Its failure is one of the reasons it will be thrown out of office in August.

Another priority of my electorate is the duplication of Vanderlin Drive. I was thrilled to be part of the Labor government that duplicated Vanderlin Drive through the Malak zone. We knew the next stage of that project was to duplicate Vanderlin Drive through what I call the Karama zone, up to the McMillans Road roundabout. The implementation of a noise barrier would have been a crucial part of that roadworks project. This budget has the duplication of Vanderlin Drive but is, sadly, lacking the noise barrier.

I am delighted that the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport took up my offer in Question Time yesterday to visit the duplication site on Vanderlin Drive with me, and hear firsthand why a noise barrier is important. He said the road pavement treatment will be a different material for the duplication breadth extension, but that the existing road surface adjacent to the housing would remain the same noisy material. Minister, you are missing the point. It is not the surface alone causing the noise; it is the traffic as well.

You could say that the people living on McMillan's Road, Bagot Road and Trower Road all confront the issue of being alongside a major arterial road. This section of Vanderlin Drive is a major arterial road. It is the connection used for all freight trucks coming into the large Casuarina Shopping Centre. All those delivery trucks come down that section of Vanderlin Drive. It is the key arterial link between Palmerston and Casuarina, which are huge population centres.

It is also used by anyone delivering waste to the Shoal Bay dump. You can imagine how many times a day waste dump trucks and commercial waste dumpers arrive at Shoal Bay; if you add to that the domestic users of Shoal Bay you will start to picture how busy this section of Vanderlin Drive is, and how heavily it is used by large trucks.

The other unique thing about this section of road is that there is no large verge between the road and the homes abutting it.

Noise barriers exist in major arterial roads in all Australian capital cities; they do help, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The beauty of a noise barrier is that these homes do not egress on to Vanderlin Drive; they back onto it. There are no driveways that would prevent the construction of a noise barrier. That is not the case for Trower Road and Bagot Road. McMillans Road has a service road which gives residents a buffer zone, as do the lower sections of Vanderlin Drive.

This is a unique opportunity to do the right thing and put in place a noise barrier. My Facebook post calling for a noise barrier received a comment from someone saying, 'You don't need it; it's not noisy.' A resident replied to this comment, challenging the person who made that comment to stand where she lives. She said, 'We lock ourselves inside the house during the day. The noise outside is unbearable and at night it's not much better.' They live as a family with many children literally locked inside the house. Constructing a noise barrier would make a meaningful difference to the lives of hundreds of residents in the crescents and courts adjacent to Vanderlin Drive.

Anyone, with knowledge of road construction in a government capital works program would know that the best time to do this would be to roll it into a capital works program of duplicating that section of road.

I want to raise ribbons of green because the environment, our built environment, is missing from this budget. We could have seen vision, landscaping across our arterial roads, the old tank farm area of Stuart Park reformed and changed into parkland, and a beautiful parkland at the old hospital site, but none of that, sadly, is in this budget. I will have more to say regarding the beautification opportunities of our suburban areas and our beautiful Darwin.

I will have more to say in the future on the impact the extra \$2000 a year power and water has had on household budgets; it is crippling. The \$2000 tradie deal is a zero gain because you have to stump up your own \$2000, so you need to have \$2000 to receive \$2000, and families are out of pocket \$2000 per year thanks to the CLP's Power and Water increases. By my calculations, you still owe us all \$6000 in your middle class welfare packages.

I will have more to say on school upgrades in the future; they are crucial. I was pleased, in successive past budgets, to be able to deliver upgrades to public schools such as Sanderson Middle School and Casuarina Senior College. I expected a much bigger announcement in this budget for Casuarina Senior College. It is missing, sadly. It has master planned. It is our main feeder college for the northern suburbs' senior schools. I do not understand why it missed out so significantly in this budget. It is very old infrastructure.

I notice there is some pretty heavy pork barrelling happening in the Sanderson electorate public schools. That is great if they get some advantages, but the government should balance that out by meeting identified needs in the existing ageing infrastructure across our schools.

Karama Primary School has the advantage of an upgrade to its administration areas which complements the upgrades I have done in previous years. Malak and Manunda did not receive as many opportunities. A government more concerned with pork barrelling than a needs-based approach to education infrastructure deserves to be thrown out of office, as this CLP government will be.

There is much to be said regarding health that has not been delivered in this budget. I acknowledge and thank the CLP government and the staff of the Health department for the commitment to

neurological facilities for Darwin and a specialist surgeon. It is an area of dire need in the Territory.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

PETITION
Petition No 63 –
Ban Unconventional Onshore Gas Mining

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a petition from 1013 petitioners praying that unconventional onshore gas mining is banned in the Northern Territory. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate as it conforms to the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

*To the Speaker, Chief Minister and
Members of the Legislative Assembly,*

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

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

REORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 59, I move that this Assembly meets on 23 June 2016 at 2 pm and that the order of business be as follows:

Prayers

Notices

Government Business

This is the standard motion to reorder business for the Thursday after the estimates process, to make certain the non-government section of the estimates process can be heard on the Thursday morning, before this House returns for the purpose of passing the budget.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): The opposition acknowledges and supports this motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Additional Assembly Sitting Day

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 4, the government has determined that an additional meeting of the Assembly will occur on 27 June 2016, which is the Monday after the estimates process. The Assembly will meet pursuant to the normal routine of business for a Tuesday or a Thursday, as provided for in sessional orders under Standing Order 60.

The reason for this motion is the defeat, by this House yesterday, of the motion to bring on matters one day early. The government has heard members' concerns in relation to the one-day early component. Rather than moving for an extra sitting day on the Friday, which at lunch time would technically meet the 30-day threshold, we have determined that the House should meet again on the following Monday. We hope we have the support of the members of this House so we can pass bills which are important to the people of the Northern Territory.

The bills deal with issues of public safety and stamp duty legislation, which is important to Territorians and needs to be passed, as well as other legislation. We have heard the complaints of the members opposite that 29 days is not enough time and the standard 30 days should be applied. We accept this criticism and the motion of this House. We will enable a sitting on the Monday to give members the opportunity of an extra weekend to wrap their heads around these bills so that they might pass.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, how ironic that we need an extra sitting day; we have had almost four years. We have had days when we have gone home and this House has not passed one piece of legislation. We have even had a full sittings week where not a single piece of legislation was passed or debated. Now we have to cost the taxpayer an extra sittings day, simply because the government could not organise itself. If you had not already proved you are the most chaotic and dysfunctional government in the Northern Territory's history, then you have just done so. This is an extra sitting day simply so you can pass legislation that you were not organised enough to do in the past three-and-a-half years.

You are putting on an additional day to suit your political agenda. That is fine; you can recall

parliament and cost taxpayers thousands of dollars. We will accept ...

Mr Conlan: You could have supported it yesterday.

Ms FYLES: That is an interesting interjection from the member for Greatorex. 'We could have supported it yesterday.' It even got a smile from the Attorney-General. Member for Greatorex, may I remind you that if you had turned up for the vote yesterday the member for Port Darwin would not have to move this motion.

Mr Conlan: I know, but you still could have supported it.

Ms FYLES: We will not do your work for you. We will hold you to account on behalf of Territorians, who are sick and tired of this chaos. They thought it would be over, but now we have one more day, costing the taxpayer many thousands of dollars, simply because you could not be organised over the past three-and-a-half years.

Training legislation was announced this week that seems fairly routine. Why could you not have organised yourself enough to introduce it in the February sittings when we had no legislation before the House?

I remind the government that they set the legislative agenda; you placed sittings too close together so legislation could not sit on the Notice Paper for 30 days between sittings. It is not the fault of the opposition or the crossbenchers; it was the government that set the timetable.

I have not spoken to my colleagues, but we will come in on that day because we are here to serve Territorians. It is pathetic that we have a government so disorganised and chaotic that it is now costing Territorians thousands of dollars. How much for an additional sitting day? I am sure we will find out during the estimates process. I believe the member for Sanderson quoted \$50 000 on radio once. We are not talking about a small sum of money, and it is simply because you could not organise yourselves.

We support the motion, but it is ironic that it is one of the last things this parliament will do. Actually, it will not be one of the last things because we are coming back; Dave just wants another Question Time. I doubt the member for Greatorex knew it was coming because he just asked his last question. We will come back and hold you to account. I can assure you that on 27 August Territorians will not forget these three-and-a-half years. This motion will remind them of everything they have seen over the past three-and-a-half years. We have had two-and-a-half Chief Ministers and midnight coup after midnight coup.

We cannot keep up with the number or reshuffles – 15, 14, 18. Sometimes you do not know which minister is responsible, and that is not good for Territorians or strong, stable government.

I note that some of the legislation that has been introduced for that day seems to suit your political agenda in the lead-up to the election.

We will remind you, just as Territorians will remind you on 27 August, that we have had enough.

Mr GILES (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, the member for Nightcliff passed an assertion on my colleague, the member for Greatorex. The member for Greatorex did not vote yesterday, but I will tell you who did. Labor and the Independents voted to not deal with this on a Friday after sittings. He did not vote against it; you did.

What did you vote against? You voted against debating stamp duty exemption for first home buyers. Why did you do that? There is a month period required for a bill to sit on the table, so we sought some clarity and said four weeks, is that enough? The response from the Speaker's Office was no; it has to be 30 days. We put a motion in to move it to Friday in accordance with the 30-day rule. The member for Greatorex did not vote, but you all voted against it.

Ms Fyles: No, we did not; we voted against urgency.

Mr GILES: I sat here quietly and let you have your say, member for Nightcliff; common courtesy would be nice.

You voted against introducing, debating and passing legislation that would have provided protection to police officers who are spat on or bitten by offenders. Now those offenders will be required to have blood tests to check whether they have AIDs, hepatitis or any other communicable diseases. It does not matter if the member for Greatorex voted; you voted against debating the protection of police officers.

You voted against introducing the Bail Amendment Bill, which is vastly supported by everyone the length and the breadth of the Territory, a bill that will remove the presumption of bail for repeat offenders – youth and adult offenders who have been convicted at least twice in a two year period. If that legislation passes it will give judges and magistrates the tools to not grant bail. It is not a presumption of bail; it is a presumption against bail. They will have to be remanded in custody or wear an electronic ankle bracelet so police can track where they go.

Territorians want that in and you are holding it up. That is what you voted against yesterday. You also voted against the employment and training legislation, and terrorism legislation which would protect the community with police being able to apprehend and hold people suspected of committing terrorism in the Northern Territory. Do you want to play games with the Northern Territory Terrorism Act? That is what you did yesterday and now you want to bag it out.

Today I heard a journalist say, 'But Matt never voted'. That is right; Matt did not vote, but you all voted against supporting the Northern Territory against terrorism, the presumption against bail, stamp duty exemption and the taking of blood samples to assist police officers. That is a shame. It is exactly what we are talking about. We could have done it on the Friday, but you did not want to.

You have come in here all high and mighty, beating your chests and playing the games you always play. If you cannot debate something at 29 days, we will do it at 30. We will have the weekend in between. It is no skin off our nose, because we stand up for Territorians.

We want the stamp duty exemption. We want the presumption of bail removed so those young offenders who cause so much harm in our community are locked up in gaol. We do not want them on our streets. We do not want our cars being smashed up or our houses being broken into. We want the legislation passed today, but we are waiting because you will go nuts if we bring it in on urgency.

This is about protecting our community and you are playing games! That is not what it is about or why you were elected. People in the electorate of Nightcliff are having their cars smashed up by repeat offenders. I am happy to remand them in custody or put a bracelet around their ankle so we can keep track of them, but you want to play games.

If you are keen on this bill, I will put it in right now and debate it today – urgency right now. If you are prepared to stand up for the Northern Territory, I am prepared to bring it on as the next legislation. If you are prepared to stand up for the victims of property crime whose cars are being smashed and victims of theft, I will bring that legislation up right now. We will suspend standing orders and debate it today.

Ms Fyles: You do not understand parliament.

Mr GILES: Will you support it? Will you support Territorians? No, you will not stand up and support Territorians.

Let us make this very clear. I am prepared to debate the Bail Amendment Bill right now but Labor will not support it. I am prepared to keep young and adult reoffenders remanded in custody, with bracelets around their ankles so police can track them, but Labor will not support that. Shame on Labor!

Let us debate the stamp duty exemption right now, bring it on this afternoon, but Labor will not support first home owners. We could pass legislation today to provide more protection for police. Would you be prepared to do that today? No, because you will say, 'We can't work that fast; we're in the Labor party and we clock off at 4:21 pm. We are on union time.' You could do that today. You could pass terrorism laws right now. If Labor was serious about terrorism laws in the Northern Territory, you could pass them right now but you will not because you are lazy, inept and will not work hard.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! It really does not bother me, but Standing Order 32. We know that the government calls teachers lazy but it really is offensive.

Madam SPEAKER: The Chief Minister was not referring to an individual person.

Mr GILES: Madam Speaker, I ask for the last comment to be withdrawn because it was offensive.

Madam SPEAKER: What was the comment, Chief Minister?

Mr Styles: That we call teachers lazy.

Ms Fyles: That is what the Education minister did.

Mr Chandler: That is a lie.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nightcliff, withdraw. Member for Brennan, withdraw.

Ms FYLES: Madam Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr CHANDLER: Madam Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr GILES: Madam Speaker, I support this motion because I stand up for the Northern Territory. I stand up for Territorians who want to see stamp duty exemptions and greater levels of protection in regard to terrorism and who want us to get these young mongrels who keep reoffending and committing crime in the Northern Territory off our streets. If you have any mettle you will join me and pass this legislation and agree to bring it on today, all four bills. I challenge Labor to bring on that legislation right now. I bet you will not, because you cannot work hard enough to stand

up for the Northern Territory. It will be interesting to see what you do if I bring it back.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nhulunbuy?

Ms WALKER: I changed my mind.

Mr CONLAN (Greatorex): You changed your mind – the irony. Do not worry, I can see and feel how my absence yesterday played straight into the argument of the opposition, but how ridiculous. I have been a member of this House for a while, and I sat in opposition when weeks went by without a single piece of legislation coming in from the Northern Territory Labor government. It was before your time, member for Nhulunbuy, but I was part of an opposition of four people against the juggernaut of a 19-seat government. Talk about running roughshod and taking advantage of the position.

On a number of occasions we were finishing at 3 pm or 4 pm. After the 2008 election, when we had a decent number in opposition – it was 11 under the Terry Mills opposition in 2008 – and with the support of the Independents, we were assisting the government to advance its agenda well into the evening. The government moved very quickly to shut down parliament at 9 pm. You might remember that. At 9 pm all government business ceased.

The member for Nightcliff lectures us, saying we are lazy and have had three-and-a-half years to organise ourselves, that it has been a wasted opportunity and we still have eight or nine bills. Do you have any understanding of Parliamentary Counsel, member for Nightcliff? They have been working hard to draft this legislation and are under pressure. Do you understand what it takes to draft a bill and the amount of work and effort that goes into that? They have been working overtime. They have had to call in extra people to draft legislation because of the amount of legislation this government has introduced in three-and-a-half years. It is a flawed argument.

Remember that this legislation, as indicated by the Chief Minister, is of extreme benefit to Territorians. I do not understand the whingeing, carping and moaning from the opposition. This will benefit the Territory and you know it. You support the legislation but you will not facilitate its passage today nor would you yesterday.

Ms Fyles: You could do it this afternoon; you have the numbers.

Mr CONLAN: You will not do it, member for Nightcliff, over half a day. Sure, I did not vote yesterday, but there were 12 members on the other side of the Chamber who did vote, as

highlighted by the Chief Minister, and who could have supported this.

You are twisting things when you say we are lumping Territorians with an extra expense to recall parliament. That is exactly what this parliament is for. We will recall parliament, which may come at an additional cost, but parliament would have sat anyway and it would have continued to sit. I do not know if you know how long it takes to pass eight pieces of legislation, particularly legislation like this. It probably would have taken all night, well into the Friday. I do not know if there will be a difference in the cost, because parliament would still be sitting possibly for 12, 13, 14, maybe 24 more hours. The cost is negligible. That is what it costs to introduce and pass legislation in this parliament. That is what parliament is for. Thousands, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of Territorians would benefit from this legislation. It will be money well spent.

You could have saved it yesterday.

Ms Fyles: You could have!

Mr CONLAN: Yes, I know and I am the first to put my hand up.

Ms Walker: It is the government's fault.

Mr CONLAN: All care and no responsibility from the member for Nhulunbuy, 'I don't care; it is the government's fault.' You too have a responsibility, member for Nhulunbuy, one that you continually fail to live up to. 'It's not our fault; it's the government's fault. Look at the big bad government. Look at how much it is costing us and the taxpayer.' You have a responsibility to facilitate legislation, and a responsibility to Territorians.

You indicated that you would support this legislation, but you will not, and then you lecture us about recalling parliament. My God, the hypocrisy and the irony.

There were 12 members who voted yesterday, as the Chief Minister alluded to. You could have supported this legislation; by all accounts you are going to support it anyway.

Ms Fyles: Matt, you could have too.

Mr CONLAN: You are changing your argument through your interjections, member for Nightcliff. If you could structure a decent argument and a considered and thoughtful response, you would be good at this. You are not too bad on your feet, but you miss it by about an inch. You now have a completely different argument. Before it was about how pathetic recalling parliament is and that

the government is costing Territorians a huge amount of money. Your interjections are all about how I could have saved all of this, but that was not once mentioned in your speech. For goodness sake, member for Nightcliff, please let us have a bit of continuity. If you mount an argument then stick with it and focus on what you are trying to argue, otherwise it does not make sense.

Considering that you support this legislation, you should have supported it yesterday. This is all for one day! It is just semantic politicking. Why is one day so important to you, if you had 29 days instead of 30?

Ms Fyles: What is the point of this argument?

Mr CONLAN: I am very much on point and focused on what I am saying, which is that yesterday you had the opportunity to support this legislation and then parliament would not have been recalled.

Ms Fyles: You had the opportunity.

Mr CONLAN: I admit that I had the opportunity. I did not vote yesterday. I recognise the irony in that, but I will not sit here while you say we are a lazy government which has not introduced legislation, and could not organise ourselves in three-and-a-half years to bring legislation forward. We have demonstrated that the amount of work Parliamentary Counsel has been overseeing in the last six or seven months is the reason these bills were brought on yesterday.

The motion was to bring it forward in 29 days, as opposed to 30 days. I do not understand; this legislation is supported by both sides of parliament, largely, and will benefit Territorians ...

Ms Walker: How do you know? It was only dropped yesterday.

Mr CONLAN: So you do not agree?

Ms Fyles: I said I support the motion of recalling parliament.

Mr CONLAN: Is that right? You do not agree with the Planning Legislation Amendment Bill, the Police Administration Amendment Bill, the Firearms and Weapons Control Legislation Amendment Bill ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: relevance. To make it clear for the member for Greatorex, we have not looked at the legislation; we received it yesterday. That was the point of the conversation when the member was clearly not in parliament. We need time to look at that legislation. What we have said

that we will support today is the motion to recall parliament.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nightcliff. Member for Greatorex, this motion is about a mechanical aspect of this parliament; stick to the point please.

Mr CONLAN: Certainly, Madam Speaker. At the end of the day, the irony in the member for Nightcliff's argument is palpable. The ALP had plenty of sitting days where no legislation was presented. To suggest that we have not been busy with actively working for the benefits of Territorians is a complete falsehood.

This is a raft of legislation that could and should have been supported yesterday by both sides of parliament. It was only to bring it on within 29 days instead of 30 days. What is the problem with it? It was supported by this side, but not by you guys. It was voted down by you guys. You do not seem to get that. You did not support the motion yesterday. Hence we are coming back on Monday 27 June.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: relevance. If the member had supported the motion yesterday we would not be having this debate.

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Mr CONLAN: If you had supported it yesterday we would not be having this debate. That is what you fail to grasp, member for Nightcliff. But that is no surprise.

Ms Walker: It is the role of government to drive government business.

Mr CONLAN: All care and no responsibility once again from the member for Nhulunbuy. She is lecturing the government about the role of government. Do you think we do not know what the role of government is? Do you think we do not have any idea about the role of government after mopping up your mess for the last three-and-a-half years which was tracking to a \$5.5bn debt, leaving the Territory in a shambles and a destructive state? We are very clued up on the role of government.

Mr Chandler: They have not apologised.

Mr CONLAN: They have not apologised for what?

Mr Chandler: For the debt.

Mr CONLAN: For the debt, of course. There is a raft of things they have not apologised for, and

they still have not put up their hands and admitted to that.

It is the role of all members of parliament to ensure every Territorian has every opportunity for prosperity in their life. It is the role of government and every member of parliament to facilitate that. We are, once again, seeing from the opposition members all care and no responsibility.

I support this motion because these bills are very important to the people of the Northern Territory. I hope the opposition will also see they are important to the people of the Northern Territory and supports these bills. There are 25 members in this House. It only takes 13 members to support an important bill. I hope all members of the House support this motion to recall parliament and facilitate the passage of these bills.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Madam Speaker, it is important to acknowledge a hard-working local member who does not mind a graveyard shift, particularly the overtime on ministerial travel and the late night hours that are put in.

I also acknowledge a comment from the member for Greatorex regarding Parliamentary Counsel. That was an interesting comment. When I was elected as an MLA, I learnt from an old guard who said, 'Don't make promises, and buy lots of raffle tickets'. That was one of the first comments he made to me, and I have taken heed of that.

I promise the Parliamentary Counsel that if I am a minister again I will not put forward legislation that has been drafted on Facebook. I will not put forward legislation that I think of in the middle of the night, use social media to distribute across a number of constituents and then run my debate on how many likes I receive, particularly when it is legislation about the future of the youth of the Territory and their families.

This is populist politics. The Parliamentary Counsel of the Northern Territory does not react well to that style of politics. Somebody is missing the point, starting with the Chief Minister. We represent around 7000 people each. I do not take that lightly. I do not come into this House with imaginings then hit the Parliamentary Counsel to draft legislation, and grandstand to challenge people on the other side. 'We'll do it now because I say so and I know better than everybody else in my electorate, or in the Northern Territory.' That is ridiculous insanity and it is embarrassing to see it coming from the first minister of the Northern Territory. He puts out a challenge, 'We'll do it here because I know better than every other Territorian'. The word is 'consultation', and I stand on century-old tradition.

I acknowledge the member for Port Darwin, who is exiting the House. He has taught me a lot about the Westminster system.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Barkly, withdraw that comment about exiting.

Mr Elferink: Madam Speaker, no umbrage is taken. I think he is referring to my well-announced and publicised retirement.

Madam SPEAKER: My apologies. I thought he was talking about leaving the Chamber.

Mr McCARTHY: He is leaving the parliament. He has taught me lots about the Westminster system and the century-old traditions we represent in this House. It is all based on democracy. When a government introduces legislation to make laws for the people it governs, it is done properly. It is not done on Facebook, or on a whim or fancy. It is definitely not done by a cheap shot, threatening and trying to coerce members of this parliament in a popularity challenge. Breaking down the legislation before us, there are eight bills that are extremely important to Territorians, who need to be consulted.

I thought, while listening to the Chief Minister, I would really like an expert opinion beyond that of a jockey from the Blue Mountains who parachuted into the Northern Territory and has been here for 30 seconds.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker! That is offensive.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Barkly, I heard that and you should withdraw that comment.

Mr Elefrink: Chocky?

Mr McCARTHY: I said jockey.

Mr Elferink: What do you mean by 'jockey'? What were you implying?

Mr McCARTHY: That is a colloquial term, member for Port Darwin; you should know that. We will ask Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: I misheard; if it was jockey then that is okay.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you, member for Port Darwin; I am the one with the hearing impairment but I can direct you to an excellent audiologist.

I will return to my point on expert opinion, and I have been lectured from members on that side enough times about getting a briefing. I live 1000 km away, and I do my best to receive

briefings, on your advice, government members. The hypocrisy in this debate ...

Mr Styles: Videoconferencing?

Mr McCARTHY: The video conferencing system was taken out of my office in Barkly when the CLP formed government.

If you really are honest and accountable then you will admit that this is a bungled operation regarding eight extremely important bills, on what is effectively the second-last sitting day.

I did not agree when you changed the parliamentary program to have one week of sittings. I spend my life in a Toyota on the road. Two week sittings were good for me; they work for a person who lives in an isolated area and represents about 7000 constituents in the remotest parts of the country, let alone the Northern Territory.

Two-week blocks were perfect for me to really work at this part of the process and then return to the road to listen, learn and represent my constituents. You are in charge and changed it to a week but when you did that you embarked on three years of chaos with no stable Cabinet.

I was a Cabinet minister and I participated in a highly-competitive process. You had to have your Cabinet submissions in a line to be discussed. If they were thrown out then you went back repeatedly. The process has obviously broken down within the government. You have had 15, possibly 18, different Cabinets, and chaotic dysfunction for consecutive years. We have had reports of CLP Cabinet members who cannot be in the same room together, and throw Cabinet books at each other. Considering the size of Cabinet books, that is a serious issue.

You guys have to face up to the fact you have mismanaged this all the way. You are trying to break Westminster tradition and govern on populist politics, with a couple of issues that you want going into the election campaign. The ice advertisements showed how low you will stoop to try to defame members on the other side. The Labor opposition and Independents called it out in that debate and said fair is fair.

The very important eight bills were chaotically organised. One of those bills was developed on Facebook, measured on the amount of likes it received, floated to Parliamentary Counsel and then brought into the House yesterday. Come on! It is time to confess. This is the end of an electoral cycle, not the start of one. What goes around comes around. You are responsible for what has happened.

Madam Speaker, the opposition will support this motion because we want to conclude parliament in the best way possible.

Ms WALKER (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, as the member for Nightcliff said at the outset, we support this motion. We know the parliament will have to return for one day to debate and potentially pass eight bills that were introduced on Tuesday. Yesterday those bills were tabled and we had the second reading speeches.

It is extraordinary that so many pieces of legislation were dropped in the House in the lead-up to the final sitting day. The confusion was such that the wrong Planning Bill was distributed. This is what happens when there is a rush to move legislation through.

I have just received an updated version of the standing orders of this House. Every parliament in the Westminster system has a book of standing orders that dictate how the House will run. As Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, I daresay that the Leader of Government Business would be the first to uphold the standing orders and their importance, and say, 'These are the rules and this is how it needs to be done'. He would cry that even louder if the tables were turned and he was still the leader of business on opposition benches. If that was the situation, if the tables were turned and the CLP was in opposition, he would be crying foul of government trying to move legislation through on the final sitting day, the last opportunity before an election.

The CLP government cannot do numbers or plan a sittings schedule. I would be lost without my pocket-sized sitting schedule from the staff of the Legislative Assembly. You only have to count. You need to have 30 sitting days between each sitting of the parliament; that is what the standing orders say. This is not the first time; there was another case where there were not 30 sitting days. As a minority government, discipline should be tight to ensure this never happens. They cannot do the numbers and they do not have the discipline.

Also, it was Government Business before the House yesterday, not General Business or the GBD. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure it has discipline and is ready to drive Government Business through. It is the fault and problem of the government that one of its members chose to take an early lunch break, stroll to the mall, and was not here to vote. It also smacks of arrogance. They clearly did not think that anyone would challenge the urgency, or drive it to a vote; they just assumed the member for Greatorex was here. The lack of discipline from members opposite and giving a semblance of

importance to their role as government dealing with legislation is disgraceful.

Members on this side of the House, Labor and Independent members, including the member for Nelson, spoke in the debate about why urgency was not supported, and it was for good reason. If the government had been smart, under the direction of the Leader of Government Business, it might have calculated the risk of urgency not being supported and plucked out the bills it considered most important in regard to urgency. But they did not do it. They just bundled the whole package up into one group of eight pieces of legislation thinking that everything was hunky-dory and it would get through.

I am more than happy to sit very late at night and into the early hours of the morning to debate legislation. I have no issue with that. I remember doing that on the final sitting day of 2013, after budget estimates. That Thursday afternoon we returned to the Chamber and contributed to debate on the budget; the budget was passed and then the government had legislation we had to debate – the second reading debate on Alcohol Mandatory Treatment. That bill was debated for between five and six hours. I was here; the member for Fannie Bay was here; the member for Araluen was here as Health minister; and sitting in the chair during the committee stage amendments was the member for Daly. We are happy to do that. That was a bill we had a lot of questions about, and the debate went for five or six hours. If we were to return to parliament to debate eight pieces of legislation, seriously, how would we do that? How would the staff who work so hard and serve the members of the Legislative Assembly do that? How could any reasonable individual, on either side of this House, make informed decisions in contributing to debate on important laws that affect the lives of Territorians? It is a nonsense.

Talking of sitting late at night and debating legislation, I would have been more than happy to stay back until any hour last night or into the early hours of this morning to see important legislation – the member for Goyder's private member's bill to allow women in the Northern Territory to access medical termination of pregnancy. I would have been happy to sit until 3 am. A number of members were, including two government members; the members for Daly and Drysdale voted to give precedence to that debate.

Had we moved forward with the debate it probably would have been defeated, but we would have had the opportunity to have it out. The member for Goyder would have had the opportunity to have her bill and amendments tested and debated. That is what we do. But no, the government was not interested in doing that last night.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: relevance. She has progressed far from the topic and is wrong. That was a free vote. The government did not take a position.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Sit down. Member for Nhulunbuy, you have the call.

Ms WALKER: He cannot help himself; he is so bitter and twisted that his plan to pass eight pieces of legislation through this House on the final sitting day has fallen over.

While it was the member for Greatorex who missed a very important vote on the floor of the House yesterday, it was the Leader of Government Business, the professor of procedure, the expert in standing orders and all things parliamentary, who incorrectly miscalculated the strategy. It is an absolute nonsense.

I reckon that the member for Greatorex is booked on whatever Qantas flight leaves at 7 am on Friday 24 June and is feeling ticked off that he will now have to come back a few days later. That is the only bee in his bonnet.

We support the return to parliament to debate eight bills because this government is so disorganised and ill-disciplined in managing its Government Business. It will come at a cost to taxpayers, which is no fault of members of this side of the House; it is entirely the fault of the members on the opposite side of the House, the CLP government which cannot do numbers and has no discipline, but has the arrogance to think it can do what it wants in this House and somehow pass it through.

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the argument from the member for Nhulunbuy, saying she would be happy to set aside the standing orders of this House to debate one bill but not another. She will not allow it to occur for government bills but she is happy to allow it to happen for other members' bills in this House.

By title and definition, 'opposition' is short for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. On behalf of Her Majesty the opposition keeps tabs on the government, which is right and proper. It is how the system works and how the government is held to account, as is occurring here today.

Yesterday's so-called urgency motion was a motion of convenience. The difference between 30 and 29 days is 12 hours. So be it. The House made its decision and came to a point of saying,

'No, we do not want to do that on the Thursday night because', for whatever reason they said, 'it is not urgent'. I reckon the 12 hours would not have made a great difference, but they are the rules of this House and we cop it on the chin.

Opposition does not mean 'vandal' or that you have to be a vandal at every opportunity. I do not think the public is impressed with the antics that go on in this House; I have not always been innocent of it, but it is what it is ...

Mr Chandler: Keep it real; that is what we used to do in opposition.

Mr ELFERINK: That is right. I thank the opposition members for their support. I look forward to the important passage of these bills. We will have another opportunity for questions to be put to government and to deal with important legislation, on an extra sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL (Serial 170)

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Madam Speaker, much has been said, good and bad, about this budget. A decrease in any budget will always cause scrutiny. The Transport budget is down by \$5m from \$249m to \$244m. I think the member for Karama mentioned in a question yesterday that there are a lot of revoted works. Vanderlin Drive has over \$11m, which had already been allocated and announced.

There has been road funding in remote areas. As the shadow for the Transport portfolio, I will always support funding for roads, including remote roads. Road upgrades anywhere in the Northern Territory benefit all Territorians, not just the northern suburbs of Darwin, and Palmerston.

We could have gone a bit harder; we received a lousy \$3m of the \$100m federal grant for beef roads. We needed more than that. It is vital that we do anything we can to support our cattle industry. Member for Brennan, I requested my portfolios – Transport, Primary Industry and Mines and Energy – because they are all linked by the roads. We need better roads through continual upgrades. Funding for that is always welcome. The cattle industry lobbies the government and opposition hard for more funding and roads. We try our hardest, but to only have \$3m of the \$100m of funding for beef roads looks terrible. I hope the federal government provides more funding for the roads that help our cattle industry.

Funding for safety on our public buses has decreased, and I have been informed that there is a lack of support for transport safety officers. We need to do everything we can to support our transport safety officers by giving them the protection and support they need to do their jobs correctly. An audit of bus safety was conducted and I am sure there was a recommendation for four extra transit safety officers and two extra administration staff to support the transit officers. I hope that it is not because of the funding cuts to transport, the \$5m shortfall, that those six positions have been scrapped. Transit officers are placed in terrible situations; they need more power and protection.

It is time to review the legislation implemented by the 2008 Labor government. I have heard some officers express concern that sometimes there is only one crew member on at a time. If we have a situation where there is trouble on a bus in Jingili, or in the electorate of Casuarina, the transit officer crew might be in Palmerston when they receive the call so they tell them to call the police. The police then call the transit officers to say, 'Can you please attend?' While the incident is happening at a bus stop or on a bus the transit officers are unable to attend for a long period of time. We could improve the service by bringing on more transit officers, and that would benefit everybody. We need to encourage more people to use our public transport system.

It is deeply concerning to hear that the promise of four transit positions and two administration positions has been scrapped, probably due to the decrease in funding. The transit safety audit was completed during the member for Casuarina's by-election and there were 25 recommendations. I am not sure if all the recommendations have been implemented. Public transport is an area we want to focus on, encouraging more Territorians to use our buses and feel safe at bus stops.

There have been many incidents at the bus stop outside my former office at Rapid Creek Business Village. People are moved on for antisocial behaviour so they go to the bus stop to catch a bus. There have been incidents where people have been fighting as they board the bus. I have seen the great work the transit safety officers do to diffuse the situation, without the protection we should be giving them. I hope the government focuses on providing them with more protection, which would mean more safety for bus passengers. I am passionate because I am a regular bus user. I try to keep it real by catching the bus. I go for a ride, and watch and listen to what goes on. I see the transit officers around. It is a fantastic initiative that the Labor government brought in, but it needs to be strengthened. I hope this government can find some money to bring the extra officers in; they are needed.

I will touch on Central Australia. I welcome the \$8.5m investment over two years into the smart grid trial, Ti Tree Research Farm, Arid Zone and the Old Man Plains Research Station. I am very interested in the research into bush tucker; it is a fantastic initiative. I am very supportive of regional economic development opportunities for people throughout the Territory. A bush tucker industry will have great growth potential in the Northern Territory, and that needs to be encouraged.

We have a plan for Central Australia, which the Opposition Leader highlighted in his budget reply speech yesterday. I highlight the commitment we made to the Nurse-Family Partnership Program. It is delivering ripper results in Alice Springs and the surrounding towns, through the Central Australian Congress, which does a fantastic job of looking after people.

The Nurse-Family Partnership Program targets vulnerable individuals and families. The support program starts at birth, with support provided all the way through the baby's life. As the Opposition Leader, Michael Gunner, stated yesterday, this program is associated with reduced maternal smoking, improved home environments, less involvement with child protection, increased employment, reduced welfare services, less substance abuse and reduced criminality before the age of 15, so we can break the cycle. If juveniles are in detention, a juvenile detention program, or just playing up, we want to ensure they do not progress to the big house. We want to do anything we can to stop that cycle, and that is what this program does.

Not only does this program invest in children, it also invests in their families. We need a holistic approach to tackling crime in the Northern Territory. Why are some youths playing up and doing the wrong things? What is going on at home? We cannot just keep picking them up, throwing them into the juvenile justice system and then throwing them back out. We need a holistic approach to this, and that is what this program does.

As the Opposition Leader stated yesterday, we have allocated \$8m over four years to roll this program out, which includes expanding services in Central Australia. This is a fantastic commitment because this program changes lives; we all need to support it.

I will move on to something that is a passion of mine, Primary Industry and Fisheries. I finally asked the minister a question on fisheries today; he slapped me down a bit, but it was still good to ask a fisheries question and talk about what Labor is planning.

I welcome the slight increase in this portfolio. I am particularly interested in, and supportive of, the \$1.2m investment in research farms to explore other options for our important agriculture and agribusiness sectors. It is critical that we continue to invest in science and innovation if we want to develop the north. I will always support that.

I ask the minister what the full cost was for the mango vapour heat treatment facility. I know they've chucked in \$2m for seed funding, and I have heard of the benefits of the heat vapour facility ...

Mr Higgins: Yes.

Mr VOWLES: I will repeat the question for the minister. I ask the minister what the full cost for a heat vapour treatment facility would be. The government chucked in \$2m for seed funding, but I would like to know exactly how much it would cost to get that up and running, and what the benefits are for the Northern Territory.

I have researched the ability to sell directly into the Asian market, a focus of successive previous governments, and future governments, in the Northern Territory. I am very interested in that. The minister is a former mango farmer. I ripped off a couple of mangoes from his place, which is what I was trying to tell him during Question Time. He asked when I last went fishing and I said, 'The last time I went fishing I snuck up, stole a couple of mangoes and caught a barra that same afternoon'. You know what you are talking about when it comes to mangoes. I am sure it is an important commitment for your government and I would like to know more about that, especially how much extra it will cost.

In regard to fisheries, the good old chestnut of the Dundee boat ramp has bobbed its head up again. All the fishermen are becoming frustrated about when that will be done. I am pretty sure it was supposed to be built last year, or maybe one-and-a-half years ago. The anglers are still waiting for it; I think it has been in several budgets now. As I stated in my question today, Labor has committed over \$50m to recreational fishing infrastructure, including upgrading Channel Island boat ramp; upgrading Middle Arm boat ramp and car park; implementing a long-term program building artificial reefs and installing fish attraction devices, which I know a lot about now; increasing land-based fishing platforms in residential areas; providing facilities for disabled anglers and children; and providing extensive CCTV for the Dinah Beach boat ramp so while we are fishing we know our cars and trailers will be safe, and will not be ripped off, broken into or have their tyres stolen. They are fantastic announcements that are fully supported by AFANT and other fishers who have come to my office and told me, 'Well done on fishing'. It is a massive announcement,

\$50m over four years, but it is needed as it is an important industry.

Mines and Energy is an interesting space for both governments. We will debate the Petroleum Amendment Bill later, but we have already come-out to the media – not pre-empting debate – saying we will oppose that amendment. It is an interesting space for both sides; there is a real difference between us. Territorians can decide at the election in 93 days, on 27 August 2016. There is a clear divide between the current government's stance and the Territory Labor Party's opposition policy.

I note the massive increase in rehabilitation costs, securities, from \$750m to \$1.3bn. I support the increase in the legacy mine focus from this government. Everyone knows where we sit with our policy on fracking, and that is the clear difference between our party and this government.

Mr Elferink: No, we do not. How long is the moratorium?

Mr VOWLES: I thought you might retire gracefully and quietly, member for Port Darwin. Sit down and strap yourself in because you will find out what our stance and direction is on fracking.

Mr Elferink: What is it?

Mr VOWLES: Sit there and listen; you will find out sooner or later. If you have not heard already, we have a moratorium on fracking.

Mr Elferink: For how long? How long will you put Territory jobs at risk?

Mr VOWLES: You can bait the big fish but he is not biting today, John.

I move to an important and personal area for me, Indigenous Affairs. Unfortunately, and sadly, this government is failing in this area. It promised so much, and Indigenous people have been let down from Darwin to Docker River. Personally, it has been disappointing to see this government's approach to Aboriginal affairs. A \$100m remote housing development authority review was announced. Countrymen all over the Territory are sick of talking. There is too much talk – another \$1m and another case of more talk and no action.

It is disappointing to see that no extra NT government funds have been put into building remote housing; it is all Commonwealth funding. We know this government has failed Indigenous people on remote housing; from the minister down, it is not working. Some remote Indigenous people are still living 20 people to a house, and sometimes more. This is a reality in some of our remote areas, and all the social and health issues

that come with that. Millions of dollars are being spent around them, in their communities, but in most cases their lives have not changed. Under NPARIH, only one new house has been built in a remote community in one year. It is a disgrace. Remote housing is failing remote Aboriginal people. It is an extraordinary failure that affects people's lives every day.

Territory Labor has a plan to invest \$1.1bn into remote housing programs to lift the amount of housing, living spaces and rooms available to Territorians in remote communities. We want to give Aboriginal people the housing they want and break the cycle. Our team is proud to have come up with a program, or a policy, that will support this if we are elected on 27 August this year.

Sadly, the Aboriginal affairs portfolio was not important enough to your government at the start of its term, now it is, and you have bungled the NT Aboriginal affairs strategy as well.

There are some good people working in this space for you, but something is going wrong. You must be sitting on a pile of policies and programs that have gone up to the fifth floor and you are ignoring.

While I welcome and support any initiatives that would increase Aboriginal employment, there has been no bigger bungling than your announcement that 77% of government contracts in the bush must go to Aboriginal companies. The Chief Minister had a public slanging match with his own candidate, who is a local contractor, and that continues.

I think they have announced a review of the policy; this is the government that has been screaming at us, 'All you will do is a review of a review'. Yet your policy has been so bad that you are reviewing it yourself, and you have been in government nearly four years.

We are very proud of our election commitments. We have a plan for Territorians that does not include selling public assets like TIO and the port. We have a plan for Territorians and we will bring them along for the journey. Labor is ready to govern.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, in the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2016-17 the government made the important observation that in August this year Territorians will have a very important decision to make which will impact on the future of the Territory. It is a clear choice about what they want to see for the future of the Northern Territory. I have been listening very intently to the contributions of all members to this debate. I am interested in a range of things; there is so much to cover.

I was really pleased and proud to be on this side of the Chamber and hear the Opposition Leader outline some of Territory Labor's plans should we be fortunate enough to be the government in August 2016. It feels good to be part of a team that has such positive plans for the future of the Northern Territory. We have some fantastic candidates who are, as we all are, talking about those plans with our constituents.

We have plans to put children at the centre of government decision-making, getting to the root of what we need to do to give our kids the best chance in life. We have been talking about that for quite some time. We have held town hall meetings, talked to experts and had some fantastic responses, and that has been warmly received in the community.

We will create jobs and, importantly, return trust to government. A lot has happened in the last two days that brings home how important it will be to return trust to government. Territorians have seen a lot of change, chaos and uncertainty under the CLP government. The 15 – or whatever we are up to – reshuffles, eight Deputy Chief Ministers and however many Business ministers we have had is only the beginning of what we have seen just in the last two years. Returning trust to government is integral for the next government.

I am pleased to stand behind a leader who yesterday outlined our support for the evidence-based Nurse-Family Partnership Program, which has been proven to work in Alice Springs. It has improved home environments, reduced reliance on welfare services, reduced criminality for young people and is needed support for families.

Territory Labor truly values education, which drew me to join the Labor Party in the first place. My parents are teachers who have fought for a long time for good resourcing in education in the Northern Territory. It is good to be with like-minded people who want to see our local schools properly resourced to provide the best opportunities in life for our children. That includes proper resourcing through teachers and support staff, as well as appropriate infrastructure.

The cuts we have seen to education under the CLP government have been disheartening; 164 teachers, that is huge. To think that does not have an impact is wrong; it has impacted on schools in my electorate. We saw the quick implementation of a huge change, global school budgets. I know from being on school councils in my electorate that has put enormous strain and stress on schools. Principals and other staff members suddenly had to do a lot more administration and finance to grasp that huge change.

Territory Labor has talked about a \$124m investment into schools over four years, which will allow schools to bring back the teachers that were lost under the CLP government. There will be \$300 000 for each school for the projects they want to undertake, which will have a positive impact for the schools in Casuarina. From the conversations I have had with my local schools, I can already think of projects that could support. It will also support small businesses right across the Northern Territory, many of which still struggle to get a look in on local projects.

I acknowledge that some of my local schools have come out really well in terms of the infrastructure spend. Nakara Primary School is a good example because \$3.2m is going to its infrastructure projects, including a new multifunctional building. That will help support STEM projects and other things the school wants to run. That is fantastic and I am really pleased for them and other local schools around the Northern Territory.

I am concerned about time frames. The stimulus package was late in the piece for many local businesses. How much time has been given to the schools, and potentially others that have had infrastructure announcements, to submit building plans? We are talking about infrastructure that has to last for a long time and will need to adapt to evolving educational techniques and the rapidly-changing world of technology.

I am very pleased that Territory Labor's support for first home buyers has been well articulated throughout this debate. In my electorate that support for first home buyers will have a really positive impact. In the last few weeks I have spoken to constituents who would have really liked to have been able to access support to buy their first home, which was an existing property. In Casuarina, we have Lyons, where there are some new homes, but a lot of the suburbs in my electorate have existing properties. If people want to live close to the hospital because they work there or go there often, or to CDU or other places, that support is important to them.

Our commitment to bring back the Banned Drinker Register will go a long way in giving police back the tools they need to combat alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and improve community safety. That is an issue that, along with my colleagues in the northern suburbs, I have put on the record on a number of occasions. Until recently it has largely been dismissed by the CLP, which told us there is nothing to see. It hit fever pitch the last time we were in parliament, with Facebook posts going wild about antisocial behaviour in the CBD. All of a sudden we heard stories from across Darwin, Palmerston and the CBD about antisocial behaviour; it is very important.

We have to back our own, and we have a clear vision for nurturing innovation in the Northern Territory; I am proud to have been part of that work. It is about realising the true potential and aspirations of Territorians, and it will have an important impact on the Territory as a whole. Things like building a formal mentoring and network component into existing and new business grant programs – we know there are people who will be looking at the grants programs to start new business initiatives and they need that mentoring and support. It is about making sure they have the best opportunity for success. Ensuring government is supportive of events that allow innovators to test ideas, come together to hack problems and have the opportunity to pitch those ideas, so they can be developed, is important to nurturing an innovation ecosystem. Innovation hubs are important to fostering an innovation ecosystem in the Territory, and I hoped we would see that in this budget. Across the Territory there are some very clever people looking at doing this kind of work, if they are not already, and it is time for the government to show leadership and support for that type of work in the Northern Territory.

The CLP government, over the last four years, has made major decisions without consulting Territorians, and that continues to resonate through our community. Putting power tariffs up by 30% was felt by each and every Territorian and announcing, again, that you have taken 5% away does not fool anybody. The sale of TIO still resonates through the Territory. It united Territorians everywhere who were trying to have their voices heard, but unfortunately it was in vain. We continue to hear about the impacts of that. The very long-term lease of the port has angered everyday Territorians because they are wondering what they need to nail down next.

The member for Blain, in the Blain by-election, said 'no deal' on the sale of Power and Water. It was really scary yesterday when the Treasurer could not rule out the sale of Power and Water, mostly on the grounds that he has no financial reports he can give to parliament. The community wants certainty and I do not think the CLP can give Territorians certainty that it will not sell more public assets. It cannot be trusted. The CLP has not been up front with Territorians about those deals, or interested in their opinions. That is something we will all be thinking about going into the election in August.

It is really positive that we have now signed the bilateral agreement on NDIS, and I thank the minister's office for briefing me on the roll-out of the NDIS over the next 18 months. I was really pleased to see the Community 360 Project that will be undertaken at Carpentaria Disability Services. Money put into disability services is

money well spent and we should be looking at how we support that sector more. It will be an interesting time ahead as NDIS rolls out. A full roll-out is on in Barkly this year, and from January 2017 it will be available in East Arnhem and supported accommodation in Darwin, then spreading out from there; it will be a big job.

I did ask, and will ask again, about the resources for disability services. Workforce development will be really important and will give people meaningful jobs. We have an opportunity to develop, and continue to grow, a local disability services workforce. Aged care and mental health nursing are also areas where we will need to grow our local workforce. It presents a lot of opportunities that I would like to know if the government is exploring more, and that I hope to explore if we are lucky enough to be in government.

I have asked the government about the bus service to Namarluk School, which is in Alawa, in my electorate. There are parents who used to have a door-to-door pick up and drop off service to Namarluk who are now on the waiting list or have different arrangements for the bus service. I have asked the government to clarify what options have been considered for the continuation of this service for families. Hopefully in the estimates process we will hear more about whether that is included in the budget.

The department is again predicting an increase in child protection notifications – about 20% extra – to 21 000 notifications, which is huge. However, once again there is a reduction in child protection services, which is focused on such notifications and investigations. It is a significant decrease.

There is a \$1.3m allocation for the long-term care team. I look forward to the opportunity to ask questions and seek more information about that initiative in estimates.

One category of long-term care, permanent care orders, was one of the first pieces of legislation I participated in as the shadow for Children and Families. It was legislation that stakeholders said they had not really been consulted on, but there was a big push to get it through parliament. There are no permanent care orders in place in the Northern Territory and none have commenced. It will be interesting to explore that area and see why that is the case.

There has been a yearly increase in the amount of children in out-of-home care; it is a very complex area that we need to get a hold on. Last year there was an \$11m blowout in out-of-home care in the budget. The government is keeping up with the demand on out-of-home care services, but we need to look at whether that is getting the results

we need for these kids. The minister has said time and time again this is not about throwing money at the system. We need to look at the resources going into it and the results it is getting for some of our most vulnerable children.

Another part of the child protection budget allocation is the recruitment of foster carers. There were 92 places of care needed over a seven-month period last year and there were 94 foster carers who lapsed in that time. What is being done to retain foster carers? How do we make resources more effective to pull in more foster carers? Applicants are being screened more quickly to become foster carers for the vulnerable children who need a stable, secure carer. How we are retaining those carers within the system?

The Leader of the Opposition again outlined Territory Labor's commitment to remote housing, a \$1.1bn commitment over 10 years to address the crisis we all know exists, through a range of initiatives. It includes bringing new houses online that are flexible enough to include what we know are very complex needs in disability, aged care and mental health supported accommodation. Local people should be in control of when, where and how, and they should see the flow on of employment opportunities through repairs and maintenance and other associated works.

The Leader of the Opposition also talked about bringing the Room to Breathe initiative – \$20m a year – into the \$100m stimulus. This is about creating new, expanded living spaces for people who need them. We know that overcrowding is a huge issue across the Northern Territory and that is why we have put \$1.1bn of Territory money into this, because we believe this should be a focus for any government going forward and we need to demonstrate how serious we are about it.

The two announcements from the CLP so far have been lacklustre. The announcement that the government will spend the last two years of NPARIH money on remote housing is exactly what should be happening, except I do not think the performance to date under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing under the CLP has been confidence inspiring. The CLP has talked about a one-year trial of a new layer of bureaucracy costing \$1m, but there is little detail on what commitment exists beyond that first year? We have a two-year \$350m Commonwealth commitment to remote housing, a one-year \$1m commitment to remote housing and we have not seen the Northern Territory housing strategy. The government has been in for nearly four years now, we are coming up to less than three months before the election and this is when the CLP government wants to announce its housing strategy?

I am confused. I read the speech the Minister for Housing delivered last night about housing. We have asked specific questions about the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing based on an answer provided by the Minister for Housing. I have that answer in front of me. I have tabled it before and talked about it before; it is the answer to Written Question 430. I asked about the number of houses that have been added, replaced or refurbished under NPARIH and the Stronger Futures funding. It is clear that there are replacement houses, and replacement houses are very important, but it is also very clear that there has only been one additional house since July 2014, and that information was from the minister herself.

Estimates will be an interesting process because I will bring all these statistics together and ask the minister which version of what she is telling us is the right one. We are relying on the information from answers to written questions and speeches delivered in parliament, but they are not matching up. We asked specifically about remote housing, but the speech from last night was about housing across the Northern Territory, and those statistics are not the same. When we ask about remote housing it would be appreciated if we could get the statistics on remote housing.

The announcements the CLP government made about housing, particularly in a remote context, were made less than a fortnight out from issuing the EOI for the town camps review. It has come at a time when the Public Accounts Committee has issued quite a damning report on repairs and maintenance of housing on town camps. The process is backwards. The biggest Territory remote housing reform ever is happening before any communication regarding the results of the NT housing strategy and before the government has undertaken the reviews it is doing over the next six months, which will presumably cost quite a bit of money.

I acknowledge that the Minister for Mental Health Services has been very genuine in working towards better services in the Northern Territory, and I commend him for that. I visited the youth inpatient unit a few days after it was opened. I missed the opening and I would like to have been there. Professor Patrick McGorry was there, who I have followed over many years and have had the privilege of speaking to on many occasions about youth mental health. The youth inpatient unit is a very positive step in mental health services in the Northern Territory.

I thoroughly welcome the CLP government's mental health services strategy and the suicide prevention plan. Today I mentioned the decrease for mental health services in the budget. It was surprising because there has been a big focus,

locally and nationally, on mental health and suicide prevention.

There is supposed to be an annual action plan under the Mental Health Service Strategic Plan; it is referenced on page 22. That is not a public document, so how can the community see how the government is performing against its action plan if we do not know what the actions are? I hope that will be out soon. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but at the time of my last briefing the advisory group for the suicide prevention plan still did not have NGO sector members or those with lived experience on it. This is important and I will continue to fight for that to be a priority in mental health and suicide prevention strategies. Lived experience input from consumers and carers is exceptionally important to ensuring those services can be targeted and effective in our community. I have spoken about it before. I attended the National Suicide Prevention Conference and the theme was the importance of consumer participation, and we need to make that a priority.

There has been a lot of talk about young people over the last few weeks and my mind has gone into overdrive, mostly because I have been involved in many youth initiatives across the Territory. I have known the former Minister for Young Territorians, the member for Sanderson, for many years in that capacity. We have a relatively new Minister for Young Territorians, who in the last few weeks has been talking about young people mostly in the context of crime. The Minister for Young Territorians went on radio to say we should stop thinking about the kids for a minute when it comes to youth justice. I am nervous that we do not have anyone in the CLP government who is thinking about young people. That is scary when it comes to youth justice and youth in general.

The only other mention of young people has been in the context of – apart from education, which is important – sports, and how important sport is because it is great for them to see their heroes play, which impacts on all aspects of their lives. Remember, not all young people are sports people. There are young people in business, the arts and a range of other areas. There is a very big need for positive engagement strategies and services, which we all know suffered greatly when the CLP government first came into office. This is an area where the CLP government is a little exposed.

The Youth Participation Framework scorecard was supposed to come out last year, and be in review in 2016. I understand that there are reasons it has not; the original document was held up and not released for some time. This document is supposed to provide the government

with an idea of where it should be targeting initiatives for young people. We are talking about the future of young people and the community, but we do not have that document, which would show how the government is performing against its own benchmarks.

This is something I helped work on in 2011, and it was not released until after I came into parliament. It is really important to give us the benchmarks and let us know how you are going. At the moment all I am seeing in this budget is a lot of money going to youth detention and locking up young people, and not much else. I know it talks about continuing the youth grants, which are exceptionally important to running local activities and initiatives; it is a great program.

The Round Table of Young Territorians is a fantastic program, but I do not believe the government has consulted with young people on a broad basis since 2011, when the initial consultation happened. At the moment you are talking about a lot of really important issues and would benefit from talking to young people as part of your evidence base.

I think youth justice came up through the current youth round table members, but I do not know whether any of the discussions had in parliament this time around were explored with the youth sector. I suspect not. There is the Palmerston and Rural Youth Services Network and the Darwin Working With Youth Network, as well as service providers in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and all the remote areas across the Northern Territory. I think they would be really interested in providing input to the government. There are some amazing people who are working to better the lives of young people everywhere and would relish the opportunity to speak to the government about how we can change our communities.

I submitted a question regarding the \$4.2m of youth services funding announced in February last year. Is the money allocated to youth services in the Barkly currently operational? If it is, what services has it been invested in? These are important questions.

Only the CLP government members see the sense in ripping money out of programs and services for young people, including those in youth detention, at the same time as increasing the budget to put more young people into these facilities. It is poorly considered and demonstrates how the CLP operates. There is no organisation, plan, consultation or sense to it. All the evidence points towards this being an ineffective way of dealing with youth crime. It seems like a good election idea to sell to people in the community, but most people see through it.

Ms MANISON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I move an extension of time for the member to finish her remarks, pursuant to Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.

Ms MOSS: The Minister for Senior Territorians and for Multicultural Affairs, the member for Sanderson, talked about the Seniors Participation Framework and the Multicultural Participation Framework. I went to consultations for both of those. I have looked at them, and I have talked to groups like National Seniors about some of our plans, which I look forward to putting forward in more detail.

I stress that it is great to see the government doing that. It has taken quite some time to get the Seniors Participation Framework and the Multicultural Participation Framework up. I am looking forward to seeing how feedback was incorporated into those documents because there was a lot of it, particularly about employment, accommodation and housing, and the availability of support services for seniors and newly-arrived people in the community.

I do not want to see the frameworks released to sit on a shelf and not be reported on for years, because that is not the intention. Public servants who are very good at what they do worked exceptionally hard on putting them together. Social policy is not an easy area to work in. We have all talked about youth justice over and over again in the last two days. It is a really complex area and there are some amazing people doing incredible work on it. Please do not put forward frameworks that will not do anything, that will not influence government, or where resources will be targeted. That would be a let-down for everyone.

I hope we see something more about the youth participation framework scorecard and what will come next. I also hope a commitment is made to not take as long to produce the other frameworks we have allocated resources to.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I admit I awaited the arrival of the Budget 2016-17 with a degree of trepidation. Previously I was a part of the decision-making process during budget Cabinet deliberations and knew ahead of time what each budget heralded. This year is a departure from that as I am on the back bench.

I had to wait to see whether this was a disciplined, sensible and responsible budget. I waited with anticipation to see where the focus of this budget lay and if it addressed some of the issues with the state of the economy and local business, issues that had been raised with me and passed to my

colleagues, the ministers in the Country Liberals parliamentary wing. I waited with anticipation to see how our overall fiscal position was tracking and what the forward estimates for debt, deficit and spending looked like. I also waited with great anticipation to see what direct benefits this budget held for Katherine. I was pleasantly surprised on all counts.

This budget is fiscally responsible. It is not a cash splash; it is a responsible budget. It recognises the current state of the Territory's economy and the forecast in out years. It provides stimulus to sectors that are flagging and a responsible roadmap to keep the Territory ticking along as a solidly-performing jurisdiction. It is a balanced budget in that it largely targets the right areas to address short- and long-term fluctuations in the economic cycle.

The budget proposes a return to surplus in 2019-20. Admittedly, we all would have loved to have seen a return to surplus sooner than that; however, I see that there are two major factors at play. Firstly, because of our huge reliance on the Commonwealth, particularly in the area of GST, and a significant reduction in the GST revenue, a return to surplus sooner than 2019-20 would have been one tough ask. It could have been done, but at what cost? It would have required major spending cuts to all areas. Spending is critical to hold and improve the services government provides in most areas; two examples are health and education. It is critical that we continue to support areas like health and education, law and order, and other initiatives. It is critical that we continue to support a strong public sector that supports economy-building government sectors.

Major cuts in spending would have impacted heavily on the economy as well, which brings me to my second point. Some areas of the economy are struggling. Manufacturing in general in the NT is down and another example is that – and I know this to be true in Katherine – the building trade has slowed. Recognising that, this budget proposes sensible strategies to stimulate the struggling sectors of the economy, remembering that most of those struggling are small to medium enterprises employing real people – mums, dads, your brother or sister, or your children. Small to medium business enterprises hold the Northern Territory's economy together, with more than 95% of our businesses being SMEs. I am very comfortable with the overall strategy of the government to delay a return to surplus for a couple of years.

Let me expand a little on some of the budget initiatives that have direct relevance to my electorate of Katherine. Over the past 18 months or so, local real estate agents have been in discussion with me about the impacts that stamp duty concessions for first home buyers of new

homes were having on local markets. Indications were that fewer first home buyers could afford a new home than an existing property, precluding many from purchasing new. This, along with a number of other economic factors affecting Katherine, has had a negative impact on the overall property market. I raised this issue with my parliamentary colleagues, seemingly with a degree of success. It is great that this budget addresses this issue with the maximum \$10 000 stamp duty concession now applied to first home buyers purchasing an existing property.

I hear the calls of REINT to completely scrap stamp duty; however, this initiative will have an impact on own source revenue. It is a step in the right direction; I credit the Treasurer and Cabinet for doing the right thing for first home buyers and the Katherine real estate industry.

There is no doubt the economy is generally slow; this is true of the Australian economy and the NT and local economies, including Katherine. It is the result of a number of factors, such as a slowdown in the mining sector. In Katherine a number of iron ore mines closed or went into care and maintenance. That had a real impact on the economy through the loss of jobs and business income. When those iron ore mines closed down, a number of people in Katherine were jobless, although not for long, and a number of businesses felt the impact on their sales and revenue figures. In addition, the cucumber green mottle mosaic virus had a devastating impact on our local melon growers, which also impacted on the local economy. TBLs, or POSIs, as they are now known, police on bottle shops, have also had an impact on the local economy with a change in our demographic and spending trends.

A small number of businesses have complained to me about the slower economy. A few others are feeling the effect but accept this as either part of the normal economic cycle or the new paradigm. I have noticed a slowing in the building trade, with a number of builders departing town, and some tradies reporting less work. Budget 2016-17 goes a long way to redress that situation for Katherine tradies and those across the Territory.

I unequivocally support the \$2000 maximum voucher for home renovations and maintenance announced in this budget; it is a fantastic initiative. Notionally, this initiative will inject many millions of dollars into the local Katherine economy. I have already received feedback from some local tradespeople and many homeowners who applaud this initiative. Painting kitchens and bathrooms are projects that people have already talked about.

The start date of this initiative was set down for 1 July, but a short time ago the Minister for

Business issued a media release to say that, due to overwhelming interest from homeowner-occupiers, and overwhelming support from tradespeople and industry groups across the Northern Territory, this government has decided to bring forward the start date of the initiative. As of Sunday 5 June, homeowner-occupiers will be able to start accessing the \$2000 vouchers to complete home renovations and maintenance around their properties. That is fantastic, and is a real testament to a brilliant initiative of this government. As with first homeowner stamp duty, I raised this issue with my parliamentary colleagues and I am delighted to report success to my local constituents. I always support local businesses to be as successful and prosperous as possible.

This year's budget contains a near record spend on infrastructure. Katherine looks set to benefit from this spending, particularly for regional roads, which are the vital arteries of our region. These roads service the agriculture, cattle, tourism and mining sectors, and will keep Katherine's heart beating strong. The Victoria Highway and Roper and Lajamanu Roads, along with the beef roads like the Buntine, are set to receive direct funding. There is already a significant amount of work under way, prioritised by this government for our regional roads in the Katherine region. There is a robust minor works and maintenance program from which Katherine roads are also set to benefit.

Tourism is also the lifeblood of the local Katherine economy. There are a number of initiatives in the tourism budget that will see benefits flow to our town, such as the continuation of an additional \$8m for another year of domestic and international marketing activity, bringing the total Tourism NT funding to market the Territory as a holiday destination to \$29m.

There is \$20m to build world-class adventure experiences in Territory parks, such as the 300 m glass skywalk and pedestrian bridge in Nitmiluk National Park, a fantastic initiative. There is \$5m as part of the Territory government's Boosting our Economy package to supplement the Tourism Industry Development Fund. A number of tourism businesses in Katherine have already received the current year's funding.

There is also \$2m to regional tourism organisations and visitor information centres, and \$1.33m over two years to develop more mountain bike trails across the Territory and help grow this niche tourism market. It is fantastic that Katherine has already been a beneficiary of this type of funding; one organisation has received a couple of grants to open up mountain bike trails and other infrastructure in Katherine. All these announcements will bring benefits to the Katherine tourism economy.

The *pièce de résistance* of the tourism budget is the proposed glass skywalk at Nitmiluk Gorge. All I can say is, wow! I have been in discussion with the Chief Minister about this project for close to a year and I am delighted to see this as a major announcement for tourism in Katherine. It has many benefits – too many to count – and I hope that local businesses will be able to participate in the project. The skywalk will bring more visitors to the gorge and to Katherine. It will be unique and will create a Northern Territory version of the Grand Canyon, which also features a glass-bottomed skywalk adventure. I am grateful, on behalf of all the people of Katherine, for this announcement, which will provide a great boon for the town in years to come. Thank you, Chief Minister.

Another initiative of the budget that I welcome with open arms is the \$2m investment in mango production, putting up seed capital for a vapour heat treatment, or VHT, plant for the NT mango industry. The NT produces more than half of Australia's mango products; a lesser known fact is that Katherine often produces more than half of the NT's mangoes. A VHT plant will be a great boon to the NT mango export industry, removing the need for mangoes to be shipped interstate for fruit fly treatment before they are exported. It is a great move and the benefits of this project for local growers are obvious. I can assure you that I will be involved in negotiations to identify the best location for such a plant, Katherine being an obvious frontrunner.

On matters relating to the primary sector, it is good to see that research farms, including the Katherine Research Station, are receiving substantial government support. Our research farms are critical links in the chain of a strong, smart and robust agricultural industry; their strong record of achievement over decades is undeniable. I thank the hard-working staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, and the Department of Land Resource Management, whose work underpins the work in the agricultural sector. I thank them for their endeavours.

There are many other parts of the budget from which Katherine will draw a benefit, and although there are a few other individual projects I would have liked to have seen funded, it is a great budget for my town. It provides a good mix of project funding, along with the economic stimulus to keep our small businesses buoyed.

Treasurer, I commend you on your 2016 budget. Despite many strong headwinds, you and the government have remained resolute and on track. That is more than I can say for the offerings from the Leader of the Opposition as far as his budget reply speech goes. I mentioned in Question Time

this morning that the Leader of the Opposition has plagiarised a number of this government's policies, and in his budget reply yesterday he remained true to form. Clearly the opposition is bereft of new ideas and, as I said this morning, the Leader of the Opposition also has no idea.

What we will end up with from the opposition over the months leading up to the election is a great big promise of cash splashes everywhere. The Labor opposition – and Labor has this in its DNA – will focus on buying votes. It will try to outdo and outstrip all the sensible economic spending measures the Country Liberal government has identified and announced in the budget, and for what end result? We will end up with an overspent budget once again. We already know that Labor is a poor economic manager. If you talk to anybody across the country, take a poll anywhere about Territory Labor or federal Labor, they will all tell you that Labor is a poor economic manager and the conservatives are far better economic managers.

Our budget sets the Northern Territory up for a prosperous future without stretching the credit card. We can do this comfortably now that we have been disciplined over the last three-and-a-half years in our approach to budgeting for the Northern Territory. We have reduced Labor's projected debt from \$5.5bn to \$1.9bn. That is a huge reduction in debt; that is \$3.6bn less than Labor projected when we came into government. The interest figure on that was \$130m a year. Instead of spending \$130m a year to repay Labor's debt we are now able to put that into projects and initiatives to build and hold this strong economy.

That is the benefit of having a fiscally responsible government that is prepared to make some hard decisions, and not for short-term gain or political populism, which we have been accused of. I heard the member for Barkly a little while ago accuse us of political populism. Everything I hear from the opposition is just an opportunity to grab a vote by trying to make a popular announcement. Regarding the moratorium on gas, the opposition knows how bad shutting down the gas industry would be for the Territory, but that is not what it is about. The opposition is not about what it knows; it is about trying to grab votes by seizing upon contentious issues to make itself popular. The Northern Territory does not need or deserve that type of government. It deserves a responsible, fiscally sensible and disciplined government to ensure our economy is tracking well. That is what they will have if the Country Liberals are returned in the August election this year.

It is a clear choice between a government that has proven itself to be responsible with the Territory's finances, has been disciplined and tough and is

now in a position where it can enjoy some of the fruits of its tough decisions, versus a potential government that will do what it always does so well and drive us back into a quagmire of debt. Our children and grandchildren will be repaying that debt in years to come if the Labor Party has its way.

It is a good budget and I am pleased to see it roll out. I commend the Treasurer and the government for what they have done with the Territory's finances and the economy, and I commend this budget to the House.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee I am looking forward to the estimates process, where we will be able to further scrutinise the details of this bill.

It has been interesting listening to speakers from both sides. Looking at this budget we have to remember the past three-and-a-half years and the chaos and dysfunction we have had. Comments from the government about lowering the cost of living were interesting. On behalf of the community I remind the government that it drove up the cost of living significantly with increases to Power and Water tariffs. Territorians still feel the effects every time they open the dreaded brown envelope. The government claims to have reduced tariffs by 5%, but we remember that it drove significant increases at the start of its term.

More Territorians are leaving; as someone who has lived here most of my life, I am tired of saying goodbye to people. You make great friends and then they move on; already one of my young sons has had his best mate leave town. We want people to stay here, but in the last few years more and more people have left.

The Chief Minister said, in his own words, that he is tricky and plays games, which is reflected in the funding cuts to health and education under his watch, particularly from the federal government. People want a stable government that gets on with the job and listens to them.

Regarding my electorate of Nightcliff, I contacted the Chief Minister via written letter earlier this year; it was either before or during the budget process. I imagine budget Cabinet was meeting. I requested that he commit to the CLP's election commitment of making the Nightcliff police station a 24/7 police station. We have seen some movement in the number of police based there. I am not sure of the exact term for the group, but it is a team to tackle antisocial behaviour. The community welcomes that additional police presence, but we would like to see that shopfront open so people have a direct point of contact.

There has been feedback that the police are very active and approachable, but we would like to see the CLP open the Nightcliff police station 24/7 as promised. I again call on the Chief Minister to honour that commitment in the lead-up to the election; he shut it on 1 July 2014.

Prior to this budget, when I imagine his Cabinet was deliberating, I raised the issue of CCTV cameras with the Chief Minister. Some areas of the Territory are receiving CCTVs or an increase in CCTV. It is something our community feels would be helpful within the electorate in certain parts of Nightcliff and Rapid Creek. It would help police and act as a deterrent. The community has asked me about this many times.

I raised those two points with the Chief Minister prior to this budget. We may be one step forward with police based in Nightcliff, but we would like CCTV cameras and the police station opened. Parap has 11 CCTV cameras in the village area; Nightcliff only has one, which is the mobile police CCTV camera that has been based there, almost permanently, for nearly the last year I think.

The other local electorate point I will raise relates to schools. Our schools have seen huge cuts over the last three years, with a reduction in teachers and support staff, and I know schools have grappled with budgeting issues. I am very proud to be a part of Territory Labor, a team that has committed to replacing funding for those teachers.

I had a conversation with the Minister for Education about when schools will find out what the budget means. It is three days since the budget was handed down and we have seen figures relating to infrastructure. Schools are crying out for those infrastructure upgrades and desperately need the funds to get things going.

Another point clarified today was in regard to sports infrastructure. I carry Sport and Recreation as a shadow portfolio, and Nightcliff has a number of fabulous sporting precincts. Today the minister for Sport mentioned \$150 000 for the cricket nets at Nightcliff; I would like to see the details of that. I thought the club needed \$200 000 to \$230 000, but I welcome any investment in our community, particularly in sporting infrastructure.

The Leader of the Opposition's commitment to training lights for Nightcliff Oval will help. It is a very busy oval, with lots of sport taking place all year round. There are hundreds of people participating in physical activity there most evenings, which is fabulous.

The Treasurer's comments on Channel 9 News on Tuesday evening were interesting; he talked about the port lease sale. I think that was the first time

the government had acknowledged that it has sold the port; it was a sale. Those were his words, 'the port lease sale'. I do not know if it was a slip of the tongue, Treasurer.

The comments that some of these initiatives in the budget will tide us over until the next project, and that we are having a little lull – it is not breaking news that the construction phase of INPEX will be ending. Only a month or so ago the Chief Minister was claiming that there was nothing to see here; then, all of a sudden, we were heading towards a big black hole. The government has dropped the ball in that space; it is a bit too little too late.

The Leader of the Opposition has outlined a clear plan, if elected in August, to stimulate the local economy to support Territorians and keep them here. The Labor initiatives include a plan for first home buyers with real incentives, for example, no stamp duty on the first \$500 000, and supporting first home buyers to renovate existing properties, which comes up time and time again in my community and people I associate with. Some people want to build a new property and are in a position to do that, but others are not able to pay rent on one property while they are building another. Many people want to stay in existing areas, near where they grew up, or do not mind living in an older property and slowly renovating, which is what my partner and I have done. We bought an older home and are slowly plodding away; we do not mind having five different types of tiles through our house. The initiatives from Labor for existing homes are important to the economy and to people who want to make that lifestyle choice to stay closer to where they grew up.

I carry the shadow ministerial portfolio for climate change. I was pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition announce our policy around renewable energy; it is very important for our future, and for the Northern Territory to have that opportunity.

It is interesting that there has been a decrease in participation education programs in corrections, and a \$2m cut to education and offender programs, which is disappointing as all evidence points towards education being a tool to help people out of that cycle.

Regarding my shadow portfolio for infrastructure, we are still waiting for the Dundee boat ramp. There was some chatter about it in Question Time today. There was a small decrease in the budget from \$66m to \$62m.

Remember the context in which this budget is framed. It is off the back of, as we heard from the Treasurer, the port lease sale, and the sale of TIO, which they did not tell Territorians about before the last election. That was disappointing.

I have questions for the Treasurer about Lands and Planning. There was a significant variance in the Lands and Planning budget in 2015-16 when it was originally \$91m, but was revised to \$136m, and it is \$92m in 2016-17. There is a significant increase in the Crown land estate of \$45m, which the Treasurer indicated is land value. Could he check that, because I cannot see how we would have such a significant increase? The management output went from \$16m to \$60m in 2015-16. The note in the budget papers indicates that the variance is due to the finalisation of the long-term lease of the Port of Darwin, and the non-cash gifting of assets to Power and Water. That was the only output in the whole portfolio with a significant variance. Can the Treasurer provide us with further explanation regarding that area of Lands and Planning?

Within Sport and Recreation, it was disappointing to see no funding for the Arafura Games. Territorians can assume it is gone forever under the CLP. Initially it was postponed or cancelled; I cannot quite remember the wording. Territory Labor has committed to bringing back the festival, which is very important for sporting, cultural and community links with our close neighbours in Asia.

Regarding Alcohol Mandatory Treatment, referrals and completed treatments have been revised down again. There is \$12m set aside for the Department of Business to work with the Commonwealth on new alcohol management initiatives, but there are no details outlined. The Department of Business has 40 new alcohol action initiatives under way or completed, indicating improvements to safety for individuals and communities through licensing. Details from the government about the federal government figure would be useful.

Territory Labor has outlined a clear plan and Territorians will have a clear choice when we head to the ballot boxes in three months. It will be a united team working together – which has been very evident through these sittings and over the past few months as we have developed policies, put papers out for discussion and met with the community – versus a chaotic and dysfunctional government. The Treasurer holds important portfolios such as Lands and Planning, but his own team has not chosen him again because they do not trust him. Many Territorians have concerns about that, especially regarding Lands and Planning.

I have asked some questions; it would be good to hear back from the Treasurer, who I understand is ready to wrap on this statement.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, to the member for Nightcliff, from the bottom of my heart, happy birthday. I hope you have a great

day today and I will not address too many of your concerns because I do not want to burst your bubble on your special day.

Ms Fyles: The Chief Minister already did that.

Mr TOLLNER: The Chief Minister probably did not realise it was your birthday when he made those comments this morning or he might have been a bit gentler on you, but he did come in here and apologise wholeheartedly.

Ms Fyles: Dave you should not comment. I will see you on radio at 9 am tomorrow.

Mr TOLLNER: The member for Nightcliff told me that if she saw me on radio at 9 am, which she intends to appear on, she would commend my budget to the House. I did not hear her commend my budget to the House; we will wait to see what she has to say tomorrow.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is an unfair claim, Treasurer. It is difficult to see someone on radio.

Mr TOLLNER: They tell me I have a head for radio, Mr Deputy Speaker, and they say politics is Hollywood for ugly people; maybe I am best suited to radio.

Mr Wood: Look at me.

Mr TOLLNER: Gerry, you can join me; you have a head for radio too.

On Tuesday morning this budget set out a clear choice for every Territorian in the upcoming August election. It is a clear choice of long-term jobs and economic sustainability over the Labor Party's plan to destroy entire industries.

The budget sets a clear choice of continuing to grow a prosperous, robust and diversified economy, over Labor's plan, which racks up debt and attacks the heartland of the Northern Territory. The budget protects our way of life and focuses on growing the private sector, utilising the strengths of our workforce to adapt to new industries, and gets on with the task of providing the best education, health and safety for our community.

Those opposite have again demonstrated their choice to destroy our agricultural and horticultural industries. They have clearly chosen to stop onshore gas and any development or construction in the building industry. Labor wants to return to where we were four years ago when I delivered the first budget: massive debt and deficit; unaffordable housing; cost-of-living increases; and out-of-control crime.

For months I have said that we always had a plan to cut debt, stop Labor waste, diversify the economy and grow the private sector. It delivers important improvements in health, education and community services. The budget continues this plan and it is fully funded and costed, which is an important point.

The budget reply speech made by the Leader of the Opposition was an important speech in this parliament because it highlighted what we can expect from a Labor government. The Opposition Leader said he will generate 50% of our electricity by renewables in the next 15 or so years; I think he said by 2030. As I said in response to a question this week, the total Territory generation capacity is about 600 MW; half of that is 300 MW. To build that with a conventional gas generation plant would cost about \$400m; however, constructing renewable electricity generation – solar – would be three to four times that. To be conservative, let us say it is three times. That would be a \$1.2bn bill that the Opposition Leader would have to pay to replace 50% of our gas-generated electricity.

We do know a bit about renewable energy in the Northern Territory. We currently have a program with Arena to construct 10 MW of solar power in remote communities around the Territory. That will cost \$60m. Half the funding is supplied by Arena and the federal government. The Opposition Leader said he would generate 300 MW. If we use that as our baseline, the Arena construction would cost about \$1.8bn for the solar panels, with no batteries or anything attached. I am currently having the cost to include batteries calculated.

It is important to understand that the sun can be used for renewable energy generation purposes for between six and eight hours a day. At night, and for a big part of the day, you still need spinning reserve electricity from a gas power station or batteries. Batteries would at least double the cost. To replace 300 MW of power without using gas or fossil fuels, as the Opposition Leader said, you need batteries to provide back-up power. The bill is rising, and on top of that, about 10 PJ of gas a year would not be used by Territory Generation.

The Labor government made a take or pay deal with Blacktip in 2011, buying 50% more gas than the Territory will ever need. That onerous gas contract is one of the reasons Power and Water has problems. A great thing about the Northern Gas Pipeline is that we can offload some of the gas Territorians are already paying for to other gas users over the border in Queensland. The cost of 10 PJ of gas would be between \$1bn and \$2bn. I cannot be more specific because it is a

commercial-in-confidence contract with 18 years to go, but the total cost is in the billions.

We are already seeing the Opposition Leader come up with enormous unfunded liabilities, which is an incredibly dumb move. There are many people who want a greener environment; it is a great goal to produce electricity with less carbon emissions, something we can all aim for, but people also want to ensure that electricity is affordable.

It is funny that the Labor government spent most of its term banging on about that cost of living and is now saying the Territory government has increased prices. Four years ago we made those price increases because Power and Water needed life support; we increased electricity costs by 30%. Holy mackerel, you would have thought the sky was falling in. It was the greatest crime we could commit on Territorians, yet the Opposition Leader had no qualms about increasing the price of power 300%, at a conservative estimate, in his budget reply speech. It defies logic that an Opposition Leader in the Northern Territory would advocate such a policy.

His copy-and-paste attitude to policy development has already been mentioned. The idea to produce 50% of electricity through renewables by 2030 is not the Opposition Leader's; he has copied it from federal Labor. Bill Shorten's carbon reduction strategy aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50% and have 50% of electricity generated across Australia by 2030, fourteen years away.

If the Opposition Leader is serious about reducing carbon emissions he would not be opposing gas development in the Northern Territory. The United States has had a shale gas boom in the last decade, but has also made remarkable cuts to its carbon emissions in the last five or six years. Those cuts are not due to the introduction of renewable sources of electricity generation; they are due to coal-fired power stations being replaced with natural gas-fired power stations.

If the Opposition Leader, Mr Gunner, was serious about cutting carbon emissions in the Northern Territory he would get behind our onshore gas industry, lobby for more pipelines to be constructed across Australia and start supplying natural gas to the eastern seaboard of Australia to replace coal-fired power stations. If we convert coal-fired power stations to gas, Australia could easily cut carbon emissions from electricity generation by 50%. The Northern Territory holds the key. We have the best sources of gas anywhere in the world; there are very few places on the planet that have the abundance and ease of access to gas that the Northern Territory does. Yet we have an Opposition Leader who is committed to killing that industry.

The Opposition Leader spoke about creating jobs and highlighted the steel fabrication industry as being at risk. If he is seriously concerned about the steel fabrication industry, all he has to do is back the onshore gas industry and then we would have 6500 new jobs and the steel businesses in the NT would have work for the next 30 years.

He talked about children being our future and education being the key to their future, and we agree with that sentiment. If he seriously believes that, all he has to do is back the onshore gas industry because all the royalties would go directly into our children's education. That is the commitment the Chief Minister has given. There are enormous royalties coming to the NT government from this industry. If the Opposition Leader gets on board, we can start directing those royalties into education.

All the Opposition Leader has to do to achieve a reduction in carbon is back the gas industry. We can convert natural gas to synthetic diesel through a gas-to-liquids process, which would save hundreds of thousands of tonnes of carbon from transport fuels in Australia. Synthetic diesel burns more cleanly, has fewer nasty components than conventional diesel, offers opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and puts competitive pressures on diesel prices in remote Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I know the cost of fuel is important to you and other residents of Alice Springs. Any relief in the cost of diesel in Central Australia would lead to larger efficiencies, create more economies and assist commercial development. In some parts of the Northern Territory people are paying in excess of \$2.50 per litre for diesel. We could do better than that with a micro gas-to-liquids operation in the Territory.

The Opposition Leader has attacked water rights. He is using a political issue to highlight Tina MacFarlane, because he is convinced she received an improper deal. It defies the Opposition Leader's imagination that someone could be involved in a political party and make an application for water. If there ever is another Labor government, it will be interesting to see whether it stops members of the Labor Party accessing water simply because they are party members. The Opposition Leader seems to think it is okay to attack somebody because of their political views. Labor will review all water licences, which means clawing back water rights and putting the brakes on, stopping, our agricultural sector – no jobs there.

He has attacked the planning, building and construction industries. There is not a single development in the Territory that the Labor Party supports. It has been up front about its opposition to development in the rural area and Holtze, and

the densification of Darwin and Palmerston. It is also opposed to dual occupancy irrespective of the fact the previous Labor government first floated the idea. It is even opposed to the completion of Bayview, a project that has been going on for 18 years and has received support from every government of every political stripe – no jobs in construction.

Tie the Opposition Leader in with his mate in Canberra, Bill Shorten, the bloke he wants to be in government with. Bill Shorten is attacking the trucking industry, a sop to their union mates, which puts pressure and more costs on the trucking industry, price increases and no jobs.

I cannot find jobs anywhere in the Opposition Leader's budget reply; there are no jobs. Where will the Territory develop? The Opposition Leader seems to be opposed to anything that involves change, progress or development. There is plenty of spending in the Opposition Leader's budget though. As I highlighted, the cost of his silly renewables idea is in the billions.

In Question Time I talked about his \$24 000 stamp duty discount for first home owners who buy existing houses and the \$10 000 gift for renovations, which is not costed and was ceded by the Master Builders Association. He will take the \$100m that we committed for the Infrastructure Development Fund and spend it on infrastructure. He is taking it from the asset side of the balance sheet and putting it on the expenditure side. That is a \$200m turnaround and he did that in the blink of an eye.

There is \$120m for education with no inkling of where that money will come from. There is \$1.1bn for housing, and again no mention of where it will come from. Today I heard that he will spend \$50m on boat ramps in the first year of a Labor government, with no mention of where they will find the money. Then, in the same breath, he said he can reach surplus in the same time as the government. He has all these new spending promises and money going out the door, no savings identified anywhere, but he will balance the books by 2019-20. That has to be the definition of voodoo economics. He has obviously read *The Magic Pudding*; that is the pudding that you can keep eating and it never disappears; it keeps growing.

I see my good friend and colleague, the Minister for Education, throwing around Gunner's billion dollar bills. It is a ridiculous situation if in response to the budget you announce money for the sake of it, stop projects, stop jobs, kill entire industries and at the same time you are going to make everything add up? You are kidding me. It returns to my point that our budget is fully costed and funded; it is open and transparent. People

can see where money is coming in and going out, and the balance of the books, simply by reading the budget papers.

What do you get from the other team? Basically what the previous Treasurer, the member for Karama, gave you: hocus-pocus and dodgy calculations. In the end you saw, from the member for Karama, a pre-election fiscal outlook that showed spending going through the roof and no plan for the government to ever live within its means or pay back debt, taking the Northern Territory on exactly the same path as Greece. They seem to think that is an election-winning plan. I hope Territorians see through that nonsense.

Another interesting thing happened this week. Three failed Prime Ministers add up to one Gunner. On the weekend, the Opposition Leader said in a newspaper that he wanted to be like former Prime Minister Paul Keating. Great, he wants to be like Prime Minister Keating. Remember, Mr Keating left the country with interest rates at 21% and unemployment rates at 11%; he was the founder of the banana republic, he gave us 'the recession we had to have' and believed the best way to see Darwin was from a plane at 30 000 feet on his way to Paris. Mr Gunner wants to emulate that gentleman.

On Monday the Opposition Leader said on radio that he wanted to be part of Mr Shorten's government. He sees himself as Senator Gunner, which sounds more fitting than Chief Minister Gunner. There is not a lot of damage he could do in the Senate. His mentor, Mr Keating, called them 'unrepresentative swill', but that is where Senator Gunner wants to find himself. He wants to be part of the Shorten government, the same Mr Shorten who led a union which was prosecuted for illegal behaviour and now wants to get rid of negative gearing. Can you believe it? He wants to emulate a man who wants to get rid of negative gearing, again driving the cost of living higher.

Today he proved he is exactly like former Prime Minister Rudd. Mr Rudd took the Australian federal government to the highest debt level of all time, which we are still paying for now, six years later, and will probably still be paying back for the next 10 to 15 years.

Rudd gave away so much money for people to buy personal stuff that he was sending cheques to people who were dead and people living overseas. He did not seem to care where the money went. I am told that most of it did not go to tradies; it went to TVs, furniture and fridges. Mr Harvey Norman, and every manufacturer of TVs was very pleased. That is what our Opposition Leader is advocating. It will not go

anywhere near providing the benefits to local tradies that the Home Improvement Scheme will.

The Opposition Leader has also taken Mr Rudd's idea of a love-in, from memory they called it the A-list; it was a meeting in Canberra. The interesting thing about that summit was that not one workable idea came out of it, but the economy was stalled for years to come.

In the political arena we find ourselves in today, there is a raging battle between style and substance. The Labor opposition is focused on personalities and platitudes, and making every effort to smear government. Its decadent spending promises and plans will wipe out entire industries and set the Territory on a path to ruin, but for them it is only about populism. On the other hand, Chief Minister Adam Giles and the Country Liberals team have made the hard yards. We have tackled tough issues and copped bruises on the way. It has not been easy, but we have maintained a strong and clear course for a more sustainable Territory with long-term, secure jobs.

In my final budget I have demonstrated that we are well progressed with our clear and concise plan to diversify the economy, grow the private sector and lower the cost of living. Because of fiscal discipline, we have a clear choice for enhanced health and education services in a safer and more prosperous community. This August, Territorians face an important decision; it is a clear choice of a robust and sustainable economy or one which is dominated by debt and destruction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wholeheartedly commend the bill to the house.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the consideration in detail be taken later.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTRICITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 169)

Continued from 21 April 2016.

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, the electricity amendment bill brought forward by the government is part of its continued structural separation agenda. The changes that come with that include bringing the Northern Territory's rules and regulations in line with other jurisdictions. The opposition will support this bill because the government has succeeded in its structural separation agenda, and we need the best deal going forward for Territorians.

However, this legislation is another timely reminder of the structural separation process of the Power and Water Corporation. Electricity tariffs are one of the biggest cost-of-living pressures Territorians are faced with every day. No one will forget that the CLP government raised power tariffs by 30%. It is an essential service that impacts on people in urban and remote areas.

Our support for this bill is on the basis that the government has succeeded with its agenda to separate Power and Water. We must now ensure that the conditions of the economic rules and regulations of electricity networks can work for Territorians, especially with the move to the Australian Energy Regulator, or AER. It is vital that the new goalposts meet the needs of Territorians and we are not penalised for having a different electricity network, physically, compared to the east coast. We are not on the national grid; we are made up of several island-like electricity systems. We have a huge land mass, a small population and some of the most challenging climates and landscapes, where it is critical to deliver electricity.

Providing safe, reliable and affordable power is not straightforward, but it is a critical responsibility of government and we must ensure we do what we can to achieve it.

The legislation before the House follows on from the structural separation process and the passage of the *National Electricity (National Uniform Legislation) Act*, which moves economic regulation of the Territory's electricity network from the Utilities Commission to the Australian Energy Regulation as of 1 July 2015.

The bill will also ensure the Territory adopts the National Electricity Law and National Electricity Rules for economic regulation of electricity networks from 1 July 2016.

The subject of economic regulations and rules relating to electricity networks may sound dry, but considering the high costs of electricity we face in the Territory, it is important we get the best outcome for Territorians. It is also important to ensure we are not disadvantaged by the move to the AER and the rules and regulations set nationally.

This bill aims to ensure the NT is consistent with other jurisdictions in its approach to the national rules and regulations, which will require the national electricity legislation to be updated. This will flow through to the NT without requiring further regular legislative amendments. This bill will bring rules and regulations around the NT's electricity networks in line with the rest of the nation; however, it will also take into account the

circumstances in which the NT electricity network differs from those connected to the national grid.

This bill ensures the NT can modify national instruments to ensure they are appropriate to the Northern Territory. It will also ensure the rule-making function of the Australian Energy Marketing Commission is relevant to the NT, given we are not part of the national grid.

The NT is made up of several island grids, Darwin to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Western Australia faces similar circumstances. It is critical that these circumstances are acknowledged and accounted for, which is part of the purpose of this bill and could be seen as an issue prior to the structural separation. The structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation has created major issues because the government rammed it through too quickly and did not heed the warnings that it was not ready for this process to happen. The government set out to financially separate the power and water from the generation and retail arms of the corporation, which involved dividing billions of dollars of assets and finances. It is now May 2016, and the Power and Water Corporation and Indigenous Essential Services are still unable to produce an annual report with completed financial statements for 2014-15.

This government was simply not ready for structural separation, yet it still proceeded. It makes you wonder whether you can have any faith in the financial statements in the budget papers relevant to the public non-financial corporations and the flow-on effects this has on the Territory budget. This again raises questions regarding the structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation and how the government went about it. Remember the government rammed it through parliament as quickly as possible, despite the clear warning signs.

The Public Accounts Committee was able to manage a very short inquiry into the bills to separate the Power and Water Corporation while they were before parliament. It was important to be able to go through that process because this government has form trying to ram things through on urgency, without allowing for the due process and proper scrutiny that people expect, especially relating to the essential services of electricity, water and sewerage in the Northern Territory.

During the Public Accounts Committee hearings into those bills, questions were put to the people from Treasury, Power and Water, and the Department of the Chief Minister who were part of the management team to drive the structural separation process. We asked questions about data and any cost benefit analysis relating to the structural separation of the Power and Water

Corporation; we were not able to gain any clear information, nor did they seem ready for the change. It was clear there would be complicated matters associated with separating the finance and assets of Power and Water. Considering it is worth billions of dollars in assets, you would think the government would have done all the work required to ensure a clean breakup of generation and the retail businesses, leaving Power and Water Corporation.

We have still not seen the Power and Water Corporation annual report for 2015 because it had huge problems separating the finances and assets. In the latest Treasurer's Annual Financial Report we saw an extraordinary statement by the Auditor-General relating to the government's non-financial corporation sector. The Auditor-General was unable to form an opinion on the financial statements on Power and Water Corporation.

This government has bungled another major project and demonstrated that you simply cannot trust it, because often its members put their political agenda ahead of the heavy lifting, hard-work, sensible planning and preparation a good and responsible government does first.

Last year in estimates we discovered that Power and Water was having deep problems with its financial management systems. The project had blown out by millions of dollars. We look forward to the government owned corporations section of estimates to receive the latest update from the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairperson of the Board of Power and Water Corporation. It is very good that some statements of corporate intent were deemed in parliament today. They will form a basis for ongoing conversations about the current position of Power and Water; there will be many questions coming up in estimates.

It is vital that we have a sensible electricity tariff determination in the NT that does not disadvantage Territorians. Another appropriate section of this bill is the need for the AER to consult with Power and Water, in line with the National Electricity Rules. This is especially important for working towards the next network's price determination, which will be an extensive, challenging and important process.

The bill addresses the issue of cost pass-through arrangements to ensure the Territory has allowance for certain events to trigger cost pass-through, if the AER determines it is appropriate for Power and Water to recover costs associated with an event outside its reasonable control. An example of this would be if a cyclone caused significant damage to electricity networks.

This legislation will amend the *Electricity Networks (Third Party Access) Act* so that if the Power and

Water network's price determination for 2014 to 2019 needs to be amended to reflect cost pass-through it will be done and incorporated into the next regulatory period. Treasury advised me in briefings that this is a normal process and in line with other jurisdictions, such as Queensland and Western Australia, which are both subject to these types of conditions, that is, cyclones. The bill also recognises that Western Australia is not connected to the national grid.

This bill further aligns the Northern Territory to the national rules and regulations for electricity networks. It rectifies identified legal issues and, more importantly, recognises that the Northern Territory is not connected to the national grid so, hopefully, we will not be disadvantaged by the changes.

It would be good if the Treasurer, in his closing debate, could let the House know how the new rules, regulations and changes affecting the Northern Territory, and their implementation, will be monitored to ensure we are not disadvantaged. Most importantly, government still has ultimate control of Power and Water Corporation through the shareholding minister, the Treasurer. As long as Power and Water remains a public asset, this will continue to be the case.

If the Treasurer had been successful in preselection, retained his seat and formed government, I have no doubt that selling and privatising these public assets would be 100% in his sights. His agenda would be to sell – privatise the poles and wires of the networks within Power and Water Corporation and look at Territory Generation or the retail arm.

In the debate yesterday we put questions to the government about whether it would rule out selling Power and Water, or parts of Power and Water, for example, the poles and wires. Other conservative governments around the country have gone to elections seeking a mandate from the people about privatisation and sell off. Will the government comprehensively rule out the sale and privatisation of any part of Power and Water Corporation, Territory Generation or Jacana Energy? It would be good to have that on the record, but given the government's form on the sale of TIO and the port, would we believe them?

They have form in selling public assets owned by Territorians; we have seen it with the port, TIO and Darwinbus. We want to know whether this government intends to privatise any part of Power and Water Corporation, including the poles and wires, Territory Generation or Jacana Energy. If the government has these intentions, it should be open and up front with Territorians. Seek a mandate, tell them before the election, put your case forward and take it to the ballot box on

27 August. I call on the government to make its intentions clear in this debate. Will you rule out the privatisation, in whole or part, of our public assets, the essential services of electricity, water and sewerage?

I thank the Treasurer, his adviser, Tony, and the Treasury officials for their assistance in providing briefings on this legislation. I also thank Tony and the Treasury staff for their enthusiasm with this ongoing body of work, which aims to ensure that, with the shift to national rules and regulations, the Territory does not fall short. The government has succeeded in separating Power and Water. Now it is about doing everything possible to get the best deal for Territorians.

Mr CHANDLER (Essential Services): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Electricity Regulation Amendment Bill 2016 will ensure that the operation of the national electricity framework in the Territory is consistent with other jurisdictions, while ensuring it is appropriate for the Territory and the Territory's context. Through transferring the economic regulation of the Territory's prescribed electricity networks to the Australian Energy Regulator, we are aligning regulatory arrangements with the national framework. As part of this nationally consistent approach, the Territory will enjoy the benefits arising from updates to the National Electricity Legislation, without incurring the administration costs associated with preparing regular legislative amendments.

We will still enjoy the autonomy to make modifications to the amendments to the national instrument, taking into consideration the unique electricity needs in the Northern Territory. Due to the Territory's unique circumstances and proximity, it is unlikely we will ever be connected to the national system, perhaps not in my lifetime, unless we build a big nuclear reactor and pump electricity all over the country, but that is another argument.

Taking this into consideration, the draft bill ensures that the AEMC will give us the flexibility to make differential rules, which will allow us to consider and contribute to how rules can be better suited to our context. The national framework is considered best-practice regulation. This is expected to be well received by existing electricity entities. In addition, it will provide certainty to current and potential entrants to the Territory electricity market, thus encouraging competition, which has the potential to bring down the cost for Territorians.

While we are on the subject of electricity, I will talk about renewable energy. As a former shadow minister and Minister for the Environment, and now with the portfolio of Essential Services, it is an area of interest to me. For example, Alice

Springs has a high penetration of roof top and industrial solar power. The Energy Supply Association of Australia estimated that Alice Springs, as of 2015, had a total of about 10.6 MW of solar PV capacity. This level of solar penetration is a big achievement, but the rapid development and integration of renewable energy is both a tremendous opportunity and a challenge. Current technology means that backup energy supplies are still required during night and in situations when the sun is not shining.

The NT government must provide certainty of electricity supply and generate electricity at a price that is acceptable to consumers. This means we must consider the cost of integrating new technologies, as well as the impacts these technologies have on existing power systems.

The Labor Party makes big statements about renewables, but I do not believe it understands the science behind it and the impacts on consumers if it implemented its plans.

I was going to stick strictly to my script but there is only a page to go so I will digress slightly and become political, but only because the member for Wanguri did the same. It talks about economic credibility and a lack of understanding of the challenges that solar energy provides for Territory Generation, Power and Water, and Jacana. However, from the Territory Generation perspective, Alice Springs is provided with over 10 MW of solar, on a sunny day, which is wonderful news for consumers and those providing that energy. They all think they are doing a wonderful job to benefit our environment, but the power station still has generators spinning away, burning gas and diesel to ensure there is always at least 10 MW in the system – base load power – in case a cloud passes over the sun.

The next level of technology, batteries and so forth, will come in the next generation. Doing what Labor is suggesting, the mantra of having 50% renewables in the Northern Territory, will increase the cost of electricity by well over 100%, because of the current costs of technology. If Labor takes government in August and fulfils its plan for 50% renewables, with the current technology and associated costs, it is guaranteed to put up the price of power by 100%. I understand what the cost of renewables is today, and what it would cost to install or replace 50% of the capacity of the generation system in the Northern Territory with renewables. It would put up the cost of power by at least 100%.

If the Northern Territory government implements solar technologies combined with storage on a utility scale across the Northern Territory, it would cost Territorians dearly. To me, it demonstrates the current Labor opposition's lack of economic

understanding. I will quote an article from today's *Australian*, because it points very sharply at Labor's lack of economic understanding at the national and Territory levels:

Bill Shorten has a simple yet very seductive message for ordinary Australians: you can have it all and you don't have to pay for any of it.

You want billions more for health, no questions asked, no price signals necessary? Shake down the Apple tree. Or Google and it will come.

A few more billions for education? So what if Australian kids continue to fall behind on the basics, despite the extra billions already spent; they still deserve to have the full Gonski. The big end of town will provide.

Never mind that Labor's numbers do not add up. Even allowing for the inclusion of the contentious \$19bn from the restoration of foreign aid cuts in its list of Labor spending it still leaves a trifling \$48bn shortfall across the forward estimates. Where are we? About two weeks into the federal election campaign, how many more billions of dollars will the federal Labor opposition promise before we get to election day? How many billions of dollars will Territory Labor commit future taxpayers to – the children they say they are trying or wanting to provide a solid education?

I further quote from today's article:

The notion that without a strong economy nothing is possible has been set aside by the Labor leader as he fashions his own brand of economic management. Let us call it Shortonomics.

Maybe we can call it Gunneronomics here. I continue to quote:

There is nothing subliminal about his message. It is overt and offers a clear choice: live it up now and leave the bills for later, the complete opposite of Malcolm Turnbull's message that we must all live within our means. No contest which sounds like more fun.

It would be great to live it up now and not care about the future. Today we printed \$69bn, a helping hand for Mr Gunner and his team, a possible future Labor government. I will not hand it over, because it would probably be fraudulent for me to hand over \$69bn to a future Labor government. That is as honest as some of the things they are coming up with, and the risk they

are putting on the Northern Territory economy if they go through with some of their plans.

We are preparing for our renewable energy future. The technology is rapidly changing and the Northern Territory government is looking forward to changing with it – a step by step change. We have invested, along with the federal government, nearly \$60m in remote voltaic power stations that will save millions of dollars every year in the cost of diesel. We are part of that process, but it has to be done in a strategic way, understanding the costs of renewables and the context of the challenges we have in the Territory.

The Treasurer and the Chief Minister pointed out earlier that the plan you have outlined has the potential to cost Territorians dearly, to put up the price of electricity for Territorians well over 100%.

Territory Generation is investigating the introduction of the latest renewable energy and energy storage technologies available, and is committed to working with Commonwealth agencies on opportunities to deliver renewable energy into its portfolio. This is following the Commonwealth government's decision to keep two renewable energy agencies and establish a new \$1bn clean energy innovation fund.

Yesterday I met with two representatives of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. The CEFC is a \$10bn Commonwealth authority that invests in projects relating to renewables, energy-efficiency, low-emission technology, hybrids of the same, and related or enabling technologies. It was an exciting meeting and there are exciting opportunities available. We discussed the CEFC's current portfolio of investment in the Northern Territory, projects of significance coming through its pipeline for the Northern Territory and opportunities for further development, including for schools.

Territory Generation already works in partnership with independent power producers to support renewable energy initiatives. The corporation has power purchase agreements in place with the 4.1 MW Uterne Solar Power Station in Alice Springs, Australia's largest tracking solar station. Territory Generation is investing in projects that will bridge the gap until costs of renewable technologies decrease to a level that is acceptable to Territorians. Territory Generation is replacing outdated generators in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek with the most modern gas-fired generators. The result will be no net increase in generation capacity in Alice Springs and a significant net reduction in carbon emissions due to the efficiency of these new machines.

The expansion of the Owen Springs Power Station in Alice Springs will mean it will use less

fuel and cost less to maintain; these are the main costs of producing electricity; this project will reduce the cost of producing electricity, which is good for consumers.

I am aware that consultation has occurred on the proposed amendments, which are supported by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science; the Australian Government Solicitor; the Australian Energy Market Commission; the Australian Energy Regulator; the Northern Territory Utilities Commission; and the Power and Water Corporation. We, as a government, should adopt the national framework for the regulation of electricity networks, including that of the Australian Energy Regulator, because it is better resourced than the Utilities Commission. The Australian Energy Regulator's additional resources and experience are expected to lead to a more comprehensive evaluation of network capital and operating expenditure, as part of network price determinations for the Power and Water Corporation, and, therefore, in the long term, put downward pressure on electricity tariffs.

The national framework is considered best-practice regulation. It is a robust and competitive regulatory framework that provides familiarity and certainty for electricity businesses, and may encourage new investment in the Territory's electricity supply industry, thus leading to increased competition in the generation and retail sectors.

The member for Wanguri spoke about the accounts and annual reporting from Power and Water. Every year I have been in this House, even when we were in opposition, there has been conjecture and allegations regarding Power and Water's financials. The Treasurer has worked tirelessly to deconstruct Power and Water into three agencies, and he has discovered things we did not know before. It is like when you pull the fridge out at home and are shocked at what you find underneath. I do not know how often you do it, but every few months when you pull the fridge out you cannot believe how much crap is underneath there. After separating these three entities, we have found out things that we never would have, had they not been pulled apart.

Putting together the finances to report on is made difficult when you keep finding more issues. Every day it is like pulling out another fridge and finding more crap, but they are coming together and the Treasurer's work is a testimony to his time in the parliament. The only negative comment I have received regarding the separation of Power and Water into three entities is that it should have happened 20 years ago. I commend the Treasurer and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, the discussion has become about electricity in general; that is not what I intended to talk about.

I will provide a layperson's perspective. I have heard the reasons why we need uniformity. We are very good at looking at outcomes, so can someone tell me what difference uniformity would make to the average punter's electricity bill? We are not connected to the grid, but in your second reading, minister, you said:

It is unlikely that the Territory will ever be physically connected to the national electricity system.

Using my limited IT powers, I found, dated Thursday 9 June 2005:

Country Liberal Party (CLP) Leader Denis Burke has announced its proposal to connect the Northern Territory to the national electricity grid, after announcing the initiative at the party's election campaign launch in Darwin.

The Chief Minister said recently that he is looking at connecting to the national grid in South Australia. Although they say, 'It is unlikely', it is still being discussed; we should look into it because the Territory is growing. We are considering a pipeline that connects to the national gas pipeline grid. Some of these ideas might be a bit highfalutin, but it is something we should look at. Locally we have brought various communities onto grids, which the member for Barkly would know. How many kilometres it is to Ali Curung?

Mr McCarthy: Two hundred.

Mr WOOD: The government closed the Ali Curung power station and joined the community to the Tennant Creek power grid; internally we are connecting to grids, and that is good because it increases efficiency. Although, running a power line for 200 km is not cheap and I presume requires transformers to keep boosting the power so Ali Curung has 240 V and not 140 V.

I have received a briefing and I understand. I listened to the member for Brennan talk about the crap under his fridge. I am not going to his place for tea because I might pick up something; his house, especially his fridge, needs structural separation. In relation to what he was saying, there are benefits to structural separation and this is another stage of that. It appears to have some benefits.

The minister said the Territory will enjoy the benefits arising from updates to the national electricity legislation. That does not sound like

something I would be happy about, but why can we not do that as we are? Is it because we are not connected to the grid, or are we becoming the same as the rest of Australia for appearances and there is really no need to because we are not connected? The only advantage I can see is a benefit to new people coming into the market, because the regulations in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia would be similar to the regulations in the Northern Territory.

I am not being silly; what difference will this legislation make to the average punter? Will it really bring prices down? If so, how would that occur? What would cause those prices to come down? Is it because we would be under the Australian Energy Regulator and the National Electricity Rules? I would be happy to hear a response from the minister.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I thank the opposition and the Independents for supporting this bill. I thank the member for Nelson for his contribution; I do not intend to have a crack at him, here and now.

Mr Wood: That is all right, I am used to it.

Mr TOLLNER: You are used to it, member for Nelson, and I am not reluctant to give you a spray occasionally, as you know, but, in this instance, I think it would be unwarranted.

On this matter, I think your views are similar to those of most Territorians. All this stuff is new. Many Territorians are scratching their heads and saying, 'So what. How does this affect me?' It is a good question.

Why do we need national electricity laws if we are not connected to the national grid? It is not a simple answer, but, fundamentally, it is because firstly, but not primarily, we agreed to do it 20 years ago as part of national competition laws. Right or wrong, the Minister for Essential Services made the point that the only criticism he has heard is, 'Why we didn't we do it 20 years ago?' It is an interesting point.

Months ago I had a conversation with former Chief Minister, Shane Stone, who is also a former Chairman of Energex, a utility provider in Queensland. He called and said, 'You know, Tollner, what you are doing is the right thing. This is the most complex business I have ever been involved in.' It is complex; there are many economical components involved that make it difficult to understand. He said, 'But having said that, it is the right thing to do. Knowing what I know now, we should have done it when we were in government last time around. It is one of those things that is absolutely necessary.'

At that time, for the Power and Water Authority, as it was known then, it was out of sight and out of mind. It did not see any reason to do it because it was not one of the pressing issues facing government, which is substantially different to the circumstances we found ourselves in coming into government. I blame the previous government for not taking a more active interest, but I also appreciate that it is a very complex business and difficult work to do.

When we came to government it was highlighted by Moody's, and everyone else we talked to, that the Power and Water Corporation was a financial basket case. Very early in the piece we decided it was time to get on with the national reforms. The reason for that, member for Nelson, is that the structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation allows greater transparency and accountability. We provide about \$170m in subsidies to various groups, such as seniors and people living remotely; every household in the Northern Territory receives a subsidy on electricity. Considering we are pouring so much of taxpayers' money into electricity, it is fitting and right that Territorians know exactly where it is going. In this regard, transparency and accountability are important, and we have already seen improvements.

The member for Brennan's point about looking under a fridge and saying, 'Holy smoke, look at what is under here; I don't know where all this rubbish accumulated from', is the situation we found with the Power and Water Corporation. We knew we had problems and it was a financial mess. We went to structural separation and what we found was akin to the fridge analogy the Essential Services minister used. We knew there were problems with the Power and Water Corporation, but did not know the extent until now. It is a much bigger job than I first imagined four years ago. I thought we would have everything in place within eighteen months to two years, but there is still a long reform process ahead.

There are other benefits to introducing national laws. The Power and Water Corporation is currently regulated by the Utilities Commission in the Northern Territory, which operates solely in the Northern Territory. The Utilities Commission does not have an easy job, trying to understand what happens in the Power and Water Corporation.

As the shareholding minister, I have the whole of Treasury behind me, and it never understood the extent of the problems in the Power and Water Corporation while it was bundled into one monopoly, because money moves so fluidly through the organisation. For example, with network price determination, income-generating areas and costs can be moved, enabling the

organisation to ask for big increases. The Utilities Commission had to take it at its word because there was no real vision, transparency or accountability in that monopoly organisation. I am not saying the current board is doing that or that previous boards have, but it would be very easy to do.

At the last network price determination, the Power and Water Corporation asked for a 53% increase over five years; I agreed to a 16% increase and it was not happy. The Utilities Commission then granted Power and Water a 39% increase, which would have made it think it was automatically allowed to increase prices by 39% over five years. They were stunned when I issued a direction that I would only allow a 16% increase over five years. I did this knowing the Australian Energy Regulator was awarding 30% decreases in some areas of the country.

What sets the Australian Energy Regulator apart from the Utilities Commission is that it is a national regulator; it can compare the Northern Territory's network with other networks around the country, which allows it to have a deeper understanding of the economic and commercial realities involved in a network. The national regulator will have something to compare the Power and Water network to when it starts regulating our network. In the future, the Power and Water Corporation will have to go through much deeper processes in relation to its network price determinations.

The other incredibly important thing, which the member for Nelson hit on and is dead right about, is the creation of the utilities market and marketplace. Players wanting to invest in the Northern Territory need to be comfortable with the laws and regulations regarding the operation of the market. The National Electricity Law and the regulators – the Australian Energy Regulator, AER, and the Australian Energy Market Operator, AEMO – are known quantities to investors in generation or retail businesses. They know how those laws operate around the country, and that familiarity for investors is what we are trying to create, which is the reason for the introduction of the market.

Yesterday the Opposition Leader, in his budget reply, talked about 50% of our electricity generation being made up of renewables. In the circumstance of a big renewables provider turning up in the Northern Territory, it is incredibly important that they understand the laws. If we maintain monopoly ownership of our utilities industry in the future, government would have no choice other than to continue to fund upgrades and improvements to that business, because there is no one else on board making the investments that private sector operators do in every other part of the country. The benefit of

having an electricity marketplace in the Territory is that competitors come in and pay for, and build, infrastructure which would otherwise be the responsibility of government.

When we talk about infrastructure in this context, we are not talking about a few houses; we are talking about infrastructure that, at times, costs hundreds of millions of dollars. My good friend, the member for Barkly, gate-crashed the announcement of the Tennant Creek upgrade, and I was happy to see him there. I was not very happy that he sidled into the newspaper photo, but good on him; that is what local members do. He looked around the power station and probably knows more about the Tennant Creek Power Station than I do; it was my first time there, but the member for Barkly had been there before and had a good idea of what was happening. He understands that Territory Generation, in conjunction with the government, is spending \$25m on upgrades to the Tennant Creek Power Station. An amount of \$25m may not sound like much money, but it is a small network. I do not know how many people are in Tennant Creek, but I doubt you would use much more than 5 MW to 10 MW of power.

Mr McCarthy: Six, they said on the day.

Mr TOLLNER: It is generally considered to be a small system, yet to replace turbines is a \$25m cost. Similarly, \$75m is being spent on Owen Springs Power Station in Alice Springs; a lot of that work is already done, yet there is \$75m in additional expenditure.

It will be many years before we see a competitive electricity market in Tennant Creek or Alice Springs. When we talk about creating a utilities marketplace, we are talking about the Katherine/Darwin network. We will have monopoly operators in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs for a long time. Perhaps one day Alice Springs will connect to South Australia; I do not know why it would want to, but stranger things have happened.

The point was raised about the former CLP opposition, led by Denis Burke, who did a great disservice to the Territory announcing an idea that was half cooked. As the federal member I had been working on it for a long time with the proponent. I worked on that proposal for 18 months. It enlivened me to start thinking about electricity networks and generation, and involved me in considering the creation of a market in the Northern Territory.

If we had connected to that DC power line, which was about 1000 MW, it would have had to go through Mount Isa and McArthur River to give it enough economy of scale to be of value to the

Northern Territory. A DC power line is different to what we normally have. The beauty of DC power lines is that you can transport large amounts of electricity at, generally, small costs, but the downside is you can only take amounts of 50 MW or more off before it becomes uneconomical. If that proposal had gone through, we would have been connected to the national electricity grid. I think, in coming years, we will be connected to the national electricity grid; in that regard, it would make sense to be part of the Australia electricity market.

Fundamentally, this legislation allows the entrance of the AER to regulate the Northern Territory electricity sector. It will also allow the introduction of NEM-like – National Electricity Market – rules, which we will try to mirror as much as possible, although we have a unique energy market in the Top End, so there will be some minor changes. It is a complex and difficult business to understand, but with the creation of a marketplace for investors, we will establish laws and regulations that people can understand and deal with.

There is a range of benefits in having an electricity market place. In my view competition creates efficiencies; in a competitive market, players try to outdo each other and there is a natural desire to find efficiencies and the like. Having a competitive marketplace, finding efficiencies is much easier than being the boss of a monopoly and trying to whip them into line. There is a lot of resistance; it has been very difficult. As much as I have enjoyed working with the Power and Water Corporation and others in Treasury during the last three-and-a-half years, it has been a difficult task. We have had to drive this reform, but once it is done we will have a competitive marketplace which will lead to greater efficiencies.

Another thing the AER does – members will find this interesting – is, every three months, publish tables of networks from around the country and compare them. In a few years we will be able to read about how well our networks are doing in comparison to other networks in Australia. It will tell you about outages, costs, the number of people employed, what is the most efficient, all those things which will lead to efficiencies. This network will then feel somewhat in competition with networks in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland; they can compare themselves.

In the first couple of years I do not think we will be seen to be very competitive, because we are coming from a monopoly situation. It is almost a public service-type mentality; it is not so long ago that it was the Power and Water Authority and before that NTEC, which was part of government. This has been a developing, growing industry and it will continue to develop over time. This is a great step forward.

I am incredibly heartened by the opposition's support of this legislation, because it demonstrates to me that although we might play political games with a range of things – there has been quite a bit of gaming playing; I am a player in it myself – the opposition is also thinking about the future and sees the merit in what we are doing. That is a mature approach to policy development in the Northern Territory. It is like we are part-way through baking a cake; my concern is that if there is a change of government, someone may try to unravel the reforms and move Territory Generation and Jacana back into the Power and Water Corporation for opposition's sake. The opposition's support for this legislation is a wonderful thing; it shows a mature perspective.

We have been debating this for three-and-a-half years; it is not a long time and it is new to Territorians. It might be old hat around the rest of the country, but it is new here. The opposition has taken the time to understand what we are trying to do. In the past I have paid tribute to the member for Wanguri, because I sensed her increasing knowledge of these reforms. There is a point where we have to come into the House, pull on the boxing gloves and belt each other up.

Mr Vowles: I am just strapping mine on.

Mr TOLLNER: I was speaking figuratively.

In this regard, there is an appreciation from the opposition that we have embarked on the right course. As reluctant as it is to give us credit, it is prepared to say that if elected as a new government, it will continue with the reform process. The way, shape and form that reform will take is anyone's guess. I will not ask the member for Wanguri what Labor intends to do if elected, but I am heartened to hear that Labor will not backpedal on the reforms.

I made sure I gave my response while the members for Nelson and Barkly were here, because I know they both have a great interest in this. They both sat on our energy committee and are, I am sure, interested in the future of electricity generation, transportation and retail in the Northern Territory. The next step for the Power and Water Corporation is further structural separation. Power and Water Corporation is going through a process of account separation at the moment, separating out the business lines. Currently it only has one bank account for water, sewerage, electricity and gas.

Mr Styles: You are joking?

Mr TOLLNER: No, that is the nature of the monopoly that was there, and it is not strange. From a governance perspective, account separation of PWC will allow for better

accountability to the board. The board will understand what is, and is not, working in a much simpler and understandable way, and it will allow future governments to continue the reform process.

My view is that eventually the network, water and sewerage services, and Indigenous Essential Services should all be standalone organisations. The member for Wanguri keeps telling me the system control stuff will be privatised; I do not know if I would use the word 'privatised', but it should be transferred to AEMO, the Australian Energy Market Operator. I think that is on the cards for January next year. That is when TEMO – Territory Energy Market Operator – will start to work in the Top End. AEMO is a creature that has been created from COAG which is owned by all the players in the electricity market. Each business, whether it is a generation business, a network or a retailer, pays a subsidy into AEMO and it runs the market. If you want to call that privatisation, then maybe it is. I think that is splitting hairs. Realistically, an electricity market operator is needed, and AEMO is the national operator of the electricity market. To have it operating here would provide national consistency and allow players to understand the marketplace.

The other entity that needs to be separated out is the gas sales division. That is not possible at the moment because the gas sales division is backed by the network, which is an extraordinarily valuable piece of infrastructure; it is the underwriting of all the gas sales agreements the Territory has. That is another interesting piece of information. It is not possible at this stage to separate out gas sales from the network because they are linked; one provides security for the other.

Some people will argue against having separate business lines because then there are separate administrations and managements, but you are talking about big organisations worth significant amounts of money. I was stunned early in this term when the former member for Casuarina, Mr Vatskalis, said, 'We know they want to privatise Power and Water assets. No one will buy a network; that's a waste of money, but the generation business is worth a lot of money and the retail business is worth a lot. They'll be the first things to be privatised.' There is always a ready buyer for the network; if any future government wanted to sell a network it would be easy to do. Networks are an asset regulated either by the Utilities Commission in the Territory or the Australian Energy Regulator, but they provide an almost guaranteed return or great long-term investment, and are generally owned by super funds or other sovereign wealth funds from around the world.

I said, in answer to a question from the member for Wanguri today that there is no likelihood of being able to sell the network. There is no likelihood of being able to sell the generation business or the retail business, even if a government wanted to. The task at hand is what is important, and that is to continue the reform process. Perhaps in five or 10 years some future government may see merit in selling those assets, but at this point in time it is not possible. The asset management systems do not work and the financial management systems are pretty well cactus. To try to sell would be extraordinarily short-sighted and probably impossible to do.

I thank the members opposite for their support, and the member for Nelson for his questions, which were good and warranted time for explanation. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer) (by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

PETROLEUM AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 164)

Continued from 21 April 2016.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Madam Speaker, Labor will not be supporting this bill. Firstly, the CLP has not made its case for this legislation and has not been open and transparent about the regulations it intends to enact to pursue it.

These amendments give the Mines and Energy Minister the power to make regulations for the protection of the environment. It is specifically designed to enable the implementation of petroleum environment regulations in an attempt to create a robust regulatory regime for hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

This legislation and the regulatory regime the CLP intend to put into place form the thrust of the government's argument that it has created the appropriate safeguards to allow fracking to take place. The problem for the government is it has failed to clear the extremely low bar it set itself to create a regulatory system which minimises risk from fracking. Dr Allan Hawke's first report advised the government that fracking would be safe if it undertook a robust regulatory regime, which his report acknowledges does not currently exist.

Dr Tina Hunter's review of the draft petroleum environmental regulations stated that draft regulations would only represent best practice if

all her recommendations were adopted. We raised questions about whether the government would do so when we were briefed by the minister's office. The minister and the government formally responded to Dr Hunter's review and released the revised regulations one day before this debate. We will be looking very closely at these, but it is clear the government is not accepting all of Dr Hunter's recommendations in its revised regulations. Not only is it not accepting all the recommendations, but it is asking this parliament and Territorians to trust that it will implement some of them at a later date.

It is hard to understand why the government did not give the community the chance to scrutinise these regulations before this debate. The whole process has more to do with the CLP's desire to play politics with this important issue than any desire to create a fair dinkum regulatory regime.

Whatever your views are on fracking, it is clearly a controversial issue, and there are substantial risks to water, the environment and places of significant cultural value for Indigenous Territorians. If you are genuine about building a case for having a robust regulatory system, why would you not be open, accountable and transparent? Why not release your updated regulations, which took on board Dr Hunter's recommendations, more than a day before the debate on this legislation? Territorians are entitled to ask what the government has to hide.

The tragedy of the way the government has acted is not only that it leaves the public with no confidence that the environment would be protected if fracking were to occur, it also destroys trust and confidence, which are so crucial to providing an environment where investment, and the jobs it creates, can occur. Unfortunately it is symptomatic of the arrogant and secretive way this government and minister do business. This is one of the many reasons no one trusts them when it comes to protecting the environment. This CLP government has proved time and time again that it cannot be trusted to protect the environment. Voting for this legislation would be signing a blank cheque for the Mines and Energy minister to regulate fracking in the Northern Territory. As I mentioned previously, trust and confidence that mining and development occurs in an open and transparent regulatory system which protects the environment is crucial in gaining community support for controversial projects and activities.

Unfortunately the CLP has zero credibility when it comes to making open, transparent and responsible environmental decisions. We have seen the government approve Port Melville without even the most basic environmental assessment. It beggars belief that in the 21st century anyone could think that a major

development should take place in an incredibly pristine and valuable ecosystem without even the lowest level of environmental assessment. Not only is it dumb environmental policy, but it is incredibly short-sighted economic policy too. This government has refused to prosecute illegal land clearing. It is not an accident or an oversight; it is a deliberate message from the government that important environmental laws can be broken without punishment.

We have seen the disgraceful gifting of massive water allocations to CLP candidates, and the total lack of transparency on how water allocations are made. The previous water minister, the member for Katherine, told conflicting stories about meeting Tina McFarlane before she received a massive water allocation, which she later sold for a massive profit.

In the last few weeks we have witnessed the government cut secret deals with mining companies which have polluted delicate ecosystems. The government is, again, arrogantly refusing to provide Territorians with any details about what transpired, what the financial liability of the government now is and how the damage to the environment will be minimised. It is under these circumstances that the members opposite and the Minister for Mines and Energy are asking this parliament to sign a blank cheque. They are asking all of us to trust they will get it right, that everything will be above board and the regulations they make will be enforced. They have to be kidding. We do not trust the CLP to protect the environment, and Territorians know this government cannot be trusted to protect the environment.

The system of regulation is contrary to Territory Labor's policies on hydraulic fracturing, water and environmental regulations. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition made the point that the election in August will present Territorians with a very clear choice. None is starker than our approach to protecting the environment: creating a regulatory system which the community can have faith in and which creates the best conditions for businesses to invest and create jobs.

We will not be supporting this legislation because we know there is a better way; we have very clearly outlined our policies in this area. We have a clear position on fracking, which will ensure the views of the community, and the scientific evidence will be front and centre in decisions on whether or not to frack.

We have also released water environmental regulation policies that protect our precious natural resources and ensure the environmental approval, assessment and regulation is done by the EPA and the Department of Environment, not

the Mines and Energy department, which is conflicted in its role of promoting the mining industry. I encourage all Territorians listening to this important debate to go the Territory Labor website and read our policies. They are a sensible framework that will allow investment and jobs to occur in a way that is sustainable and will ensure future generations of Territorians can enjoy the majestic natural environment that we call home today.

This government has not made the case to support this legislation, and has quite shoddily released the revised regulations the day before this debate. Nobody trusts the CLP government to protect the environment, let alone regulate fracking. Labor has outlined a vastly superior approach over the last six months, and will not be supporting this bad legislation. I encourage all members, especially the members for Arnhem, Arafura, Daly and Stuart, who represent people in places that will be put at grave risk if this legislation is passed, to stand up for their constituents and oppose this bad legislation.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, the issue of hydraulic fracking has created a lot of discussion. I probably have a different opinion to others.

I will not be supporting this bill, but I will not be supporting Labor's viewpoint on this matter either. I have concerns and some are similar to those of the Environmental Defenders Office, which is a good office of one person, David Morris, who is not about picking sides but looking at legislation. I have discussed fracking with many people, and there are some people you cannot discuss it with. That is one reason I do not want to be put into the anti-fracking group; that is not me. I think fracking has a future in the Northern Territory; it already exists in the Northern Territory, but I want to ensure the systems in place satisfy me, as a member of this parliament, and the general public, and that the processes will protect the environment, and will be safe, transparent and up front.

I know about the Hawke inquiry and do not agree with people who say it is biased. It may have some bias, but everyone has bias. The recommendations were good. Hawke said fracking can go ahead as long as there are rigid regulations. Those regulations have come forward tonight, but I cannot discuss them. I believe they are on the website, but I have only looked at the draft. This is one of the disadvantages of our system. I can debate this relatively small amendment which gives the minister the power to introduce the regulations, and powers of discretion. We can go into consideration in detail and discuss the amendment for as long as we like, but I cannot

really discuss the regulations because I do not have them and they are not officially here. If I want them, I have to talk to the people on the third floor. Remember, when the increase in the number of pokies was passed in this House, to bring that back to parliament was quite an effort.

A standing committee will look at the regulations; if it passes the regulations and I want to debate them again in this House, all I can do is debate for 30 minutes or so, but there is no consideration in detail. That would not be during this parliament sittings week, and I do not know how changing from one parliament to another works. There would be no committee stage; I could not break the regulations up for thorough analysis and debate. That is difficult for me.

I acknowledge that Tina Hunter, professor of law and energy at Aberdeen University, has been through these regulations. I have read her report and the government's response to that report. Generally speaking, she has said these regulations are world class. She made some recommendations, and I am sure people will ask where those are in relation to the regulations. I have not had a chance to look at the regulations on the website this afternoon, so I have nothing to tell me whether that is true or false.

We are here to talk about the act, but if this amendment to the act goes forward then the regulations, schedules and guidelines, I imagine, will all fall into place. I will tell you what I believe is missing. I say that carefully, because I do know that in the draft regulations there is a section called regulated activity, and it says:

A plan must give a comprehensive description of each regulated activity to which it relates and include:

- (a) the location (or locations) of each activity; and*
- (b) general details of the construction and layout of any facility associated with the activity; and*
- (c) an outline of, and proposed timetable for, the operational details of the activity; and*
- (d) if the activity is hydraulic fracturing – details of the chemicals or other substances that may be in, or added to, any treatment fluids to be used for the activity.*

This is not easy because we are looking at a broad brush type of approach, which I think Tina Hunter has also recommended, which, technically, allows people to be innovative in how they do

things, and to say they are reducing risk as much as possible.

I will read Tina Hunter's executive summary so people can gain an understanding that this is not straightforward. This is trying to use the best method to ensure we do not go down a path that would cause problems in our environment:

The draft Petroleum (Environment) Regulations that are analysed in this report have been drafted to address the regulation of petroleum operations in the Northern Territory. They are a solid regulatory tool for future petroleum activities, and represent a quantum leap from the Northern Territory regulations of old. They herald in a new era of objective-based regulation, which has been assessed by the World Bank to be the most suitable form of regulation to foster petroleum development. In addition, these regulations are the first for onshore petroleum to implement the concepts of Ecologically Sustainable Development, and for that the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy should be applauded.

The fundamental aspects of the Regulations are sound, and the use of risk-based regulation is a welcomed addition in regulating petroleum activities. Such risk-based regulation will ensure environmental harm will be minimised, and give the Northern Territory government enhanced scope and the capacity to implement best practice in the regulation of petroleum activities in the Northern Territory.

The Regulations need to be supplemented by detailed Guidelines, which will need to be developed once the regulations are completed. These Guidelines need to provide an overview of the approval process of the Environment Management Plan (EMP), which lies at the heart of the Regulations, and the requirements for the content of the EMP.

The success of the implementation of these sound regulations depends on continued resourcing of the Regulator, the Energy Directorate. This means that as onshore petroleum activities increase, staffing levels at the Regulator will also need to increase.

I will return to that later. We are looking at world-class regulations, but I have issues that need to be addressed which are not addressed here. I do not want to put that effort down. I will not support the Labor side either, because, from my perspective, we are going forward, but we have not done it with enough protection.

I will give you an example from Tina Hunter's report. It comes under 'Legal status and enforceability of regulations'. She said:

As subordinate legislation, the regulations are enforceable.

Fair enough:

However any soft law instruments, such as guidelines, schedules and the like are not. Their legal status is that of advisory.

Today I asked for advice on schedules and was told that if they are in the regulations then they can be enforced, but that statement makes me wonder whether there can be schedules outside of the regulations that are only advisory. I am concerned about that because the guidelines are good. The guidelines have been around for a while, and I presume they have not changed at all. The guidelines are the guiding principles for the onshore oil and gas industry. If you want to know about well design, they tell you the basic operating principles for well design. But it is purely a guideline, which is my concern and is also a concern of the Environmental Defenders Office.

There are things I would like to see in the act, or at least in the regulations, so that the minister is required to do them. I would prefer them to be in the act because then there would be less discretion.

Tina Hunter gave a talk to the Cattlemen's Association earlier this year. I have her PowerPoint presentation from the talk. I also have a tape of her talk, but I have not been able to transcribe it. She said, 'What about the wells? Wells are the most important thing. Well cementing, steel and barriers are critical', and she cannot stress that enough. She said, 'You must ensure wells do not leak. Environmental impacts flow from well control, or the lack thereof. Aquifer contamination can be avoided. The basis is well inspection, which is not compulsory in Australian jurisdictions.'

Those are the two issues that are really important. I want the procedure and details of proper well construction firmly in place. The regulations are intended to give people room to move, and that could be built in. There is a basic principle for well design. In the West Australian Onshore Gas Code of Practice for Hydraulic Fracturing there is a series of international standards employed for onshore petroleum activities, including specifications for materials and testing of well cement. It is API Spec 10:

Requirements for manufacturing eight classes of well cements and application of

the API monogram, including chemical and physical testing requirements.

I do not know whether they exist in the Northern Territory, but those specifications would ensure the cement used in the structure of a well is reliable. Not only should the well be constructed properly, but it must also be seen to be constructed properly; that is another concern. When the floor of this building was poured, you would hope an inspector was here watching, and they approved that it was done according to specification. That is critical, and it is also critical that the inspector is qualified, not someone who just finished university. At the moment we do not have many wells or large numbers of people constructing wells, but if you want my support you need details in this legislation about the inspectorate and what qualifications that inspectorate will be required to have, so that someone cannot pour a well until a qualified inspector is on site to make sure it has been poured correctly.

There are also issues about waste water design principles and regulations. I cannot imagine that would be a burden because we know the fracking process requires water to be pumped down a pipe to fracture the rock and then the pipe is emptied of water. The gas companies have told me they cannot afford to have water in the gas pipe. They spend millions of dollars and the last thing they want is water in the pipe. I want some principles regarding what happens to the water after it is removed to ensure it cannot seep into the ground water and is protected from things like heavy rain. Also, we need guidelines about what the water can be reused for, because it can be used again. It could possibly be used in another well and then pumped out again, which is fine, but I want that specified in the act, not just the regulations.

There are also issues with chemical storage, but chemicals are not only used for fracking. I do not know if the minister will comment on this, but it is funny that we worry about fracking because we have the *Geothermal Energy Act*. In South Australia they drill holes 4 km deep into the ground and, later, pump water down the pipes until eventually it has to be removed. It is a lot of water – 4 km down, 4 km back up and a couple of kilometres across. That is the theory behind geothermal. In South Australia the hydraulic fracking and geothermal legislation is combined under one act. I think it is the gas and geothermal act. People worry about what is happening, but we already have an act which allows drilling through aquifers into, in this case, granite.

Part 6 of *Geothermal Energy Act* is titled 'Technical work programs and geothermal operations plans'. It is in the act, not the regulations. I do not know if these things are in

the regulations because I have not seen them, but they may be suitable. In the draft regulations, under Schedule 1, there is a section called 'Regulated activity', which possibly covers some of these issues, but I am yet to be convinced they are there.

Another issue which I and other people have raised is methane discharge. What are the control principles for ensuring the smallest amount of gas as possible is released? The industry may say it does not want to release the gas because it is valuable. That is fine. The industry is in the business of reducing waste. If the gas can be captured and sold, that is a good thing. I am unsure if that is something we should leave generalised. If we bring it into the act, there are controls over it, but having it in the regulations would allow the minister to use their discretion.

I am happy to be proven wrong on these issues because it is not easy to understand. There is an act; there are regulations, and I only have a draft copy; there is a schedule; and there are some guidelines. How they interact and would work in practice is not always that easy to understand.

I also want to see a defined rehabilitation process. One of the Australian states has a requirement for the rehabilitation of a bore, or well, once finished. I do not see that included. It may be under regulated activity, but it is something that needs to be specified. How would the bore be rehabilitated? That would be 30 years later and technology will have changed by then, but we need a definite requirement and it would need to be inspected as that happens.

Another important area is to ensure we have serious penalties for breaches. The government would receive a bond from these companies. I do not know how that works, but it could be put into an investment account to earn interest. That interest could then be used to fund the inspectorate. Tina Hunter argues that the inspectorate should be independent. If the money from the bond or trust is used to fund this process, the wells could be inspected on a regular basis, which is really important. Tina mentions this in her recommendations, but I am not sure if it is the new regulations because I do not have them.

Another important issue, which I have raised with the industry, is that the industry needs to convince people that it is interested in ensuring the environment is not negatively affected. In Queensland there is the GasFields Commission. The GasFields Commission looks at the following:

- the allocation of tenure which gives resource companies the right to explore for and produce the gas

- environmental impact assessments and the inclusions of conditions in environmental authorities to prevent or mitigate impacts on the environment
- best practice for communication between companies and landholders, and conditions that companies must abide by in their involvement with landholders
- assessment of the potential impact on ground water and provisions to protect landholders' access to ground water
- standards for drilling, using and decommissioning gas wells
- safety standards
- greenhouse gas storage.

I am interested in having something similar in the Northern Territory. I will quote from the *Gasfields Commission Act*:

The commission has the following functions:

- (a) facilitating better relationships between landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry;*
- (b) reviewing the effectiveness of government entities in implementing regulatory frameworks that relate to the onshore gas industry;*
- (c) advising Ministers and government entities about the ability of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry to coexist within an identified area;*
- (d) making recommendations to the relevant Minister that regulatory frameworks and legislation relating to the onshore gas industry be reviewed or amended;*
- (e) making recommendations to the relevant Minister and onshore gas industry about leading practice or management relating to the onshore gas industry;*
- (f) advising the Minister and government entities about matters relating to the onshore gas industry;*
- (g) convening landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas*

industry for the purpose of resolving issues;

- (k) partnering with other entities for the purpose of conducting research related to the onshore gas industry;*

The presence of a gas commission would be positive for the Northern Territory, but that is not in the act. I know it could come in later, but we need to ensure we have set-ups that cover many of the issues we are concerned about.

Another issue is where are our baseline assessments? Are they in this act? Are they in the regulations? The Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection issues a guideline. I know it is only a guideline, but it is a baseline assessment guideline. It says:

What is baseline assessment?

...

- *the level and quality of water in the bore.*
- *how the bore is constructed.*
- *the type of infrastructure used to pump water from the bore.*

This is not only for fracking; it comes under the *Water Act*, but we need a process stating that a baseline assessment is required. Before entering an area the water quality and the environment are known and measured controls, then if something happens you can say, 'This is the change that has occurred because this particular thing happened'. It may not be fracking; it could be mining, a road or many other things that could affect the environment, but there is a baseline to compare it with.

I had a good talk with David Morris yesterday. He submitted a very long report, which he told me would be worth about \$30 000 if he was doing it for money. I hope he does not mind me repeating that; it was an off-the-cuff remark. All he received was an acknowledgment of some type yesterday. He would love to know whether that report has been taken seriously or went in the bin. I hope people have looked at what he had to say. He is a great bloke. I do not always agree with him, but he is a genuine fellow who works independently. There are pressure groups in our community which I do not always agree with. Once you hear what he has to say, I think you will agree it is a reasonable approach. He is not saying fracking should not occur, but that it is an industrial process and any industrial process needs to be assessed properly. I will read his summary and

key comments. I note that 'EDO' refers to the Environmental Defenders Office:

There is plenty to commend the draft regulations. The EDO recognises the significance effort that has gone into the development of the draft regulations. Particularly we wish to recognise the following aspects of the draft regulations, which are of great importance and benefit to the establishment of a world-class regulatory regime for oil and gas operations in the Northern Territory:

- *The recognition and specific inclusion of ESD ...*

Ecologically sustainable development:

... principles into the draft regulations; and

- *The increased transparency of process, achieved by:*
 - *the mandated requirement to publish environment management plans (EMP); and*
 - *the requirement that decisions be accompanied by a statement of reasons.*
- *The clear intention to require comprehensive stakeholder engagement.*

In terms of constructive criticism, the five main issues the EDO identified are:

- *The draft regulations do not define what is meant by 'acceptable' or 'as low as reasonably practicable'.*
- *Our continued scepticism of the merits of an approach, which does not specify in the regulations any minimum requirements that must be met by operators, but instead requires them to achieve environmental outcomes, which are always 'acceptable';*

A word that has been questioned before.

- *A continued over-reliance on the minister to make good decisions;*
- *The absence of a sufficiently qualified and independent body to assist the minister in making decisions about the adequacy of EMPs; and*
- *The absence of third party review rights to challenge the merits of decisions.*

These were his major recommendations:

It is clear there are some drafting errors that need attention; however, these comments have not sought to be too pedantic in terms of those minor issues. Our major recommendations are as follows:

- *The introduction of a hybrid regulatory approach which incorporates some prescriptive, enforceable, operational requirements into the regulations, particularly requirements regarding:*
 - *Well integrity,*
 - *requirements for baseline testing,*
 - *Use and disposal of water*
 - *Chemical use; and*
 - *Limitations on fugitive air emissions and use of flaring*
- *The introduction of third party merits review of the approval of an EMP.*
- *The introduction of an expert independent advisory panel.*

This is exactly what I mentioned Queensland has. It may be slightly different but has the same principle.

- *Penalties under the regulations should be substantially increased.*

I am not against fracking per se. It is a form of developing gas resources in the Northern Territory. I believe that with today's science it can be done carefully, properly and safely. But unless I know those three things are guaranteed to be put into our act, regulations and guidelines – I hope the guidelines are a requirement under the act. It would only require some wording to ensure the guidelines are taken into account. If all those things I have spoken about ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I request an extension of time for the member for Nelson.

Motion agreed to.

Mr WOOD: Do the processes take on what the Environmental Defenders Office has said? I have spoken to people who are genuinely concerned, but they have not put a yellow triangle on their front gate. They are interested because they can see the benefits of the gas industry in the Northern Territory. Believe it or not, some people will argue that there is no economic reason, but

gas companies will not come to the Northern Territory if there is no economic reason. Gas will continue to be a form of energy used in Australia because it is essential for cooking and heating. Regardless of renewable energy, it will still be used for that and in industry. Many industries use gas to provide the heat required for the processes they use. That does not mean we should be lax in ensuring the provision of gas for the overseas economy does not threaten the Northern Territory environment.

If the major recommendations from the Environmental Defenders Office – which are, coincidentally, similar to what I have discussed with people – are included in this system, as well as some of the other ideas discussed, such as penalties which are significant enough to discourage harm to the environment, then this can happen. However, what we have been given today does not convince me that this is where we should go.

I know sometimes we knock the industry, but the West Australian Onshore Gas Code of Practice for Hydraulic Fracturing, which I pulled off the Internet today, is by APPEA. Some people do not like APPEA, but it is the oil and gas industry and it comes up with some good things. It issued a code of practice for hydraulic fracking. I looked through it and it is pretty good. It may not be perfect for those who do not like fracking at all, but something like this would be good to include in our legislation.

It talks about the legislation; the community, landholder and stakeholder interaction; sourcing and use of water; use of chemicals in hydraulic fracking; fluid flow back and produced fluids contaminant; industry standards and guidance, and the regulatory framework; fugitive emissions; continuous improvement; and definitions.

Remember, the government decided it would be slow to introduce this legislation, which has made the industry take notice and realise it has a responsibility. If it wants to come into the Territory and take gas from the ground, it also has to tell people what its intentions are and be open and transparent about what it will do.

I am not a great supporter of fracking. I have a document from the ABC rural website. It says that Dr Tina Hunter said at her Cattlemen's Conference talk that:

... the moratorium on fracking, as proposed by NT Labor Party should they win government, was not the answer.

She said fracking exploration provided useful data which helped to develop a regulatory regime.

'My concern with a moratorium, and I am against a moratorium, is because how do you get knowledge and build your scientific profile and get the necessary data if you can't undertake the activity that will give you the data' ...

The ACCC released recommendations on 26 April this year and I will read what APPEA said about it:

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has called for the lifting of gas moratoria and has warned against introducing domestic gas reservation.

On Friday 22 April, the ACCC released its long-awaited report of the Inquiry into the East Coast Gas Market.

This document found that onshore regulatory restrictions and hydraulic fracturing bans in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania – as well as a proposed fracking ban in the Northern Territory – had increased uncertainty and contributed to reducing investment in gas operations.

'While the inquiry acknowledges that there are understandable reasons for policy positions like moratoria, blanket moratoria and regulatory uncertainty act to curtail gas exploration and new production,' ACCC Chairman Rod Sims said.

The ACCC also said gas reservation policies should not be introduced, 'given their likely detrimental effect already on uncertain supply.'

The recommendations came from that. It is one thing to say we need to improve these regulations and the act, but it is another thing to have a moratorium. I believe there is an amount of populism in saying that because it is a controversial issue. 'We will not do anything for five years, which will take us through the election without controversy.'

We need to face up to the issues. There are people opposed to it and I understand where they are coming from, but some of those people come from a philosophical perspective of not wanting gas because they believe the world should run on renewables. As much as I like renewables, I do not think that is a practical outcome. Some people do have genuine concerns. I have met people who are into you straight away like a ton of bricks because you suggest some things to them, like what I have been putting to the Environmental Defenders Office. Their response is, 'No way', and they put you in a corner straightaway. I do not want to end up stuck in a corner over this; I am fluid on this.

We know the science is there; fracking will occur and has occurred in the Northern Territory. What we need to do is balance our concerns with what is needed to promote our economy in the Northern Territory. The Territory cannot always rely on funds from the Commonwealth. We have to keep looking at ways to drive our economy and employment opportunities, and replacing projects as they drop off, like INPEX. We need to ensure our economy is growing, but of course we have to balance that with a system that will not put our environment at risk.

Madam Speaker, I hope people understand where I am coming from. I thank the government for its briefing, but until I genuinely believe that what I have spoken about today is included in here, there is really no way I can say that I support it. Also, as I said, I cannot support Labor's point of view.

Ms LAWRIE (Karama): Madam Speaker, I also cannot support the petroleum bill. My journey is different to the lack of support for the legislation enunciated by the member for Nelson, but I respect his research, and on many points we have common ground.

I also listened to the issues raised by the Labor opposition members, who have said they will not support the legislation. I was personally very disappointed when Labor supported the pipeline legislation, the North East Gas Interconnector, which is predicated on unconventional fracking. However, I am glad that Labor recognises that amendments to the *Petroleum Act* do not provide best practice, despite assurances from the Country Liberals.

Regarding the *Petroleum Act*, to put it in a very simplistic way – which is hard, but we all try to articulate it – the best practice we are looking for is things such as defined practices around well integrity, inspection regimes, storage requirements, water requirements and the things we find in similar legislation, such as the *Mining Management Act* and the geothermal legislation, which was mentioned by the member for Nelson. All the things that are normally in the legislation are not in the *Petroleum Act*, because the government has taken a very non-prescriptive path with these amendments. It has put some principles in the act, and for the detail we would need to turn to the regulations, but when you turn to the draft regulations, or what we are led to believe are the final regulations, those prescriptive operational concerns are not there either.

Essentially, what we have is not best practice, as committed to by the government, out of the recommendations of the Hawke report. There is lip service paid to the recommendations by Dr Tina Hunter, but you have what I submit to be self-regulation of an industry that has proven

elsewhere in Australia and the world to provide significant adverse impact on the environment, land, water and air. We are at the very start of a journey the government wants the Northern Territory to go on in terms of wells – a flourishing number of wells, potentially 55 000, to exploit the onshore gas industry, which the CLP sees as the great saviour of the Territory's economy. I say, no, thank you, to self-regulation. For best practice, self-regulation does not cut it. The onshore gas industry, under the legislation proposed by the CLP, would be given a set of guiding principles under which it should operate. It will be required to create and obtain ministerial approval for its management plan, but otherwise it will self-regulate. Under such a scheme the interest holder, that is, the fracking company, prepares its own management plan, which must identify all risks associated with the activity and demonstrate that all risks are reduced to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable and acceptable. To put it quite simply, its true purpose is to enable shale gas fracturing in the Northern Territory to operate under a statement of principles and for frackers to self-regulate and operate as they best see fit.

Those are an analysis of the proposed amendments to the *Petroleum Act* by Northern Territory barrister, Lex Silvester. Lex is used to analysing legislation and has clearly shown us that this legislation is lacking. The genuine concerns that I and, I believe, the majority of our community have regarding fracking are heightened by the actions of a government that promised best practice and delivered, through amendments to the *Petroleum Act*, anything but best practice. It is self-regulation. As the member for Nelson pointed out, the Environmental Defenders Office put forward a significant submission to the government.

Madam Speaker, if the Treasurer wants to negotiate the outcome of the legislation on the floor of the House today, I respectfully ask that he do it where his conversation will not disturb contributions. You are speaking to me from the back of the Chamber, Treasurer. It is highly disorderly.

As the member for Nelson pointed out, the Environmental Defenders Office has been fair and reasonable in its extensive submission to the department and the government in regard to the *Petroleum Act* and the regulatory requirements around this industry. I guess they have taken the path that if it is to occur, then what is required for best practice? The baseline of requirements would normally exist in the head legislation, to give force of law and very defined requirements to the operators, but it is missing from this act, and, worse still, it is not even in the regulations.

The Environmental Defenders Office has put forward major recommendations, which I believe the government has received. We could have been dealing with a genuine approach to this today and the government could have had amendments to this if it had taken on board what the Environmental Defenders Office said in relation to well integrity; requirements for baseline testing, use and disposal of water; chemical use; and limitations on fugitive air emissions and the use of flaring. The relevant minister could have brought forward amendments to these amendments to accept these basic regulatory requirements, but that is not here.

We could have had the introduction of a third-party merits review or the approval of environmental plans. We could also have had the introduction of an expert independent advisory panel, and could have had the penalties under the regulations substantially increased. None of that has happened; it does not exist in the legislation before us today. It has not been picked up in the regulations; it is missing. Without those fundamental requirements for us to understand that best practice has been introduced into an industry that has a history of destruction of the environment, how can we be expected to support this today if we care about the land, water and air of the Northern Territory?

I listened to the member for Fong Lim ranting and raving against me, and I expect there will be more tonight. I saw his despicable display in Question Time today when I asked why the government had not picked up the recommendations of Dr Tina Hunter. He said, 'It's just all pandering to the lefties and the Greens'.

I was born and raised in the Territory; this is my home. My care and concern is for best practice in an industry that has been proved to damage the environment elsewhere in the world and in Australia. I am a child of the Territory; I love this country, our land. I want our water to be safe and our air unpolluted. This industry requires significant regulatory regimes if there is to be any chance of that happening. These legislative changes are far from that.

I have a different view to some other members in this Chamber; we should not allow fracking at all. There is no place for it, if we put the environment first. I am not anti-jobs or anti-development. You can try to paint me that way, but it is nonsense. I believe we are far smarter across regional Australia than to embrace an onshore oil and gas industry. We could have better efforts in pastoral, agricultural and tourism businesses. Small, focused, smart, local businesses driven by the people of the country, the land across regional Australia, Indigenous Territorians and our long-held pastoral and farming families – but you

cannot have that when your land, water and air has been poisoned.

This is a regime that allows self-regulation and all of the environmental risks that come with that. We are meant to believe that it will satisfy the environmental needs of our Territory, but the basic requirements are not in place in the head legislation nor are they in the regulations. They do not have force of law.

We are being fed the big white elephant, as Lex Silvester calls it. In a moment I will seek leave to table some notes Lex Silvester has provided to me, and has approved for me to table. I wanted to table them in a previous debate, but I ran out of time. The document is titled 'A Fractured Territory' and it is the Barrister Lex Silvester's analysis of the Hawke report, upon which the government bases its stance that it is providing a regulated environment for the onshore oil and gas industry. Lex analysed the Hawke report, and his analysis very clearly points out why the report is biased and not independent.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table the Lex Silvester analysis of the Hawke report.

Leave granted.

Ms LAWRIE: I met with Bruce Robertson who has done some financial analysis of the NEGI, the North East Gas Interconnector pipeline. He pointed out why it is a white elephant.

In this debate about regulatory regimes, or lack thereof, within this industry, it is appropriate to talk about whether or not we have the big drive, push and urgency the CLP government would lead us to believe we have. It is completely dismantled when you look at the financial analysis of the pipeline. Like anyone who speaks out against what I call the Giles white elephant, the pipedream of Giles as he exits the Territory, Bruce Robertson will be denigrated by the Treasurer. That is the way he plays; he plays the man, and it is vile when you are on the receiving end. I apologise to Bruce Robertson for having to put up with that sort of behaviour, because he is a very decent person who did some very strong financial analysis.

In his analysis he clearly points out that the onshore gas industry has to be assessed in the context of a global gas glut. An excess supply and floundering demand exist; globally, the contracting price mechanism is breaking down. An example of that is provided in his analysis. NT shale gas delivered to market would be at an even higher cost. The NEGI would have to compete against the cheap piped Russian gas and cheap LNG from the USA into the all-important Asian markets, particularly China. The NEGI is a foreign government-owned, unregulated monopoly. It is

not a private corporation, as the government would have people believe in its great web of obfuscation. It is owned by Singapore and China. Jemena has a very tax-effective structure, and should the NEGI and the shale gas industry in the NT proceed, it is the governments of Singapore and China that will reap much of the gains.

The global gas industry closed the 2015 year in a glut with a total nameplate liquefaction capacity of 308 ML. I apologise because I will probably incorrectly describe the technical definitions. Essentially, supply outstripped demand by 26% in 2015. It is predicted that supply will outstrip demand by 30% going through to 2020. The bulk of the global expansion in the LNG capacity between 2015 and 2020 will occur in Australia and the United States. Australia is already oversupplying into a global environment where demand is decreasing. The domestic market is down in terms of demand; the east coast Australian demand was down by 4% in 2015. Between 2011 and 2014 there were consistent downgrades of forecasts.

The point Bruce Robertson makes in his graphs within his analysis is that the industry had higher demand growth predictions than what has actually occurred. It is a form of crocodile jaws, with very high demand forecasts and very low actuals coming in. If you want a percentage on that, forecasts made in 2011 for 2030 are a massive 58.7% higher than the forecasts made in 2015. The analysis provided sets out – with quotes from the Office of the Chief Economist – how global demand is falling. It shows the reduction in demand from Japan, a prediction of a 28% fall. It talks about the relationship with China drawing down energy from Russia. We are being fed the great white elephant pipedream by this Giles government.

Korea has seen drops in demand; it is expected to fall by 5% from 2014 to 2029. China is seeing the rise of renewable energy and the growth of a domestic gas industry. It has global geopolitical effects on its energy security issues and is looking to its north; it is increasing its Russian supply. According to this analysis the Chinese market has two main driving dynamics. There is the Power of Siberia pipeline and on 8 May 2015 the western route, the Power of Siberia pipeline II, is being pursued. The analysis describes this as the Russian bear hug.

There is this notion that we will be able to supply into an already oversupplied, domestic, eastern-seaboard market which then exports into an already oversupplied global market, but do not worry folks, it will be okay because China will take all this extra supply. That flies completely in the face of what China is doing, which is muscling up to Russia.

The financial analysis provided by Bruce Robertson shows that the contract system can and does break down. India's Petronet LNG managed to recast its contract with Qatar's RasGas; the renegotiation cut prices in half over the 25-year contract. This goes to the financials around the NEGI. Power and Water over-contracted gas when Syd Stirling was Treasurer, which the government relies on to pursue the NEGI concept. The government walked away from opportunities to keep the industry alive in Nhulunbuy, which is one of the greatest shames of this term of government.

The NEGI project has obvious issues; the pipeline has already had a 25% capacity downgrade. Jemena does not currently pay tax, but there is a view that it will potentially pay tax this year. Ultimately, in a financial oil and gas market, it all comes down to price. The US gas price is about \$2 USD/GJ, the Japanese contract gas price is about \$5 to \$6 USD/GJ and the east coast gas production costs about \$5 to \$6 USD/GJ. Using the lower range of the Wood Mackenzie Analysis, gas could be delivered to Gladstone on the NEGI for \$9 USD/GJ, before liquefaction and shipping. It does not stack up; it is \$9 USD/GJ versus the Henry Hub sitting at about \$2 USD/GJ.

I raise the financial analysis because the government would lead us to believe this is the great messiah, that this will save the Northern Territory and deliver jobs and growth, because they have failed to deliver a major project off the back of the Ichthys project. It will not; the financial analysis shows it does not stack up. The markets are already over-supplied, domestic and global. The current prices are far lower than what a Territory fracking industry could deliver through this NEGI pipeline. In the dying months of the CLP government, we are expected to trust it with a regulatory regime for the fracking industry, but evidence shows, globally and in Australia, that it causes significant environmental damage to land, water and air.

The *Petroleum Act* presented to us tonight does not have the basic environmental management plan requirements in the legislation, and they are missing from the regulations. In all conscience, no one in this Chamber should support this legislation. If you want and believe in best practice – if you are a believer, like the CLP, in this white elephant industry that is proven to damage the environment – you have the time to get it right. What we have before us tonight is completely and woefully inadequate, and in all conscience could not be supported. Take it away and fix it. Put the environmental management plan requirements into the head legislation, as it is in other similar industry legislation, such as the mining act. Do not proceed unless you have, as a minimum, operational requirements in the

regulations – I would argue in the legislation, but at a minimum in the regulations – regarding well integrity, requirement for baseline testing, use and disposal of water, chemical use, and limitations on fugitive air emissions and the use of flaring. Do not proceed unless the introduction and third-party merits review of the approval of an environmental management plan – do not proceed without the introduction of an expert independent advisory panel, and do not proceed unless the penalties under the regulations are substantially increased.

CLP, if you did all of that we would be dealing with best practice, but you failed to. Do not proceed, there is no mad rush. For the sake of the Territory's environment, we need to get this right.

I do not believe in fracking at all. I will stand and oppose fracking completely, but I understand that this government is on that bandwagon and a future Labor government may decide to embrace fracking. Let us put best practice in place, in case the companies roll in and strike wells across our land. In all conscience, I cannot believe that anyone could support this legislation in this Chamber tonight. I certainly will not.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, my understanding of the people I represent is that Centralians are generally quite concerned about the planned proliferation of horizontal fracturing in Central Australia.

Like most people, I knew very little about horizontal fracturing, or fracking, until a few years ago. Over the last couple of years I have been listening, reading, seeking information and watching documentaries. I even attended a screening of a documentary called *Frackman* at the invitation of the local environmental group in Alice Springs. I now feel that I have a reasonable understanding of what the global and national fracking experience has been. I have been lobbied by the local anti-fracking lobby group. They have come to see me on numerous occasions, providing me with information and personalised tutorials on the latest information regarding fracking, particularly horizontal fracking.

On the flipside, I have had very little contact with anyone from the mining industry involved in fracking. I have not been approached by any lobby groups wanting to talk to me and educate me on the wonders and virtues of fracking in the Northern Territory. The only recent, publicly-available information I have read is the advertisements that have suddenly appeared in the *NT News* and the *Centralian Advocate* which talk about onshore gas drilling. That is my vague education of fracking, what it would mean to the Northern Territory and what it has meant to places around the globe that have been affected by horizontal fracturing and fracking generally. The

average person is probably at the same level as me, still drawing on information and trying to become more informed.

Tonight we talk about the amendment to the *Petroleum Act*, which the Minister for Mines and Energy has brought forward. This amendment involves a very simple insertion into the *Petroleum Act* of, I think, about 56 words. It involves very little information or little detail. I will read it out:

In regulations prescribing matters for the protection of the environment as mentioned in subsection (2)(p) the Administrator may provide for:

- (a) *functions to be performed and powers to be exercised by the minister; and*
- (b) *the way in which the minister may perform a function or exercise a power including the way in which the minister may exercise a discretion.*

Tonight we are debating the insertion of those 56 words. When I think about the concerns of the people in my community, this does not provide much confidence or information. The Hawke report released in 2014 made six recommendations, which the Northern Territory government agreed to adhere to. The first was:

Consistent with other Australian and International reviews, the environmental risks associated with hydraulic fracturing can be managed effectively subject to the creation of a robust regulatory regime.

I have been waiting for the government to come up with a robust regulatory regime. In my Araluen newsletters, which I publish every four to six weeks, I have been providing updates on the Northern Territory government's implementation of the Hawke report recommendations. In my latest newsletter, May 2016, I talked about my anticipation of debating the Petroleum Amendment Bill (Serial 164) tonight, because we have waited quite a long time to see how the government will implement the recommendations of the Hawke report.

When I looked at the amendments the Minister for Mines and Energy brought forward I was suddenly disappointed, because there is no detail in the legislation. I was then informed that the details of what will be required by miners intending to undertake fracking will be in the regulations. Everyone in this Chamber knows the legislation is enforceable, but the regulations are far less enforceable.

People in Central Australia want to be convinced; they want to be reassured; they want to be

confident that all their fears about hydraulic fracturing will be allayed by a robust regulatory framework put in place by the Northern Territory government. The presentation of this amendment to the *Petroleum Act* makes me feel no less fearful or concerned about fracturing. Maybe my expectations were a little too high, but this is a great disappointment. It does not provide any detail or public scrutiny of hydraulic fracturing and the fracking industry to allay the concerns of my constituents. I am very disappointed; this is a lost opportunity.

I am not an expert in the field and will not go into technical detail regarding what I was or was not looking for, but this piece of legislation has not reassured me in any way. Alice Springs residents are especially concerned about hydraulic fracturing contaminating our water supply; that is their number one issue. There is nothing in this legislation to allay those fears. Another concern, of people who are possibly more informed of the process, is the integrity of the well heads used in hydraulic fracturing. Where will the water come from? In Central Australia, water is precious; it is gold. I know hydraulic fracturing is occurring in Central Australia; I have been shown a map of very remote locations where horizontal fracturing is occurring. How will those mines be supervised and inspected? In this legislation, the Minister for Mines and Energy provides no explanation or reassurance to the people in Central Australia regarding their concerns about horizontal fracturing.

I cannot support this tonight. I want the Mines minister to go back to the drawing board and come back with legislation, as well as the regulations. You must have regulations backing up the legislation, but people want to be reassured, and this legislation does not come close to providing that reassurance to my constituents, the community of Central Australia. Go back to the drawing board and come back with something far more prescriptive, detailed and comprehensive that addresses all the issues the people throughout the Northern Territory have in regard to horizontal fracturing.

Passing this bill would authorise the fracking industry to self-regulate, because there is nothing in the legislation to stop it. The regulations would be made enforceable in some way, but the penalties are not particularly harsh. There is nothing to allay the fears of people with real concerns about horizontal fracturing in Central Australia. For that reason, I cannot support this legislation.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is quite right for members to be exercising caution. The issues of the oil and gas industry, hydraulic fracturing and horizontal

fracturing are contentious to say the least. We know that if the industry is not well regulated or monitored, it has the potential to cause environmental problems. It is right to be cautious in considering a regulatory environment that provides for a regime sufficient to mitigate the risks involved in this industry.

Let us start with some history. The power generating networks of the Northern Territory have relied upon gas on and off for quite some time. When the Amadeus Gas Pipeline was built it provided gas from the Mereenie field in Central Australia, south west of Alice Springs, to Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine in the early days. That was fracked gas; it was removed from its reservoirs underground through the process of hydraulic fracturing.

Much of the discussion I have heard tonight, in different parts of the Territory, and in Katherine seems to be based on the premise that fracking is new. I will call it fracking because it is a simple term and everyone understands what it is. Many people are not aware that fracking has been around for a long time. It started a long time ago, in 1865 in the United States, and a crude process called the Roberts' Torpedo was used. I think all the mining was for oil in those days, and if an oil well stopped flowing or the flow diminished significantly, the rough neck – the oil miner – would drop a stick of dynamite or similar down the hole to blow the rock apart, which would allow the oil to flow again. Technology has progressed since then; I think modern fracking was used for the first time in 1949.

Modern fracking is the injection of high-pressure water, sand and a small amount of chemical into a well bore. The process is the same, whether it is horizontal or vertical. The high pressure water is pumped into the well bore, bursting the casing at preordained points. The high pressure water, carrying the sand and chemical mix, then bursts out of the pipe, fracturing the surrounding oil and gas-bearing rock. The sand is designed to remain in situ to prop open the tiny fissures and cracks that have been created in the rock. The water, and the majority of the chemical, is recovered by either being pumped out or through flowing back to the surface under the pressure of the oil or gas which has come back into the casing. There is a fairly high rate of recovery of the water, which can be recycled and reused.

The process has been significantly refined over time. In 1949 it was probably hit and miss, a case of giving it a try to see how it went. These days the science and technology is well refined because oil and gas companies spend millions of dollars determining the right mix of chemicals, sand and other components to go down the well bore. It is based on the type of rock being

fractured and how long and wide the fractures need to be. There is a lot of technical information backing that up.

Companies are so meticulous and technologically advanced now because fracking costs a lot of money. Companies need to ensure every fracture is as effective as possible with an efficient flow of gas or oil, whichever it may be, flowing back into the well casing to be recovered. The technology is now very well understood. A team of scientists sits either at the surface or in laboratories testing rock samples and other things to get that chemistry right. When I say chemistry I mean that of the fracturing fluid and the oil- or gas-bearing rock.

That explains the fracking process which has been happening in the Territory for 40 years. As I said earlier, some of the Territory's power stations were powered by fracked gas for quite a number of years. Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Yulara are still being supplied with gas that has been fracked out of the Mereenie field in Central Australia. Since the Mereenie field started to diminish its flow a number of years ago, the new gas supply for the Darwin/Katherine grid is through the Blacktip field, which comes onshore at Wadeye. We need to forget the false premise that fracking is new to the Northern Territory, because it is not, and it has also been used all over Australia.

It is very important to delineate the difference between deep shale and coal seam gas. Many people have become caught up in the false and misleading information being spread around the community by the anti-oil and gas lobby, and the anti-fracking lobby. Those lobby groups have been quite successful in confusing people into not really knowing the difference between deep shale and coal seam gas. In the context of the Territory, deep shale gas is between 1.5 km to 4 km underground, whereas coal seam gas is often very close – within a few hundred metres – to the surface; sometimes it even outcrops. At times it has direct contact with, or is very close to, surface water and ground water.

The processes are quite similar, but there is a stark difference between the two. Coal seam gas is fracked as well, but in a physical and geological sense, the two are poles apart. I point that out because there is only the smallest of chances that a fracking process occurring in deep shale – deep underground, possibly several kilometres below the surface – will have any impact at all on ground water, and certainly not the potable ground water that lies within 30 m to 150 m of the surface. That impact could not happen, because there is such a great distance between the Northern Territory's potable water tables and deep shale resources.

The longest hydraulic fracture ever recorded was about 600 m long. Imagine a pipe going through the earth, which turns horizontally into a seam of shale and fractures it from that casing. A fracture has been propagated 600 m, which is quite a long way, but generally fractures are much less than 600 m and kept within the oil- or gas-bearing rock. There is no point in excessively fracking a shale deposit or going into any other rock because it would be more expensive and provide no further resources. There is an economic imperative for the gas and oil companies to keep their fractures confined to the hydrocarbon-bearing shale.

I hope that clears up some misunderstandings of the potential of hydraulic fracturing to contaminate water tables. The anti-fracking groups will talk until they are blue in the face, trying to convince you that internationally there have been dozens, hundreds, or thousands of times when deep shale hydraulic fracturing has contaminated a ground water source, but that is not true. I have been advised that of the millions of fracturing operations that have occurred across the globe over the decades, there has never been a proven case of aquifer contamination as a result of hydraulic fracturing. Although, it is easy to find cases on the Internet, if you read left or green websites or articles that purport to be scholarly. These articles will have a lot of words that are open ended and do not amount to proof, but say things like, 'could cause', 'has the potential to', 'may do', 'could do' or 'might do'. In those articles there is nothing hard and fast that definitively states, based on definitive proof, that hydraulic fracturing in deep shale has ever caused contamination to a potable water aquifer. Hopefully that clears up a bit of the misinformation on hydraulic fracturing as a cause of water table contamination.

The water brought to the surface, which still has fracking chemicals in it, has to be stored. Best-practice regulation would dictate that the water is taken offsite, treated and then returned to be recycled. That is one method, another is to pump the fracking water out into lined pits. Best-practice regulations would dictate that a pit is dug in the earth, lined with an impervious material and the water is pumped in to be stored. Sometimes it can be recycled, other times evaporation is allowed to be employed and what remains is a sludge which is removed and disposed of under best-practice regulations. Occasionally recovered hydraulic fracturing water has contaminated the environment, either because it has leaked off site, has broken out of the pit or drained through the bottom of an unlined pit and contaminated ground water.

That is why the regulatory process and getting the regulations right are so important. The CLP and I are often accused of being pro-fracking; I do not think that is the case. I will not plead the

industry's case for fracking, but the government and I are pro-jobs and pro-development. We want to open up sustainable opportunities which expand the future for all manner of Territorian, from Darwin manufacturers of heavy machinery, parts and equipment for the oil and gas industry; local businesses in Katherine, such as the engineering workshop which serves the mining and oil and gas industries; to remote parts of the Territory with oil and gas prospects, where Aboriginal people might get a job. That is what we are for.

I will not apologise for, or defend, the industry; however, disregarding the hype and misleading information, I am convinced that the industry can be managed through proper regulations. The risks can be mitigated sufficiently for this industry to thrive while still providing the best levels of protection for our environment. I am not pro-fracking, but I want to see the oil and gas industry thrive because it provides economic opportunities for so many Territorians.

Dr Tina Hunter is a well-respected scientist in this field who was engaged by the former Labor government a few years ago to look at the regulations around the oil and gas industry. She determined then that a lot of work needed to be done, which, as far as I can gather, caused the Department of Mines and Energy to redouble its efforts. It looked nationally and internationally for the best regulatory environment to apply to the Northern Territory context. Part of this process of seeking and identifying a strong regulatory environment, or the components of one, was to visit different countries. In 2013, as the Minister for Mines and Energy, I went to Texas as part of a Mines and Energy delegation to see how its oil and gas industry operates and talk to people about best-practice regulation, how things are done there, what went well, what did not go well, what went wrong and the lessons learnt, which we could bring back to the Northern Territory.

It has been an ongoing process and many people in the Department of Mines and Energy have worked extremely hard on it; they are dedicated professionals who take their job extremely seriously. They probably feel uncomfortable by inference, because some of what is being said by the members opposite and the Independents could be seen as a slur on those fine members of the department. They have dedicated years of their life to doing the right thing for the Northern Territory environment, while potentially making the oil and gas industry a greater reality than it currently is.

That important work has been ongoing, it has been bubbling along for the last few years. Then it became very fashionable to criticise fracking. The Lock the Gate Alliance started its business in

Queensland in 2010 and has grown since then. It has had some successes in New South Wales and it is possible its efforts resulted in a moratorium on fracking in Victoria. Then it set its sights on the Northern Territory; we are engaged in a battle with Lock the Gate and its supporters regarding the practice of fracking.

The opposition members and Independents who have contributed to this debate have been irresponsible in their comments and the approach some of them have taken to this industry. As members of parliament we have a job to do, with roles and responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to listen to the views of our constituents, and convey those views to the government. That is one side of the information flow; the information goes the other way as well.

To responsibly manage these very contentious issues, a member of parliament must fully avail themselves of all the knowledge, literature and information their little heads can hold, and then return to their constituency to educate residents. If you do not attempt to take the right information back to your people, you are allowing a lie to perpetuate. Much of what is said about the oil and gas industry and hydraulic fracturing is untrue. Is it right for members of parliament to allow those lies to be perpetuated? Do we not have a responsibility to our constituents to provide them with the information they need to make informed choices? Is that not the responsibility of every member of this House?

There are examples where that has not happened. Nick Xenophon, an independent South Australian senator, was in full support of the live cattle ban of 2011. He took the populist approach. He was canvassed heavily by his constituents and decided to support them, without researching and understanding the live export cattle industry, and then trying to educate his own constituents. That is what is happening in the Northern Territory with the oil and gas sector.

I heard the sanctimonious whine of the member for Karama. What a hypocrite! Not long ago she was the Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, a very influential position. Why was she not dealing with this issue when the Labor Party was in power?

Mr Chandler: Hard.

Mr WESTRA van HOLT: Exactly, member for Brennan, it was too hard, like many other things for the Labor Party. They do not like it, they are too scared of it, it is too hard, and they do not want to upset anyone. What do they do? They put a moratorium on it. Why do you think we had a moratorium on land clearing in the Daly? It was because the Labor Party was too scared of its

Green mates to make any tough decisions. So what did they do? They put a moratorium on it. That is the Labor Party's answer to tough questions. Rather than deal with an issue up front and educate themselves and their constituents, they happily put a moratorium in place.

The problem with moratoria is that they hurt somebody. People do not like a decision that does not go their way, but they hate no decision even more. That is what a moratorium is, no decision, and people hate that more. They expect their politicians to have some gumption and courage under fire to make the right decision. The Labor opposition is bereft of any courage whatsoever so it wants put a moratorium in place.

Uncertainty is not the only reason a moratorium is harmful. Labor's moratorium will severely damage two things: the Territory's economy and reputation. I do not often use the term 'sovereign risk', but in Australia the sovereign risk is very low. We have a stable government which makes sensible decisions. It is not always prone to knee-jerk decisions like the live cattle ban of 2011, but populist decisions like that impact on the ability of business to operate in a safe, stable and secure environment, increasing sovereign risk. That is one of my biggest concerns, that the reputation of the Northern Territory is damaged as a result of the Labor party's call for a moratorium. I hope, on that basis alone, it is not successful in taking government in August this year.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: There is a lot of misinformation about hydraulic fracturing and it is a big issue in Katherine. I produced a fact sheet, with questions and answers, which was distributed in the *Katherine Times* this week. I hope this will circulate, start to re-educate people and allay some concerns. I seek leave to table a copy of this document.

Leave granted.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Tonight we have seen an example of what to expect if the Labor Party returns to government in August this year. It will be sovereign risk, moratoria and industry uncertainty, which will lead to a decline in the Territory's economy and reputation. Even worse is that many of its policies are job destroying.

I will be disappointed if this legislation does not pass tonight; it enables the government to properly regulate the industry. As they stand, the regulations have been well received by Dr Tina

Hunter and a number of other people who have commented on them. I think the regulations are going out for more consultation.

I support this bill and I hope that sufficient parliamentary colleagues provide the same support.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are technical engineering differences between harvesting an oil and gas resource in the Mereenie Basin, the Blacktip offshore field and the new tight shale gas, which is defined as an unconventional resource. I will throw these differences into the debate arena, because this is what happens when an ex-police officer, a school teacher, a horticulturalist and poultry farmer, a cattle station pastoralist and a journalist debate an issue.

The member for Katherine has given me a science lesson full of holes, which, essentially, represents Labor's concerns. We do not want to give the good son of a pastoralist full authority to regulate this industry, which is considerably new in the Territory. It is not like the Mereenie Basin, the Browse Basin or the offshore reserves; this is a new industry of tight shale unconventional processes. That is why no one in the Territory is buying the hyperactive spin from the Chief Minister and the Minister for Business, their scaremongering and ridiculous hypocrisy about the lights going off in the Northern Territory. It will be difficult to explain the subtle difference without an engineer on the floor to inform the debate.

I thank my colleague, the member for Johnston and Labor opposition spokesperson for Mines and Energy, for facilitating a briefing; I participated via telephone. I also thank the department officials, because it is difficult to conduct briefings with a member via phone, but it was a good briefing with a great interchange of ideas. There were a couple of beneficial outcomes. I also thank the CE of the Department of Mines and Energy, who updated me on McArthur River Mine. Two weeks later I took a full tour with the executive of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, local pastoralists and government officials, and saw firsthand what McArthur River Mining is doing in its considerable environmental program. Thank you to Ron Kelly for that.

As an opposition we hold a very different position, and our spokesperson has already said we will not be supporting the amendments the minister has brought forward.

At the time of the briefing there were no regulations to present. I bounced straight off what I learnt from the member for Port Darwin when he was in opposition; he taught me about the, 'just trust me' legislation approach. I remember it very

clearly, trying to sign a blank cheque when you do not have the information in front of you. I am a little gun-shy of that position in opposition, but there were promises. Examining the concept of promises, unfortunately this government does not have much credibility left in its trust and accountability; you can understand the reticence of opposition members.

It was said that this would be formed up, put into the public domain, that we would understand what regulations provide the minister with governance to act on. Yesterday more information was provided, but I am under the impression that there is more to come. This is important legislation. The opposition considers that the government has not done its work, and also that the sense of urgency the government, particularly the Chief Minister and the Minister for Business, continues to rant about, is not there.

The province I live in potentially represents a resource. I have been aware of the exploration program that has been happening over the past 10 years. Currently, other than Origin Energy, which is in a good state with a significant retail arm of its business, and money to explore, everybody else has left the region. Globally there is no sense of urgency in this industry at the moment.

The member for Katherine defined misinformation put out there by the Chief Minister and government members. I agree that it is wrong to put that into the public domain as elected members of the parliament with a responsibility to provide the community with real, relevant and accountable information to take the community with us.

In a global context there is no real sense of urgency. For 37 years I have lived in a province which the industry tells us could realise a resource and it will be different. That is why I define it as a frontier industry; it will be very different. It will use a new process in a new geological setting: the Northern Territory. This is not Chinchilla, Queensland; Africa or Wyoming. This is the Northern Territory. As I keep reminding members in this House, we are custodians of our natural resources. If we go down this road to realise any economic future for the Northern Territory, we better get it right, because there are many international and national examples where things have not gone to plan and have created more problems than it is worth.

As opposition members we asked what the government has planned regarding the Environment Act; the comments were that the Environment Act does need a lot of changes. I asked about the EPA; the comments were that the EPA does not need a lot of changes. The

government's focus seemed to be regulation through the Department of Mines and Energy, and these amendments which give the minister considerable power in terms of governance and delegation over the regulation of this industry.

Where Labor differs considerably from those early questions and answers of the briefing is that it believes the Environment Act needs to be strengthened considerably, and that is what Labor plans to do. That is a distinct policy difference. Labor will look at the Environment Act, community expectations and the outdated rules, which are confusing for business and investment, as well as reform the environmental regulatory systems.

That is the baseline of Labor's approach to the new industry of alternative oil and gas, and the development of Northern Australia. That is parallel to the Environment Protection Authority. Labor believes there is a lot more work to be done to strengthen the EPA as an independent body, aside from government, that has real accountability to the community, and this is supported by stakeholders across the Territory.

That is where Labor comes from with its policy, which has been spun as political opportunism about moratoriums. I am not concerned about moratoria. If judged worthy to become part of the new Northern Territory government, I would be ready and proud to be part of a team that does this work. I want to understand the hydrology and geology of the Northern Territory. I am privileged to have been a member of the Committee on the Northern Territory's Energy Future over four years. I thank the government and the Chief Minister for that opportunity; it was a wise decision and the committee has worked very well as a group and done a vast amount of research.

It is important to acknowledge the Legislative Assembly secretariat which manages all our committees, but the Energy Futures Committee has been particularly excellent. I will share a small example of the experience.

Members of the House would know that I was very active on the Muckaty campaign against a nuclear waste management facility being imposed on prime cattle country in the Barkly. I always took a moderated position. If Australia is to go down this road, then let us do it properly once and not fudge it trying this deficit model on Muckaty. The campaign ran for seven years, and eight years later I was at Lucas Heights talking to scientists who work with nuclear isotopes. I was very fortunate and privileged to sit with a scientist who was doing some amazing work in the Pilbara, identifying underground aquifer water sources. The irony for me, a guy who was on the front protest lines against the nuclear waste management facility at Muckaty, was that these

processes use radioisotopes directly produced from our uranium and processed at Lucas Heights.

The scientists can not only define the aquifer's source of water, they can also tell you how old it is, where it came from, the recharge rates, the length, depth, breadth and all of its capacity issues, and then they can advise you on management aspects of that water source. As a school teacher entering the debate, I asked the scientists if they could come to the Northern Territory and conduct those studies, and they said they would be honoured to. It represented a significant commercial venture in two ways: for the scientists and for the Northern Territory to create jobs, research and development, identifying our natural resources. That experience led me to support and understand Labor's policy, and to advocate for it.

The studies and the strengthening of the environmental regulatory system and the EPA – I acknowledge the Chief Minister's comments on the office of the independent scientist, which is part of Labor's policy is to look at that as well and how to make sure we have a strong regulatory regime – all come together to be very clear and definitive, as opposed to the government's position on it, which is reflected in this legislation before the House that represents a quicker pace and a more rapid intent, which matches their aggressive narrative around this industry in the Northern Territory, and the political outcomes of trying to create a division in the community between the politics of Labor and the CLP.

Labor is working on what the policy will look like, testing and improving our environmental legislation, looking at working with the community and focusing on ensuring we can provide certainty to industry. Currently there is uncertainty for industry, but I look forward to the construction of the gas pipeline from Tennant Creek to the customer at Phosphate Hill. It is an example of new development for the Territory in this industry. It will realise an existing resource, our take-or-pay gas which comes from offshore, provide tax relief for the Territory, and give the Territory some confidence in government that it can do this properly and safely, and jobs will be created out of the project.

It is something government, industry, industry stakeholders and the community needs to focus on. Ironically, the project will take place in a global context where there is no money for oil and gas, and where there is no exploration happening. In the Barkly at the moment there is a lot of sadness because roadhouses are without bookings and there are no exploration rigs operating in the field. There has been a downturn which has nothing to do with politicians debating

in this House. It is to do with the global context. We need to be honest and up front. The gas pipeline will be an indicator in this new industry for the Territory, which will hopefully provide the public with confidence.

Labor also represents a policy that is progressive about implementing change relating to accountability and strong narrative with the community. Territorians not only deserve narrative and accountability, they demand it.

The resource that explorers think we have and want to look for is unconventional gas. Debate on the new unconventional gas industry has become, in colloquial terms, a barbeque stopper. Since the emergence of national groups like Lock the Gate, this conversation is happening everywhere. It is resonating in the remotest Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory.

Any Northern Territory government would be well advised to stop and listen, consult properly and look at more appropriate accountable systems, as opposed to this very prescriptive legislation which provides the minister with enormous powers. It indicates to the community that there is an escalation in the pace, intent and agenda to sign these issues off before the election. I do not share that sense of urgency.

In my budget reply I looked for examples of pragmatic budget appropriations from the government. I have been living and learning about this industry for the last decade because it relates to where I live in the Northern Territory.

In opposition I have been examining the budget papers over the last four years and have seen a trend. There is no increase in appropriations that would back up the government's plan or intent. The government is saying to Territorians that it is strengthening all the systems, making sure there are checks and balances, and doing studies. However, there has been no fiscal evidence of this in four years of budget cycles.

Once again, Budget 2016-17 has not shown any increases, other than a small increase in the Department of Mines and Energy appropriation relating to the production of petroleum, which the Chief Minister alerted the House to.

There is no hard evidence. I have not been able to assure our members that this is consolidated, tight and organised with any certainty. There are stakeholders we consult with as well.

I credit the government for mandating that any mining projects or developments in the alternative unconventional gas industry must have water licences. Labor supports it. It is a great outcome, which should be commended.

The government moved on it and Labor did in its policy as well. The other issues and concerns that stakeholders have listed have been mentioned by a number of members in this House.

There is a very clear difference, and, Treasurer, this has become an election issue. Territorians will be deciding on the next government of the Northern Territory on this election issue. The development of this industry, and the security, safety, surety and future of natural resources in the Northern Territory will be high on the agenda of electors in August. There are definitive policies to choose from between both major parties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Treasurer for bringing this to the House. It is a good opportunity to debate a very important issue. As our spokesperson said, Labor will not be supporting these amendments to the legislation.

Ms LEE (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, every Indigenous person has a right and a say on their land. The Mereenie Basin, as it stands, has been going for 40 years. I know about the Beetaloo Basin exploration that has been happening and I know the traditional owners have agreed to it.

At the end of the day, it comes down to the people. There will be one half who do not want it, and the other half will want exploration because it could help economic development in their region, which puts money on their table to look after their kids and send their kids away to school. These reasons mount up for Indigenous people.

Do not think you know where Aboriginal people stand and use it as a political platform in this House. That is the last thing I want to hear in this House. I have spoken to people, especially the members of the NLC, and hardly anybody is fully across fracking. One half made it sound so dramatic it scared people to death. They are terrified when you put the worst to them, because they do not have the same level of education as people in urban centres.

The other half wants more information and the liberty to make a choice about their land, if they have the opportunity to frack. They just need more information. I do not know where everybody else gathers their feelings from, but it is not from the people who are protesting outside of this House. Whether you are talking to the people out there on the ground or not – I do not know where you are getting your feedback from.

I know a lot of the mob who have come here in regard to McArthur mine. I have been to Borroloola several times. I want to know what the former members have done. I know there are problems at the mine, and it is because of the issues raised there that the same people are

outside now protesting. I went to school with those young fellows; I know them really well. I can understand their argument, like everybody else.

I respect everyone's argument, but I will not make assumptions in this House, or let people tell me where I stand. It is hypocritical to say you have invested in the pipeline but you want to put a moratorium on the gas you will put in the pipeline. How will you get the gas in the pipeline? That does not catch me. It does not make sense.

I had a good talk with the Department of Mines and Energy, and with the minister himself; I thank you guys for that. I also had a good talk with the environmental NT area to hear its side of it. I had a good listen to people in the remote areas, and the NLC members when they talked about it. Everybody is talking about it; I have had to listen to everybody. I know, as a fact, that a few of the people marching down the street actually want it to happen. I am not here to call them out, but you cannot wear two coats at once.

If this industry that drives economic development and provide jobs is stopped, who will fork out money for the economy the Aboriginal people live in? What is plan B? That is something everybody here needs to consider. Has anybody thought about the future of the Northern Territory, especially the people in the bush? I am not pro-left or pro-right; I am about moving forward, getting ahead and making things happen. If you want to be in places like this, then you have to be visionary, give and take, and sometimes you have to make decisions people will hate you for. It does not bother me; my heart will still be pumping.

What matters to me is the future of my kids after I leave this place, and the many kids behind us. If there will be money injected into education, then I hope it does truly happen. We have tried putting money aside with Aboriginal organisations, but like this House, you have those for and against development. Most of us want to move forward in our organisations, but we are held back by the other half. That is why Aboriginal organisations are always breaking up, splitting in half. It is because of debates like the one we are having in this House. Those are Aboriginal corporations, which is smaller politics, I can live with that, but there is always a plan B. We do the same thing in this House, except we are messing up the future of everybody. I have not heard what plan B is, if this is stopped.

Who will feed our kids? Will we just rely on the federal government and this false economy that we are living in for the rest of our lives? The last thing I want is for my people to be restrained in that situation for the rest of their lives. We are not elected to this House to keep going backwards.

You should not go backwards, even in relationships. I have proved that I do not do that; I move on. Everything I have faced in my life I have faced on my own. I did not cry on anybody's shoulder or expect anyone's help. I took the slap and I walked away.

The minister has explained to me that there is only a guideline in place at the moment. The mining sector in the Northern Territory has regulations in place; the only sector that does not is fracking. If fracking is to happen in the Northern Territory, it has to be done properly and in consideration of everything, including the environment.

From my understanding, as soon as this is passed fracking companies cannot suddenly do whatever they want. They can already do whatever they want because there are no regulations in place, only guidelines. I do not know how you misinterpreted that, but that is how I understand it.

We can make the world a better place if we put regulations in place, which we have not even got to yet, and get it right. This is not about winning votes. I could not care less if I am here for the next term, but if I am going to leave this House I will ensure the Northern Territory is ahead when I do, especially in regard to economic development, growth and the people in remote areas who will benefit from it.

Let the people decide about a moratorium. When I was first elected, Groote Eylandt wanted one.

Mr Giles: We did it.

Ms LEE: The government did it. It listened and put the moratorium in exactly where the people wanted it. That is how you do your job. You do not go across the board, because not everybody agrees with that.

Stop trying to use everybody as though they are tokens or puppets, especially in this House. I do not care if you tell the world what I just said. It clearly does not matter to me. I have been judged all of my life, especially the past four years in this House.

The last thing people should do is speak on behalf of a generation they do not even understand. Stop throwing rhetoric in their face. Consult them with an open mind – the good, the bad, let them decide with the facts. Of course there is a need in the global economy for gas, otherwise why would you have built a gas pipeline in the first place? One part of the Northern Territory is powered by gas. We cannot even bring it here yet, but eventually it will come here. There is a big need, from what I know, for renewable gas in the world. There is a big push for it, and one day it will come to that. My father was part of shutting down

Coronation Hill. There will be a need to open that up in the generation after me, or maybe in my time. The last thing I want is this House determining what I and my people want out there. If there is development that has to move on, let it happen. This House does not determine the fate of the people out there, especially not a minority.

If the clan who owns the land says go ahead, then that is their business. That is their determination and it has nothing to do with this House. If they say close it down because they do not want anything in their region, respect their wishes, close it down and do not do anything in their region. It is up to the people in their own regions.

I am not saying that because I am Aboriginal I speak on behalf of everyone in the Northern Territory, in all the other electorates, but I will speak on my traditional land. I have a say about the traditional land where my mother and father are from, because they are both Aboriginal custodians of a certain region. I am from the Northern Territory, born and bred, and so are my grandparents, and the grandparents before them. I do not know how far we go back, but longer than the Egyptian pyramids as far as I am concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we will pass this to put proper guidelines in place, but there has to be deeper consultation with the people on the ground. I want to bring them along with this. At the end of the day it is their choice to decide whether they want it or they do not. With regulations in place, if it does happen in the future they will be protected, and that is all that matters.

Mrs PRICE (Local Government and Community Services): Mr Deputy Speaker, my Aboriginal people have much to say about this. You cannot avoid the input of our people because it is our land, our country. We are the traditional owners, the custodians, and we want to have a voice in deciding what happens in our back yard.

For a long time others have decided and spoken in a foreign language on our behalf, yet we are the traditional landowners, the custodians, who are ignored. We have been ignored for a long time and it is time for others who think they own this part of the country to start listening to us. Our people have suffered for a long time without a voice. Our people's voices have not been heard. We have not had a chance to say what we really feel and what we want happening on our country. It is always other people talking on behalf of us, although we are the traditional owners, the custodians, the landowners. Other people think they have better ideas for us, but we are the ones who are kept down, told, 'Shut up, listen, and we will talk on your behalf'.

This has been going on for too long. We want to make a difference for the future of our children who have not had an education to make them aware of the possibilities out there for them. Employment opportunities are an important way forward for our children. To stand up and talk about what is important for us and our future – it is employment opportunities, housing opportunities and anything relating to us working with our land.

From day one, many people have talked about what is best for Aboriginal people. How dare they? They do not want to understand our culture, traditions and languages, and how we relate to our country. They think they know what is best for us and that what they think is the best.

That is what this country has been doing to my people and our choices. It has always been their choices and their opinions. People stand up and say, 'We know what is best for Aboriginal people', but they do not know how to speak our language. They do not know how to explain themselves, to tell us exactly how they are related to this country or how they feel for this country. It has been going on for so long and for something like this, which is so important, we have to work together; we have to talk together. You cannot just throw your opinions in the House and say what is right for blackfellas. You have to start involving blackfellas, not put your views over ours, because Aboriginal people have not been given the information to make a decision for themselves about fracking, drilling and everything else.

In Central Australia, the Mereenie gas fields have been operating since the 1980s and the traditional did not disagree with it. They have worked with it. They have achieved what they wanted. We have to understand; we have to allow Aboriginal people to decide for themselves. If you want Aboriginal people to work with you on this, we have to work together. That is all I wanted to say about this bill tonight.

Mr TOLLNER (Mines and Energy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everybody who has contributed to this debate tonight. I intend to comment on some of the points made, but firstly, members for Stuart and Arnhem, your contributions were fantastic. The points you made about Indigenous self-determination and consultation were fair and you had every right to make those calls.

I am proud to be part of the Adam Giles government. I have known the Chief Minister for a while now; I know a bit of his vision. He is pro-development, keen to open up the Territory and start things happening. He has been up front in saying that. He has especially crusaded for Indigenous economic development, but he always says, 'Where Indigenous people and communities

want economic development we are ready to assist. If they do not want it, we will stay away.'

For example, the member for Arafura has been vocal about his desire to see development and growth, particularly in the Tiwi Islands, through commercial opportunities such as the woodchip plantation, the port, fishing experiences, tourism and a range of other things. He wants economic development because he wants to see better jobs, better education and real meaning in life for people on the Tiwi Islands. Good on him; he is a great advocate for the Tiwi Islands. It is not only his desire to see development and opportunity created on the Tiwi Islands, he has the Chief Minister backing him.

It has been incredible to be part of this government over the last four years. The Tiwi Islands is almost an economic test case because the development there has been remarkable. It is catching on all around the Northern Territory; more and more often, Aboriginal people are telling us they want development and opportunity. That is the point the members for Arnhem and Stuart made.

For too long, the members for Arnhem, Stuart and Arafura, and many other Indigenous people, have had their voices suppressed. They have not been allowed to say they want economic development.

It is interesting that the member for Barkly spoke about his opposition to the nuclear waste facility at Muckaty Station. I was also pretty involved, as was the NLC. The NLC took the Muckaty area traditional owners to Lucas Heights, New South Wales, to look at ANSTO and find out about nuclear waste. They understood it, and once that group of people understood the commercial opportunity, that the facility would lead to education and possibly long-term jobs, they wanted it.

Sadly, many people, most of them from the left, would not listen to the traditional owners, because in their view Muckaty Station was no place to put nuclear waste. They went out of their way to suppress the people's voices and overturn their decision.

Something I like about the Chief Minister is that if a community says they want development, jobs and opportunity, he will support them in that goal. That is a wonderful breath of fresh air and a great way to build and develop relationships.

The member for Arnhem talked about what is important to her, and sometimes she makes interesting comments, but tonight she mentioned three things she was interested in: jobs, progress and education. That is what the oil and gas industry represents to her. She was quite vocal in

saying that traditional owners who do not want that on their land should have the choice to say no, but those who do want that should also have the choice to say, 'Yes, we want jobs progress and education'.

I make these comments to reflect on what they said and to say I am fortunate to be part of the Giles government because it believes in the same thing – jobs, progress and education – but also, more importantly, we believe in giving people a choice. If people do not want jobs, progress or education then that is fine; live off the land or however you want and we will move on to the next community.

The opposition Mines and Energy spokesman said, 'We do not know about this and we do not know about that', but the member for Arnhem had it right. This is not a debate about the regulations; this is a debate about whether we allow the petroleum industry to be regulated. It is currently operating on a guideline I issued to allow the industry to progress until we developed some regulations. We have a *Petroleum Act* without any regulation around it. All we are voting on tonight is whether we want to allow regulations.

We have some draft regulations, which I will table so people in this Chamber can view them, but they have been on display on the Mines and Energy website – www.onshoregas.nt.gov.au – since Monday. Prior to that, draft regulations had been on the website for months, which were commented on, submissions were made to the department and they have been amended to the point ...

Ms Fyles: Yesterday or Monday?

Mr TOLLNER: This has been happening for months, member for Nightcliff. I understand you people are asleep at the wheel, but we in government have been working. The original draft regulations were put on the website several months ago, inviting public comment and submission. I think we received about 16 submissions from various people and organisations, which were taken into account. The draft regulations were updated, changed and posted on the website again. They are still out for discussion; they were updated again and put up on Monday.

The member for Johnston says we are not being open and transparent, but he has not been paying attention. The regulations incorporate best practice from Australian and international jurisdictions. The regulations deliver on recommendations and findings by Dr Allan Hawke AC about the introduction of a best-practice regulatory framework in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory government engaged Dr Tina Hunter, Reader in Law at the University of Aberdeen, to undertake an independent expert review of the draft regulations. It is not the first time she has worked in the Northern Territory; she worked with the previous Labor government. You would think the opposition would see her as a person of repute because they have relied on her in the past.

Key findings of Dr Hunter were that the draft regulations represent a quantum leap from the previous regulatory framework and herald a new era of objective-based regulation, assessed to be the most suitable form of regulation.

Dr Hunter also applauds the Northern Territory government for delivering regulations that incorporate the principles of ecologically sustainable development within the regulations. She is the key expert; she peer-reviewed Dr Hawke's paper and passed judgment. We have had other experts pass judgment on the draft regulations. We are not looking to introduce these draft regulations at this time, but allow for the regulations to be added to the *Petroleum Act*. I did not think it would be a difficult equation for Labor members to wrap their heads around.

The government has taken a range of things into account to develop an onshore gas industry. There were concerns about explorers accessing land uninvited; those concerns had some merit, some concerns did not, but government responded and we now have land access agreements as part of the regulations. The agreements are applied any time a mining company or gas exploration company wants to access land.

We also heard that there is a range of areas where people do not want exploration occurring, so we have implemented a range of no-go zones. Drilling cannot occur in towns and communities, ecologically important areas, sacred sites, national parks or in areas of intense agriculture. We have ruled a lot of areas out. It needs to be understood that the previous Labor government allowed applications on 95% of the Northern Territory; we have wound that way back to about 30%.

It amazes me that this Labor opposition turns its back on everything it did in the past. We were in opposition when INPEX was coming to Darwin and we supported the Labor government in bringing INPEX here. We provided the bipartisan support that gave INPEX the confidence to establish a plant in the Northern Territory. We credit Clare Martin and Paul Henderson for their efforts in attracting INPEX here, but a small part of the credit should go to the Country Liberal Party opposition at the time for providing the much-

needed bipartisan support that gave the company confidence to invest in the Territory.

What a strange situation now. The same company wants to explore onshore and we are saying, 'Yes, we want to see INPEX continue building trains and getting more LNG happening', but suddenly, the Labor Party has turned 180 degrees saying, 'Well, we actually do not support you anymore'.

The bizarre thing about the opposition is that it supported the NEGI. If you are opposed to onshore gas or gas extraction, how can you possibly support a gas pipeline? The opposition is taking a rather quixotic position. I have heard the member for Johnston, the Opposition Leader and others say, 'We're only putting a moratorium in place until we do the science. We actually want to know the science.' We have gone out of our way to demonstrate the science. We have Dr Allan Hawke AC, a significant Australian and former chief of staff to Paul Keating; he worked for a former federal Labor government – one of theirs. They do not want to know about Dr Allan Hawke. We have Dr Tina Hunter, also a well-revered scientist, also employed by a former Labor government, but they do not want to know what Dr Hunter has to say.

Earlier this year I phoned the member for Johnston and asked him to visit the US with me. The intention was to visit Oklahoma, Texas and several other locations to look at hydraulic fracturing and understand how gas drilling works, but he declined. He did not want to go to the US and look at it. They say they want the science, but they are running from it; they are not interested. Like an ostrich with its head in the sand thinking it is hiding, they do not want to learn the science and are doing everything they can to avoid it.

I have heard people talk about recommendation 11 from Dr Hunter, saying we must have an independent certified third-party inspector. We have not agreed to that because we do not have an independent certified third-party inspector in this country, but at the Mines department we have well-qualified petroleum engineers, environmental engineers and others who can do that work.

One member – I will not say who and embarrass him – said, 'That engineer, he only came out of university recently; he is so wet behind the ears that he will not know anything about it.' The DME has employed Jop van Hattum, who is a qualified petroleum engineer. I know a bit about Jop because I went to the US with him and inspected some of the operations of American Energy Partners, and others in Oklahoma and Texas. Jop has been all over the world, working as an engineer in the petroleum industry. I can say from

the week or so we were in US that he is a very impressive guy.

I thank the DME staff in the adviser's box. It is 10 pm and we have not called on your expertise, but I hope you are enjoying the debate. Jop is also here; he is the handsome man in the suit.

A member interjecting.

Mr TOLLNER: Sorry, I was not talking about the Attorney-General. I was talking about the Dutchman in the adviser's box, not the Dutchman in the Leader of Government Business's chair. Regardless, we do have experts there.

I have chatted with the member for Nelson and others. The member for Karama is very concerned about recommendation 11 and why we have not accepted that recommendation. I have explained that we do have expert people in the Mines department. If guaranteeing we will have an independent certified third-party inspector is of such importance to gain support for this bill, I can give that guarantee now. I have had a chat with the Chief Minister about this issue and we will ensure the regulations reflect that recommendation. We will do whatever it takes to ensure we have an independent certified third-party inspector for the people who do not trust the experts within our own Department of Mines and Energy.

As the Minister for Mines and Energy, I have a lot of respect for the people in the department. I think they are good regulators; they are there to service industry as well, and they do a damn fine job. I am comfortable that Jop and his team can regulate the regime for drilling and similar activities in a very professional way, but if having someone external to the Department of Mines and Energy would make the people in the Chamber more comfortable, and assist in getting this over the line. I am happy to agree to that.

As I said at the outset, this is not a bill about the regulations; this is a bill that will allow regulation of the *Petroleum Act*. It stuns me that the Labor Party members are saying they are opposed to regulating the oil and gas industry. That makes no sense me, but they are taking a purely political approach to this. It is not about whether they want onshore gas or not; it is about trying to pick up the Greens' preferences. It is a dodgy, dirty deal that Labor has done. They have sold their souls on this issue. They turned their backs on the previous Labor governments, which allowed 95% of the Northern Territory to be put under application, and supported the INPEX project and the Northern Gas Pipeline. They have turned their backs on all of that, saying they will put a moratorium on oil and gas so they can buy The Greens' preferences. It is a cut off your nose to

spite your face outcome, but Territorians will see right through them at the next election.

We are aware of the misinformation being peddled by groups like Lock the Gate, the Environment Centre and others. Lock the Gate is opposed to anything that comes out of the ground. It wants us to go back to living in caves.

Ms Fyles: Oh, rubbish!

Mr TOLLNER: Well, what does Lock the Gate support, member for Nightcliff? Go on its website. It is opposed to gas extraction in any case. If you were genuinely concerned about the environment and greenhouse gas emissions you would be advocating for onshore gas so we can start closing down coal-fired power stations on the eastern seaboard, but this is not about that; it is about stopping all extraction of gas.

Labor is now being dragged along on a crazy ride with some of the extremists groups peddling this misinformation. My great fear is that the misinformation will become widespread, to the point where people turn their backs on jobs, progress and education.

The member for Barkly said he wanted to know more about hydrology and geology. Well, it is not hard; you do a course. How do you do a course? You could allow the gas extraction industry to progress, and then the royalties would pay for it, member for Barkly. They will not only pay for your course on hydrology and geology, but they will pay for your kids' courses on hydrology and geology, and your grandchildren's education as well. Here is a good opportunity for a past chalkie to support the education sector and back the gas industry. The member for Barkly knows he is between a rock and a hard place. This is the biggest economic development opportunity Tennant Creek has seen in decades and he is turning his back on it. That is a very dangerous thing to do in the lead-up to an election.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everybody who has contributed, particularly my colleagues for their assistance in understanding what is important to Territorians. I commend this bill to the house.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 12

Mr Barrett
Mr Chandler
Mr Conlan
Mr Elferink
Mr Giles
Mr Higgins
Mr Kurrupuwu
Ms Lee

Noes 10

Ms Anderson
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mrs Lambley
Ms Lawrie
Mr McCarthy
Ms Manison
Ms Moss

Mrs Price
Mr Styles
Mr Tollner
Mr Westra van Holthe

Ms Purick
Mr Vowles

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TOLLNER (Mines and Energy) (by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Mr GILES (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to reflect on the comments made by the members for Arnhem and Stuart; those comments were so true and reflective of the reality. While listening to Larisa and Bess, I was thinking about our Knowledge Territory policy, which says all gas royalties will go to education, and I thought maybe I have made a mistake in that policy.

We have urban-based members, where there will be no gas extraction, voting against a regulated gas industry. In the bush we need more housing than ever before. Our Knowledge Territory – gas royalties to education – policy says royalties from the bush will help people go to university and VET. It is a good idea which pays a dividend to Territorians that anyone can access, but with Labor and some Independent members of urban seats in the Top End saying no, maybe I should be putting the royalties into housing in communities, because they are the ones supporting industry, making the Territory wealthy and creating jobs. I will not commit to making a policy change but I will think about it.

If people in Arnhem, Stuart, Namatjira, Daly, Arafura, Nhulunbuy and Barkly support development, maybe they should be reaping more dividends and rewards. That is a serious point. I am not a person who makes policy on the run. We just did the budget and have Knowledge Territory and we want all the royalties going back to dividends for Territorians.

It is great for it to go to education, but since we announced that we will have a \$2000 education voucher for higher education and Vocational Education and Training, do you think the AEU has come out and said, 'What a great idea?' Has the university backed it? Have any educational institutions backed it? No, but we have countrymen and countrywomen saying they want gas exploration development on their country in a safe way. Maybe some of those policy settings are wrong if we cannot cause the AEU to say it is great to put more money into education. Maybe we should be putting more money into Aboriginal housing in the bush. I will think about it.

Before I came into the Chamber – on the most recent walk in and out, to listen to the member for Arnhem – I was in the back room, reflecting on

one of the lessons I have learnt about Green and Labor politics over the time I have been involved in politics. There is no environmental debate in Green and Labor politics; it is all about politics. It has nothing to do with the environment, and that is a lesson. No matter what you do to support the environment, they will oppose it on political grounds. The piece of legislation that was just passed is a perfect example. Right now we have guidelines in the *Petroleum Act*, but we want to strengthen the rules around horizontal fracturing, so we changed it so we have a framework to set regulations.

We have published draft guidelines, now called regulations, which are stronger than ever before. They are stronger than yesterday and stronger than when Labor was approving gas drilling in the Northern Territory. We have strengthened our environmental credentials, protected our environment more and protected our country where the drilling, whether it is exploration or production, occurs, but we are voted against by Labor and the Greens for it. To me, that shows politics for politics' sake, not environmental protection.

I made a commitment to the federal Opposition Leader twice today. I said, 'If you truly want to cut Australia's gas emissions from power production in half, close every coal-powered power station in Australia and use Territory gas. You will cut Australia's emissions in half straightaway. If you really cared about the environment that is what you would do, because we now have a gas pipeline to get the gas. We know the challenges of gas supply interstate. You could do that.' But no, they will not do it; Labor will not support it.

Instead, it supports the biggest coal mine ever to be built in Australia, in Queensland. I have nothing against coal mining, coal miners, Queensland, economic development or development on whoever's country that is. I am not attacking that, but we know that coal has more emissions than gas. How can Labor support a high-emission industry, then say it wants to cut emissions in Australia and not support gas in the Northern Territory? That is what shows it is not about the environment; it is just about politics.

Last week I commented on ABC Radio about interstate protestors – the hairy armpit brigade – coming to the Northern Territory and stirring people up. I have had a gutful of them. It was reflected in the speeches of the members for Arnhem and Stuart, and the minister's speech as well. People are coming here, using Aboriginal traditional owners and others, stirring them up, filling their minds full of rubbish and causing great concern, fear and harm to those people individually.

A couple of people in Alice Springs have said to me that it is a bit tough to call them the hairy armpit brigade. Call them whatever you want, but they are professional protestors. I will name a few from this list of names of people who have been protesting in Katherine recently:

- Helen Bender, a lady from New South Wales
- a random Italian backpacker leading the front of the protest – I have that written down here
- Lauren Mellor from Queensland
- Karrina Nolan, a Yorta Yorta tribeswoman from the Murray River district in Victoria
- Larissa Baldwin, from a Queensland climate change group
- Johnny Fenton and John Fenton – one being junior – from Wyoming in the United States
- Naomi Hogan, the one who stopped the gas industry in New South Wales, is now with the Wilderness Society and, I am told, has a \$12m budget to fight the gas industry in the Northern Territory as part of the Territory election.

Coming here and trying to radicalise people in the Northern Territory to fight against economic development, and manipulating Aboriginal people in particular – something I know about Territorians is that the Territory can sort itself out, whether they agree or disagree. I mentioned Helen Bender's name before as relating to New South Wales; I should have mentioned Queensland. I understand some of the tragic circumstances she may have been through in the past, but this is the Northern Territory. We can solve our own issues; we can develop our own environmental regulations and protect our own industry.

The last name I will talk about is a gentleman called Neil Morris, a radical from Victoria who has come to the Northern Territory to cause harm and damage, to get under the skins of the protestors and try to stop an industry. He not only comes from Victoria, but also works for the Victorian government. He is a militant who threatens violence in his protesting. He works for the Victorian government's North Central Catchment Management Authority. He has come to the Territory to try to radicalise Indigenous and other Territorians. It is very hard to put your message out when there are multimillion-dollar Wilderness Society campaigns feeding people total lies about an industry that has been operating in the Northern Territory since the 1960s.

This is about people who own country; it is about economic development, but it is about the land and the culture. The land has been here for

millions of years, the oldest landscape in the world, and we should be protecting it. That is what we were doing tonight. Tomorrow, there will be more protection for our environment than yesterday. Keep the radicals from interstate out and let us decide how we do our own business.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

**FISHERIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 162)**

Continued from 20 April 2016.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I just had another fantastic briefing from the minister's office. I want to thank the minister's staff and the Fisheries department, people who are very knowledgeable in this area. This *Fisheries Act* has not been looked at for 28 years and the department and the minister's office have done a very good job. Territory Labor, the opposition, will be supporting these amendments.

Of particular interest is the fit and proper person policy, which is a very good change to how it works. No doubt we will hear more about that. The licensees and approved operators amendments are in there. The strengthening of some fines and weakening of others is very sensible. I always talk about being sensible and having a sensible approach; the minister and his office have been sensible with these changes. The Territory opposition will be supporting this bill.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, you mob have had plenty of time on gas. I will add a bit more gas.

I thank the department for the briefing. It is not much good to have a briefing and then not at least thank them. The Seafood Council has raised a couple of issues with me: concern about big gaps in fisheries' management and the loss of capacity within the Fisheries department. They feel they are not receiving the level of resourcing needed to develop the industry, for example, applications for research have long delays of many months, after which time researchers give up and go somewhere else. Without the research sector, the industry does not have the investment it needs to grow.

There is also concern about the workforce for the future. Without investment in the industry, skilled and knowledgeable operators are leaving the industry and not mentoring young people. There is also a need for training opportunities to be offered at secondary school and at university level.

In general, the industry is pleased with changes dealing with biosecurity and licensed operators,

and the old language has been cleared up. However, they said this was really just a band aid; the entire act needs a complete review. They are welcoming what has come forward, but they are looking at the bigger picture.

Another thing mentioned in the act is identification and, I thought, is it a chance to talk about whether an amateur boat should be identified? If you mention licensing you will not have me on side, but regarding boats being identified, it is important that we have that debate. Some years ago the opposition brought forward the idea of identifying boats as a form of registration. My local, Howard Springs fishing club, was willing to be part of that; it would raise money for the fishing club. There was a lot of discussion about identification on boats and whether you could use your name; if your name is Gary Jalopy, and you are the only Gary Jalopy, you could have that on the side or you could have a number. Another idea was to use your trailer registration number.

There are some good reasons for having at least some form of identification. One argument is if the boat is lost or stolen at least you have some ID. If it is out at sea, floating around the harbour, it would be nice to know who owned the boat.

The other argument is if people are doing the wrong thing – fishing where they should not be or driving their boat in a dangerous manner – at least you have chance to identify the boat. It does not need to be costly because all you need is a database with all the names. If you work through fishing clubs it would be a good income for them as well.

It is a debate we, from time to time, need to bring back for discussion. I am not a fan of licensing and even if I did like it, the cost of administering a licensing system in the Territory would be horrendous and would not actually work. I am certainly not arguing for that.

I am bringing to you some of the issues that were raised. I think that a lot of the changes are good. I did forget one point. We need to thank the government for its work with the ranger program. Giving rangers the power of being fishing inspectors is something that should be spoken about in this House because it really is a good thing. That is it, minister, short and sweet.

Mr HIGGINS (Primary Industry and Fisheries): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everyone for their comments. In regard to the member for Nelson's comments from the Seafood Council, I possibly agree with some of their comments; however, I do not think this is the time or the place to make those amendments. They are issues that were raised with me previously and they are in my thoughts.

Regarding licensing, the act talks about electronic identification on some of the commercial boats so we can track them. We do not cross into boat identification and, again, I do not think this is the time to do that. I have similar views to the member for Nelson on licensing. I am not a supporter of licensing as such; however, I am a supporter of accreditation. Clubs could accredit people with boat handling skills and that accreditation could be put on their driver's licence, but it should not be a revenue type thing for government.

With the issue of the rangers, one of the intentions of these changes is in regard to agreements that have come out of Blue Mud Bay. The member for Nelson and I have had a long association with many of the people involved in the Malak Malak rangers, and they would probably be at the forefront of some of these changes introduced today.

I am pleased that members have provided their support today to the passage of this bill. It is a fantastic outcome for all Territorians because the benefits of this legislation are significant, including the Blue Mud Bay settlement agreements, which I have already mentioned; the essential biosecurity powers to deal with the increased risk of pests and diseases; and the removal of red tape and administrative burden, which will support a simpler, more efficient fishery licensing framework, reduce time and costs, and improve business flexibility. It will provide for more efficient and effective compliance through the use of electronic vessel monitoring systems, fishery infringement notices for minor offences and more contemporary penalties that are commensurate with the offences. It will reduce the cost of Fisheries compliance through the use of new technologies, improving the ability to detect, deter, prevent and eradicate biosecurity threats to our aquatic resources, and ensuring fisheries legislation is consistent with Northern Territory privacy and other Australian legislation.

I thank the previous minister for his work in this area and all the staff; they have spent a lot of time on this and they put a very good effort into ensuring it was well consulted on and that members of this House could have as much information as possible before we presented the bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HIGGINS (Primary Industry and Fisheries) (by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

BUSHFIRES MANAGEMENT BILL (Serial 167)

Continued from 21 April 2016.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister and the department officials who provided a briefing. It was great to travel into town, receive the briefing and have a very learned conversation about all sorts of things relating to the Northern Territory and regional and remote areas, particularly areas I am familiar with, have lived in and still enjoy living in.

This is supported by Labor. It was a pleasure to brief the Labor Caucus, share my learnings and discuss what has been a major exercise in tidying up old legislation, and normalising and legalising very important duties, roles and responsibilities of Territorians, firstly the officials and secondly the volunteers. It is interesting to understand that volunteer bush firefighters across the Northern Territory represent a cohort of over 1000 Territorians, the largest group of volunteers in the Territory. That is very commendable.

The bill relates to the *Bushfires Act*, and that act relates to rural and remote areas. It will improve public safety, economic certainty and safety for rural industries. It also incorporates Aboriginal land, which most of my questions were around. It is an act which will manage and protect Northern Territory biodiversity values and our environment.

It was important to learn from the briefing that the bill is driven by a sense of community. It was termed by the officials as, 'community-driven legislation for the next 20 years', incorporating Bushfires NT and its 1000 volunteers, traditional owners of the Northern Territory and landholders into the act. It is underpinned by best-practice fire management, that is, fire management based on risk, and not only acknowledges but values landholder responsibility in partnership with government, and governance around regional fire management plans.

I have the impression that this act has brought the Northern Territory up to speed with all the other jurisdictions in Australia; it represents best practice in operations, management, occupational health and safety, and protecting biodiversity and environment through applied science.

The briefing then went into detail on the changes and how this act, relying on a traditional sense of community spirit, has introduced new management and not only normalised but also legalised professional officials, the volunteers, assets and asset management. It has established entities that are now all covered and legal, right across the board, from the council to the committees, control officers, wardens, volunteer

bushfire brigades, fire protection zones, fire danger areas, fire management zones, property management plans and firebreaks. It was good to see all those relevant and real outcomes from the legislation. I and other members of the Territory opposition are proud to support the minister, the department and the officials who have done the great work to achieve this.

The briefing was also a great opportunity to have a discussion and conduct learnings. I talked about Aboriginal participation and the role of traditional owners and Aboriginal organisations. There was a session in which the officials provided maps and we were talking about areas where I have lived and now represent people. It represents some great opportunities in terms of commercial carbon burning projects. In terms of commercial outcomes, I was really impressed to hear from the officials that there are already 200 Indigenous rangers across Arnhem Land who are employed and working in this new, innovative, carbon burning industry. There is the potential of a further increase in the next few years of over 400 rangers. That relates to the new rainfall definition modelling and allowing new fire abatement scope and locations that will creep into the Barkly, which I am pleased to hear.

There is a lot of potential for jobs, work on country, incorporating this great work and these ideas into our school curriculum and preparing young students for real jobs on country. I did ask the final question about appropriation and resourcing, and I notice in Budget 2016-17 there has been a moderate increase for Bushfires NT. Congratulations, minister. You are earning a lot of gold stars in Cabinet. You are a minister that has come through this budget process with great scores. I do not know what you are doing, but keep it up. They are good outcomes for the departments you represent and for the Territory in meaningful areas.

I took on board and advised the Labor Caucus that the officials were very modest and not looking for major increases in appropriation. However, should those increases appear they would be targeted at new innovations and technologies relating to their coordination and management role – understanding the Northern Territory and undertaking important planning – which then translates into directing people and the community spirit evident in the briefing. This is a great outcome for the Territory.

Thank you, minister, for the opportunity to learn, and congratulations on this legislation.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also thank the minister for allowing me to have a good briefing on this important legislation. The briefing was so good that we had a whiteboard, because

you need one with this. It was good learning curve for me as well. As the member for Barkly just mentioned, you have a range of people in different positions, and fire zones which have fire protection zones, fire management zones, fire management areas, fire danger areas and fire ban areas, and then there are controls in those various areas as well.

A diagram in the back of the bill would be useful for people to understand it, but this is a well put together and easily read bill. Sometimes people are scared of reading bills, but this one is put together sensibly. Except for trying to understand those various terms used for different parts of Northern Territory in relation to what they are, there are no major problems. It shows that we are moving with the times.

I am a hybrid member of parliament. I have the Northern Territory Fire Service volunteers and now, with Herbert, I also have the Bushfires Council, which takes the northern part of my electorate up to Gunn Point.

It is a learning curve for me. I am used to the Northern Territory Fire Service operations, but they have become professional – I say that in an amateurish way – and the Bushfires Council is also heading that way. Many years ago when I was on the Daly – member for Barkly, the reason the minister is so good is because he lived in Howard Springs and then the Daly; I have lived in Howard Springs and the Daly too. They are good parts of the world to live, but when I lived on the Daly all we had was a fire cart attached to a tractor. I remember some fires at the Daly where the cart was not a great help. When the pandanus went up in flames it could become scary and the little fire cart was not much. As the volunteers, we did not have any training. We jumped on the tractor, hung on for our lives on the back of the trailer and went to try to put out fires.

Now we are moving on and part of this legislation is starting to make the process more professional, not so people are being paid, but showing that you do need to do things in a certain way. It can be a dangerous job, so there is liability and this bill discusses such things.

It gives volunteers some official recognition and the ability to knock off work if they have to go and fight a fire, without losing their long service leave or other entitlements.

There are many good things in here. The minister mentioned that a few people are upset. That will always be the case when you are trying to change something that has been around for a long time. It is hard to avoid that, but from listening to the minister and talking to him elsewhere, I think the majority of fire brigades support this bill.

It has taken a long time which is good as it gave people time to consult and think about it, which we sometimes do not do ourselves. We have time to consult, but not always time to think about it. In a quick meeting you might say yes, but then you go home and have another thought and you think that it is not right. I have forgotten how many years the minister said it took to put this together. I think two, but it might have even been longer than that.

I appreciate the hard work of the department and the people who talked to the various fire brigades across the Territory. The member for Barkly has a pretty big area; I do not know how many brigades he has, but he has a larger area than some of the ones closer to town.

How does this bill fit when you have an existing bill? There are things in here which obviously will overlap because of the changes in the legislation. Is there any sort of conflict between the old legislation and the new legislation? If there is, how will you overcome it?

Once again, I thank the minister for a very important bill. People might think it is just the bushfires bill, but it covers about 97% of the Territory so it is pretty important. This may be a bit of paper, but it will affect many people. As the bill says, this is:

A Bill for an Act to provide for the protection of life, property and the environment through the mitigation, management and suppression of bushfires, and for related purposes

That is a pretty good objective, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr HIGGINS (Land Resource Management):

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the members for Barkly and Nelson for their interest in this. It is incumbent upon me to ensure they receive briefings, but it is also fantastic when members are interested and want to have briefings to gain some understanding of it.

The bill was developed through much consultation over a period of 18 months, and there was a review of the act. I spoke to Paul Blore, Chair of the Bushfires Council, who said there was a review of the whole process even prior to that, so it has taken a bit longer than two years.

Over that period the recommendation paper was produced and there were discussions during 38 public meetings and two periods of public consultation. The results were combined to come up with this bill.

Since becoming minister, I found there were some concerns with the bill so I took a further step. I

obtained Cabinet approval to release the draft of the bill to an independent consultant; his opinion was that he thoroughly endorsed it. In his words, 'The bill provides a substantially improved legislative framework for bushfire management and particularly strong protection for volunteers and their communities'.

He went on further to say, 'Overall the bill was supported, particularly in regard to the authorisation and protection of our volunteers'.

As well as my 18 months as the minister, probably more than half of the bushfire brigades are in my electorate and many of them came and spoke to me. I took the next step and got an independent assessment and there were some small adjustments made to the legislation before we introduced it into the House.

The bill strongly reflects community and stakeholder views, and the nature and depth of consultation, which has created broad community support and expectations for the progress of the bill. The cornerstone of contemporary bushfire management practice is the establishment of fire management zones and plans defined by risk, which the member for Nelson was talking about. This allows an appropriate level of planning and mitigation within each zone to be determined according to risk. The bill addresses the absence in the current legislation of a regional planning and mitigation framework.

The bill retains the principle that landowners are responsible for fire management, but also provides a framework that supports regional planning and coordination with landowners, and input through the involvement of regional bushfire committees and allows property-level action to be leveraged to provide stronger regional fire protection networks.

The current legislation does not recognise or authorise volunteer firefighters, leaving their status unclear. Volunteers contribute significantly to rural and remote firefighting, particularly in the high-risk areas of rural residential development in the Top End. The bill provides for volunteers to be recognised and authorised to take part in fire management operations, and provides protection in line with volunteers performing similar roles with other fire management agencies in the Territory and beyond.

The bill recognises and defines the roles of Bushfires NT in bushfire management. It creates a clear chain of command under which Bushfires NT personnel and volunteers can work together in fire management.

The bill continues existing regulatory arrangements with some simplification and

clarification. The only additional regulatory requirement is the capacity to require the owner of land that presents a high risk to neighbouring properties to undertake mitigation.

I will address a question raised by the member for Nelson about the overlap between the current and new legislation. The timing needs to be worked out. After the fire season in the Top End finishes there is the fire season in Central Australia. Although we would like to introduce the new legislation on a single day, such as 1 July, we need to consider the impact on the brigades as the change will affect them. The committees also need to be set up and approved, and there is a process to go through for that. It is not legislation that can be introduced tomorrow. It will take a couple of months to sort a lot of those things out.

As I stated in the second reading speech, there will also be a consultative committee of the fire captains or the volunteers. That would be set up as a ministerial advisory committee to lift the standard a bit more.

I have a minor change which corrects drafting error. It is in the schedule and refers to the bushfire regulations infringements, which we removed. It is just a minor technicality, so we will go into consideration in detail.

I would like to thank Mark Ashley, the director of Bushfires NT; he has put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into this. I also thank Paul Blore, the Chair of the Bushfires Council. I have known Paul for a long time; he was running Lizzie Downs behind the mango farm when I first went there, so I have probably know Paul for about 20 years. He has also put in a lot of time and effort into this, along with the people who have continued their roles on the existing Bushfires Council.

I also thank all the volunteers, not only in my electorate, but those who attend bushfires across the Northern Territory. Many of them are very passionate about their work. Some of them are a bit hesitant about this, but it is a change that has to go forward. We have done a lot of consultation and the majority, about 90%, are happy. Those who are not probably lack a bit of understanding or knowledge, but we will continue to work on that. I commend the bill to the House and we will go to consideration in detail.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1 to Schedule 1 taken together and agreed to.

Schedule 2:

Mr HIGGINS: Madam Speaker, I move an amendment to Schedule 2. The proposed amendment in Schedule 2, Other Laws, amends and corrects a minor drafting error in the Schedule by removing an unnecessary reference in the Fines and Penalties (Recovery) Regulations.

Under the heading Fines and Penalties (Recovery) Regulations remove the reference to Bushfires Regulation from the 'omit' column and the Bushfires (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades) Management Regulations from the 'insert' column. This amendment will adjust the reference to the act in the Fines and Penalties (Recovery) Regulations to reflect this new act's new title.

The net effect of the amendment is to remove the reference to the regulations from Schedule 1 to the 'Fines and Penalties (Recovery) Regulations.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 2, as amended, agreed to.

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

Mr HIGGINS (Land Resource Management): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

RACING AND BETTING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 168)

Continued from 21 April 2016.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, the legislation before us will give the Northern Territory the legislative requirements to allow a betting exchange to be established, which is a client to client service where an operator receives a commission from a winning bet, but this legislation is client to client. This legislation which the minister hopes to pass tonight relates to what is being provided for a company, Betfair, currently based in Tasmania. I received a detailed briefing from the department, and I thank them for their time and for sharing that information.

Currently no other Australian state or territory, except Tasmania, has this type of betting arrangement. Betfair is obviously looking to move its headquarters to the Northern Territory.

Betfair is currently on a month by month contract in Tasmania. Tasmania has been looking into its legislation and requirements to allow that regime to take place within the state.

Obviously gambling has a number of associated issues and concerns, especially over the last five to 10 years with the shift to online gambling, which has increased greatly. It is a concern that people in the community have raised with me.

In preparation for this legislation I spoke to a number of stakeholders, and I thank them for their time and information. They are very well versed on these issues and some of the concerns.

Some of the concerns that were raised with me regarding the move to online gambling included the potential to take money out of gaming machines. I am not sure if the minister has any data on whether there has been a decline in gaming machine revenue or anything that might highlight that shift to online. I think the community feels that online gambling is quite strong and becoming stronger. There are also concerns regarding which jurisdictions are receiving revenue from online gambling.

Computer operated apps or social media devices know your habits and potential spends, and will react to that. They can send you push notifications. That is concerning. Operators are doing a lot of tracking; generally for these services you need to have an account so they have some data on you.

The shift towards online gambling is concerning. I think it is quite well known in the community that Somerville has had to halt its financial counselling services. It is unable to take on any new clients because so it is so burdened with clients. That is something we need to look at when passing legislation such this. What is the impact on our community? What is the impact on everyday families?

Gambling has the potential to cause huge impacts. We need to take note when we have services – Madam Speaker, you would have people in your electorate who come to you seeking advice. It is concerning when you try to put them in contact with a service like Somerville and they say, ‘We are not taking any new clients at the moment because we simply cannot see them in a reasonable time frame of two to three weeks’, and they have not had to do that before.

Something in this legislation that was raised with me is the sponsorship aspect; the minister might explain that in his closing remarks. Obviously governments make decisions to allow these types of operators to set up within their jurisdiction, and they would claim there is benefit through economic revenue. This bill provides for \$300 000 of sponsorship. How will that sponsorship take place? Will it go into the Community Benefit Fund or is it a direct sponsorship the organisation or the company can choose? That was raised with me

as concerning – the subtle sponsorship of children’s sports jerseys. I think it was the AFL Auskick jerseys that had a betting company name on them, which caused quite a bit of controversy interstate.

What will be the makeup of this \$300 000? I would like to know how the sponsorship will take place. Of course we support investment in our communities and community groups, but our role is ensuring that legislation protects the community as much as possible, and looking at what we are taking on and what the community will get in return.

I have a question which may have been answered in the briefing. I apologise if the department has already provided me with the answer. Regarding the \$500 000 revenue, I am a little unclear if that is a cap. Will they pay tax over that \$500 000? I know it is not only \$500 000; it is penalty units. Can the minister clarify exactly what the Northern Territory gains for allowing this agency to set up?

I also have concerns that we have shaped the legislation around a particular company. We did not decide as a jurisdiction that we would like to provide this service and set it up. The legislation and the minister’s speech were shaped around a company, which is concerning. We should try to be generic in our legislation to accommodate things, but do not look overly supportive.

Obviously some of the community, and rightfully so, has strong concerns that although this will be a base for operations it is still more gambling in our community. We need to understand the levels and impact of potential harm. I think the government is working on the latest gambling prevalence survey. There has not been one done for quite a time, but there was mention of that in one of my briefings.

Returning to my comment about the legislation being set up, are we at arm’s length from the industry? We must protect ourselves.

I would appreciate the minister responding to my questions. I thank the department and community groups who provided me with feedback. I look forward to the minister’s responses.

Mr STYLES (Racing, Gaming and Licensing): The bill before the House does not concern a specific application for a licence. It is designed to establish a specific betting licence exchange category so that applications can be made for this type of licence.

The member for Nightcliff raised a number of issues that I am happy to address.

There are two aspects of this bill. One is to facilitate the betting exchange licence. The other is to establish in legislation the ability of the Northern Territory racing and sporting control body to charge a fee for the approved use of their information by a betting service provider to provide valuable revenue, particularly to the racing industry. It is a product fee, so anyone using information that comes from a racing organisation has to pay a fee. Until now, this had been done on a handshake. The government feels it is a good idea to enshrine it in legislation to protect the income of organisations that supply this type of product to businesses.

Regarding matters raised by the member for Nightcliff, this is not about Betfair's licence; this is about facilitating its application for a licence. Betfair has been operating for 10 years. It has a good corporate record and does not want to be involved in the story of problem gamblers. It has very good regulatory frameworks of its own in place that it works with in the industry. It can flag problem gamblers and deal with those things in house, and talk to people about what their habits might be.

This is not the normal form of betting where you bet against a bookmaker or, in some instances, a corporate bookmaker. This is person to person. Betfair facilitates, in a regulated environment, people placing bets on horse races, dog races, outcomes of sporting events and the outcomes of a list of regulated TV shows. This is all done between people who put a bet online with Betfair and they set their own odds. If a person is looking for someone to bet against them, Betfair simply facilitates the bet. They take a very small commission for facilitating the bets. If one person places a large bet, three or four people may take on smaller parts of that bet.

It is anonymous. It is known to Betfair who the people are, but each person betting does not. It is a different way of betting than going to the TAB or calling a corporate bookmaker. This is generally higher end gambling; there is more mathematics involved and the customers are a little more sophisticated because they are setting their own odds. These are people who follow their sport or hobby very closely; the challenge of following and understanding is what they do to entertain themselves. It is different to going to a track and putting on a bet with a bookmaker because you set the odds and parameters you want on the bet. If no one takes that bet then no bet occurs, but if it does then Betfair takes a small commission from the winner. That is how Betfair operates.

This legislation is about facilitating the application of these types of licences. We know that a company called Betfair would like to come to the Territory. It likes our regulated environment and

the fact we are smaller and able to handle issues in a far timelier manner, if there were any. It demonstrates that the Territory is a destination of choice. We are hoping others will come here because there is an economic benefit. Given gambling has been around since year dot, it is far better if it is done in a regulated environment. As a former police officer and detective I dealt with gambling in unregulated environments. It can become very messy and argumentative. Unregulated, it can raise various problems in families and communities. This is one way to facilitate people who chose to do this for enjoyment in a regulated environment.

The company, Betfair, has a range of responsible gambling policies. Customers are checked out; they have to identify themselves through 100 points of identification. Betfair, and any other company in this betting exchange industry, knows exactly who its customers are, their betting patterns, and if the patterns change it can assist them if they believe they have a problem.

Betfair and the corporate bookmakers do not want problem gamblers as customers. If a person does become an issue or have a problem they are the first ones to help them. They can do it through self-regulation. Government supports Amity and Somerville to help people who may have a gambling problem. The government, in the current financial year, has given in excess of \$2m for amelioration programs. I think the member for Nightcliff said there is no prevalence study at this point; I assure her it is under way. In excess of \$2m has been given to organisations such as Amity to do amelioration research; the money going into research has either doubled or tripled. The government is concerned about making sure that problem gamblers can find help. There are education programs to prevent people from becoming problem gamblers.

I think I have dealt with most of the questions the member for Nightcliff has.

Ms Fyles: The amount they will pay in revenue to the Territory?

Mr STYLES: Revenue is in relation to an annual licence fee. There is an annual fee of 200 000 revenue units and an application fee of 200 000 revenue units. When you look at the benefits paid in taxes ...

Ms Fyles: Is that capped, minister?

Mr STYLES: It goes up to a capped maximum of 500 000. When they turn over they are capped at 500 000 revenue units.

Ms Fyles: Will they pay tax or revenue units over 500 000?

Mr STYLES: No, they will not.

One of the things we have in the Northern Territory is a very fair system, which is why people like it. It is a smaller community; there are about 300 people involved in this industry. They contribute over \$5m in direct taxes and fees, along with other indirect taxes due to being located here. There are jobs in this industry. A lot of young people, especially, are employed by corporate bookmakers. If people who run betting exchanges want to move to the Northern Territory from other states then that is okay.

I think I have covered everything. If the member for Nightcliff gives me a nod then I can probably wrap this up.

Ms Fyles: Sponsorship?

Mr STYLES: Sponsorship is up to the particular company. They can make donations to various people in the community; it is their choice as to who they may like to sponsor. There is no regulated requirement for them to sponsor a specific club. They will be sponsoring people or it could be corporate boxes.

Ms Fyles: Is there regulated amount that they have to sponsor?

Mr STYLES: No, there is not, but these are people who would like to be good corporate citizens. As with most businesses in town that contribute hundreds and thousands of dollars, if not millions, to sponsoring various organisations in our community, it is in their best interests.

Madam Speaker, I again thank and congratulate the department for the quality of the briefings given to me and the members of the opposition. It is a hard-working department. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail:

Clauses 1 to 23 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 24:

Mr STYLES: Madam Speaker, I move amendments 54.1 and 54.2 to Clause 24.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

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

Mr STYLES (Racing, Gaming and Licensing): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

TABLED PAPERS Government's Response to Committee Reports

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, the standing orders require the government to report to the Assembly on what action it had taken in response to the recommendations to it in committee reports and for the Speaker to report on the status of government responses twice a year.

Pursuant to Standing Order 201(5) I table a schedule of government responses to committee reports to May 2016.

Quarterly Members Fuel Transaction Report

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to the requirements of the Auditor-General's report of 19 December 2014, I table the quarterly fuel card use report for each member provided with a vehicle under the RTD.

Travel Reports – Members for Nelson and Nhulunbuy

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table travel reports from the members for Nelson and Nhulunbuy.

Report on Statehood Reference

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I table the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report on Statehood Reference and the associated minutes of proceedings.

The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee has played a vital role in progressing issues associated with Statehood in a nonpartisan forum since receiving its initial reference to inquire into appropriate measures to facilitate Statehood in the days following the failed 1998 Statehood referendum.

In November 2011 the Assembly deferred further implementation of the Statehood program until a time to be decided by the Government during the 12th Assembly. Following the 2012 election the Attorney-General referred to the Committee the options for the Northern Territory to become a State.

Including:

- (a) *implementing the recommendations of the former statehood steering*

committee in its Final Report and Recommendations tabled on 6 December 2010

- (b) *planning and implementing constitutional conventions and the elections of delegates*
- (c) *promoting public understanding of, and participation in, the development of proposals for a constitution for the Northern Territory.*

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Committee to progress this reference during the 12th Assembly.

MOTION

Note Paper – Report on Statehood Reference

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I move that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

TABLED PAPER

Report of Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I table the Subordinate Legislation and Publications Committee Report of Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications from December 2015 to May 2016 and associated minutes of proceedings.

The report places on the public record concerns raised by the committee's independent legal counsel, Professor Aughterson, and allows interested persons to see the clarifications regarding the intended operation of the regulations or undertakings to correct any errors as provided by ministers.

The committee is also responsible for monitoring the statutory reporting requirements of 95 government entities. I note that at the time of writing the Power and Water Corporation's 2014-15 annual report remained outstanding.

MOTION

Note Paper – Report of Ministerial Correspondence on Subordinate Legislation and Publications

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I move that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

Public Accounts Committee Report – Public Private Partnership Arrangements for the Darwin Correctional Precinct – consideration adjourned.

Public Accounts Committee Report into Structural Separation of Power and Water Corporation – consideration adjourned.

Northern Territory's Energy Future Committee Key Challenges and Opportunities Issues Paper – consideration adjourned.

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's August 2015 Report to the Legislative Assembly – consideration adjourned.

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's February 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly – consideration adjourned.

Standing Orders Committee Report to the Assembly March 2016 – Motion to Adopt Recommendations – consideration adjourned.

Committee of Members' Interests Report to the Assembly March 2016 – Motion to Adopt Recommendations – consideration adjourned.

Public Accounts Committee Report on Repairs and Maintenance on Town Camps – consideration adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr CHANDLER (Brennan): Madam Speaker, the proposal for a 22.4 m telecommunications tower across from Sanctuary Lakes in Gunn has been a hot topic of conversation in my electorate over the past few months. Many residents are concerned about the proposed location of the tower as it is close to homes and Sanctuary Lakes.

I held meetings with a number of concerned residents and with the City of Palmerston aldermen. I then held a community meeting at Sanctuary Lakes on 13 April 2016 to allow for open discussion to be shared and the voices of all local residents to be heard. There was an excellent turnout, over 60 residents attended.

After much debate, a logical proposal was put forward and this received an overwhelming response. Optus also held two community information sessions, allowing residents to hear the views of the company firsthand. Initially I received positive feedback from residents who were very pleased with Optus' response to their

concerns and questions at the community information sessions.

The logical proposal put forward is to support the tower being constructed on the other side of Roystonea Avenue. This idea has been put forward to the Minister for Lands and Planning, the Development Consent Authority, Optus and Vodafone. I brought this letter to the attention of the Minister for Lands and Planning and sought assurance that the site agreed to by attendees at the community meeting could be used for the tower. Attached is the letter confirming this, addressed to the proponents, encouraging them to look at the merits of choosing lot 4250 as an alternative to the current site.

Based on this information, I submitted a letter of objection to the Development Consent Authority, urging it to listen to the community, and I wrote another letter to the proponents. The revised proposal will be exhibited until midnight tomorrow, Friday 27 May 2016, and I am advised it will go to the Development Consent Authority meeting for consideration on 15 June 2016. The DCA has three options available to it: approve the proposal, refuse the proposal; or defer consideration to allow additional information to be provided.

If the proposal is either approved or refused the determination will be formally prepared and sent to the applicant and submitters. An approval decision can be appealed by submitters and a refusal decision can be appealed by applicants. A deferral determination would result in advice to the participants. This is the normal process through the DCA.

Throughout the years many constituents have visited my office with concerns about the quality of telecommunication services. Improving the service has the potential to improve the liveability of the area. However, the community wishes are clear on this matter and there is a preferred location.

I assure my constituents, as their local member, I will continue to do all I can for a positive outcome for our community. I will also continue to work hard to ensure my constituents' voices are heard on this matter and will keep them updated about this and all developments.

It was a great opportunity to put our heads together and come up with an alternative proposal which, hopefully, Optus and Vodafone will listen to. If they do it will be a good PR exercise for them because the community chose a site, and one gentleman applied some science and determined it to be a far better location for the tower. If they sign off on this new proposal it will be a great PR exercise and will demonstrate quite

clearly that working with the community brings good outcomes.

I will also share another great example of a community supporting its local school and the positive impact this has had, not only on the students and families, but also the teachers, support staff and the wider school community.

Last week Tennant Creek Primary School received a shipment of brand-new classroom furniture for 17 classrooms, including new tables, chairs, lockers, bookshelves and desks for the teachers. Coming from Z Furniture, a local NT supplier, the school selected red and blue furniture to match the school colours.

With the assistance of Shannon and Charlie from NT Installations the community assembled the furniture and moved it into the classrooms. It was truly a team effort. Parents helped to assemble the furniture. The heavy lifting of the furniture was delegated to the local police, fire and ambulance officers, along with local football players. The teachers and school support staff organised the furniture and directed it to the relevant classrooms, and the students each collected their own chairs.

I thank the Tennant Creek community for its continued support of Tennant Creek Primary School. In particular I would like to thank the following people who volunteered their time to assist with the installation of the school's new furniture. I am sure that the member for Barkly would know most of these people:

The Tennant Creek Fire Station, particularly officer Les Green and his team Matt, Johnny, Andy, Jacob, Rachael, Mitch, Luke, Ayden and Genaya; Tennant Creek Police Station; Tennant Creek Ambulance; the local football team; the principal, Tony Fahey, teachers and support staff of Tennant Creek Primary School; and the Barkly region, Abbey McKenna, Ally Brown, Eddie Bell and his son Robert, Jestke Niemeyer, Norm Forrester, Rocky Postrak and Tracey Guerin. Students Emilio Dobbs, Shakayla and Shanique Morton and parents, Alison Haines, Emma Rush, Matt Johnstone and Wayne Green.

The final thank you is to all the students of Tennant Creek Primary School. I have been told that the smiles on your faces as you took your chairs into your new refurbished classrooms were the greatest reward to those who volunteered their time over the long installation.

I look forward to visiting Tennant Creek Primary School and personally congratulating the school and community for the fantastic team effort. I believe that we will be there in a week or so.

Schools are often the heart of our community, particularly those in remote locations. Stories such as this highlight the great relationships that the schools develop with their local community. It is important that we continue to acknowledge and encourage communities, right across the Territory, to be involved with their local schools.

Well done to all those people involved and well done Tennant Creek.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I rise in adjournment this evening to draw the Assembly's attention to an important matter of ministerial accountability. In September 2013, the then Minister for Lands and Planning undertook a 17-day study tour to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Minister Chandler was accompanied on this overseas tour by the Planning Commissioner and his Senior Ministerial Adviser, Lawson Broad. The minister's study tour cost the taxpayers in the order of \$100 000. The Chief Minister's department paid two-thirds of the cost to cover the travel of the minister and his senior adviser. The balance of \$33 000 incurred for Planning Commissioner Garry Nairn's travel was paid for by the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment.

The minister's 17-day intercontinental study tour was organised by Latitude Travel. No one in the government has been up front to confirm who recommended and who approved that Latitude Travel be utilised to make the travel arrangements for this minister's study tour.

More than two-and-a-half years later the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment undertook a belated audit of transactions totalling \$33 000 in relation to the overseas travel undertaken by the Planning Commissioner. The audit found that potentially inflated invoices were subsequently submitted for payment in relation to these transactions. In a letter on the audit to the Chief Minister's department, the Chief Executive Officer of Lands and Planning stated:

The invoices provided by Latitude Travel presented some irregularities which relate to the lack of any itemised breakdowns of costs.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table the audit report and related communications.

Leave granted.

Ms FYLES: The sequence of events and related communications give rise to four basic questions. Who recommended and authorised Latitude Travel to organise the minister's overseas travel? Why did the departments of Chief Minister and

Lands, Planning and Environment approve irregular invoices, totalling \$100 000, which did not include an itemised breakdown of costs? Why has it taken almost three years for an audit of the irregular invoices? What is the status of the police investigation into these transactions?

Madam Speaker, consistent with the reasonable expectations of the community, these questions should be answered by the relevant ministers in the interests of public accountability and transparency.

Mrs PRICE (Stuart): Madam Speaker, I am disappointed after reading the report of the Standing Orders Committee entitled *Report on Consideration of the Speaking of Languages other than English during proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory*.

To be honest, I am baffled as well as disappointed. The committee has responded to my request that Indigenous languages of the Northern Territory be used more freely in this parliament by placing additional restrictions on the use of languages other than English.

This recommendation astounds me and I wonder why the committee wants to impose it. It reads:

A member may rise to speak in any language other than English so long as an oral translation is provided in the English language by the same member immediately prior to the words spoken in the language other than English and a written translation is tabled immediately prior to the contribution by the member speaking.

I accept that interjections in any language could be called noise or disturbance and that this rule was laid down 323 years ago in the English House of Commons. I recognise that this issue arose out of a reaction to an interjection on my part; however, I am not concerned with interjections. I have been the subject of noisy and disturbing interjections, as much as any other MLA, and they have all been in English.

I am concerned with what we call the legitimate use of languages other than English in the House. I am concerned about the status of my first language and of Indigenous Australian languages generally, but especially in the Northern Territory.

When the English House of Commons laid down this rule in 1693, there was no United Kingdom. The Acts of Union that created it were not passed until 1707. During the creation of this nation state the government was often at war with the speakers of languages other than English, which had been spoken for thousands of years in the British Isles. The speakers of Celtic languages

were forced back into the harshest and poorest parts of those islands. I have stood on the battlefield of Culloden where the Gaelic-speaking clans were finally defeated and forced into poverty and neglect. That battle happened 52 years after the rule on interjections was laid down and 43 years before the first fleet arrived in Australia.

Many of the convicts forced into exile in Australia in the 19th century still spoke those despised languages. Some have survived; many have disappeared. This long war of language, culture and religion did not come to an end in Ireland until 1921 and some would say a lot longer in Northern Ireland. Making English dominant was not a peaceful process, but almost every nation of Europe has done the same thing.

It was believed that one nation should have only one language. The systematic oppression of minority languages went on in Europe until well into the 20th century. Fierce debates continue about the language issues in Europe today. Not everybody is satisfied with the present state of affairs, but a lot of progress has been made. It is now accepted that a nation may have several official languages.

In 1693, only rich English-speaking Protestant men had the right to take part in the law-making process in England. There was very little democracy, very little of what we call fairness. England was yet to become one of the most important and richest of all European slave-trading nations and the head of the world's largest and most powerful empire. Five years before 1693, when the rule on interjection was made, William Dampier and his crew became the first English speakers to set foot on this continent. He did not think much of my people, 'The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world', or of our languages, 'These people speak somewhat through the throat, but we could not understand a word they said'.

Aboriginal people did not have the ability to fight back like the Celts of Britain. We were so weak, in military terms, that our languages, our cultures and our right to own land were easily ignored by the British when they claimed this continent as their own. We do not know what Aboriginal people thought of Dampier and his men, but I bet it was not flattering.

For much of our history our languages were banned from public life altogether and the testimony of Aboriginal witnesses was not accepted in courts. This brought disaster to many of us.

I found the opening parade of the Yipirinya festival in Alice Springs, 2001, a very emotional event. The names of all the languages that had existed

on this continent were held up high on placards in the parade. It made me proud to see so many, but it made me feel deeply sad that most were no longer spoken. Too many had gone for ever, often a deliberate result of government policy.

Things are much better now. We are Australian citizens with the same rights as everybody else. In the Territory my own Warlpiri people now have most of our land back. Australia has become one of the most decent, tolerant and open societies on earth. I am proud to call myself Australian; I celebrate Australia Day and Anzac Day.

It is recognised that people who do not understand English are disadvantaged before the law. Those charged with an offence have the right to an interpreter. It is up to the police and the courts to ensure that those charged understand what the law is, what they have been charged with and what rights they have under the law.

We fund Aboriginal-controlled organisations and professional experts to make sure all of this happens. I have worked as a court interpreter. I know how it works. Like all citizens, my people are obliged to enrol and vote in elections. We are encouraged to stand for public office and some of us accept that challenge. Is it not a little strange though that when we are charged with breaking the law, we are allowed access to an interpreter service and can freely use our languages, but when we are elected to this House and expected to take part in making and changing those same laws we have no right to use our languages freely and no right to use interpreters. Is it not reasonable that lawmakers are given at least the same rights as law breakers?

I have nothing against English. It is the first language of husband, my daughter and my grandsons. I know what it is like to be in a situation where I am being spoken to in an Indigenous language that I do not understand. On a study tour to New Zealand I met with a group of Maori women, public servants. The meeting was opened with a long speech in Maori with no translation. I thought that was a little odd, and not particularly respectful of the fact that I had no idea of what they were saying? I suppose it was a symbolic gesture so I responded with a short speech in Warlpiri, knowing that Maoris had no idea what I was saying and I offered no translation. They seemed to accept my action as another symbolic gesture, but it did not do much for communication between us.

I have a practical attitude about this. I am no protester. While on the Isle of Skye in Scotland I was interviewed by a local radio station that broadcast programs in Scottish Gaelic. Typically, the man who interviewed me was not a speaker of that language, and, of course, interviewed me in

English. He seemed a little taken aback when I basically said we speakers of minority Indigenous languages have to accept that English has won the language wars, and we have to ensure that our children are good at world language. I also said that if we want our language to survive we have to do the hard work ourselves rather than expect government to do it for us. He did not expect me to talk like that, but that is what I believe.

Like Noel Pearson, I think English should be our official language in law and I would support the passing of such a law. I believe passionately that all Aboriginal children should be taught to speak, read and write Standard English well. I know, from personal experience, that we can do that without losing our first language. We can have both, if it is done properly, but we have not been doing it properly. We will learn to use English more easily if our languages are also acknowledged and respected.

We are used to being ignored; I am getting tired of it. When I was first elected as the MLA for Stuart I had the great pleasure of addressing the people of Willowra in our own language. I recently watched a discussion on a referendum for constitutional recognition of our people. Although it took place in Darwin there was not one panel member who spoke an Aboriginal language as a first language. Even in Darwin, the event organisers could not find somebody with an Aboriginal first language to be involved in discussing an issue that would have a major impact on them, and their descendants, forever.

I am not doing this as a protestor or an activist, but as a lawmaker duly elected to our parliament. I want to see our languages given greater acknowledgement so that we and our children can speak for ourselves. We are tired of being misinterpreted, being talked about and people telling the world what is good for us and what we think, in a language that is not our own. We are tired of not being able to express ourselves in the best way we know. Wherever I go in the Territory I am approached by people from the bush. Those who speak our language say they are watching me and are proud of me. They speak languages totally different from mine and live in cultures different to mine, but they say to me, 'You are like us, you know us, you know how we think'. This makes me truly proud.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Stuart, your 10 minutes has expired.

Mrs PRICE: Madam Speaker, I would like to table this.

Madam SPEAKER: No. You could continue on the next sitting day in adjournment; it has been done before.

Mrs PRICE: What can I do?

Madam SPEAKER: Hang onto it until the next sitting day.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move that the member for Stuart be allowed to incorporate the rest of her written speech ...

Madam SPEAKER: You cannot do that, member for Port Darwin; you know that. It has to be provided previously. I suggest the member continues, as has been done by other members, during adjournment on the next sitting day.

Mr ELFERINK (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, firstly I will address what was clearly a tawdry and unnecessarily slithering little attack by the member for Nightcliff on the Minister for Education. Once again – happy to do it in coward's castle, making assertions of various allegations, trying to muddy the waters without any evidence or support behind her. The member for Nightcliff has been the usual disgraceful, tawdry member we expect her to be, using this House for her own advantage. If she has evidence, then bring it forward. I understand that still no evidence demonstrates any wrong doing whatsoever in relation to the Minister for Education's travel. It was nothing more than an attempt to muddy his name with no evidence. If the member for Nightcliff is sure of her ground then she should stand outside and say it and see what happens.

On the behalf of the member for Stuart, I take this opportunity to finish her speech while I have eight minutes left.

What the member for Stuart was going to say is:

Wherever I go in the Territory I am approached by people from the bush, those who speak our languages, and told that they are watching me and they are proud of me. They come from all over and speak languages totally different from mine, live cultures different from mine, they say to me, 'You are like us, you know us and you know how we think.' This makes me truly proud. All they want is to be listened to and to be acknowledged.

I want this to happen in memory of the innocents who died in 1928, in memory of all our ancestors and their painful story. I also want this to happen to honour my parents. They were proud of who they were, their culture and their language, but

they allowed me to break their law to live free and to live my life the way I wanted to. They taught me in their language and law, but they also encouraged me to learn and respect the white man's law, to learn English and to work hard in the white man's school.

That is why I am here. I firmly believe that our children will be happier and more confident to learn English well if they know that those who speak that language and control this country truly acknowledge and respect their languages, those of their families and their ancestors, going well back before 1693.

During the debate, on my motion, last March the member for Port Darwin used sentences in three languages other than English. He admitted he was in breach of Standing Orders...

And I was.

The first time he did was in what he called broken German, but proceeded to do the same thing in Dutch and Afrikaans.

He again described it as broken. He did so without prior warning or prior translation, either oral or written. No translation appears in Hansard but it appears at the time that nobody assumed that he was being offensive or abusive. His behaviour was not ruled to be disorderly.

I did not understand a word of what he was saying, and neither did most of the members. I do not know if any of this language was broken. He wasn't interjecting but he did admit to being in breach of the standing orders, but he suffered no consequence.

And that is true, that is precisely what occurred. The only thing I point out is that I think someone in Hansard spoke German and they correctly interpreted the German for me in the Hansard record.

The member for Stuart went on to say:

I did not think I was asking for much. All I am asking for is the same rights that the member for Port Darwin exercise during the debate on my motion, but without being in breach of the standing orders and with a subsequent and immediate oral translation into English, or if required, a written translation that can be subsequently entered into the Hansard.

I would not speak in broken Warlpiri; after all, it is my first language and it is sacred to me. I want to be able to use my own language spontaneously and when it occurs to me that it is appropriate. I want other Indigenous MLAs to have the same right if they want to exercise it. I want to make a point well, as the Attorney-General did in three languages other than English, but unlike him, I want to make a serious point, not a tongue-in-cheek joke.

I do not want to be treated like an untrustworthy schoolchild whose words need to be checked before I am allowed to use them. I want to be able to use my language without listeners assuming that I am being abusive or offensive and without being ruled disorderly. Is that too much to ask in the 21st century, in a modern, decent, tolerant, open and democratic Australia?

I understand the points the member for Stuart is making. I wish her the very best at the Northern Territory election. When she returns as a minister of the Crown to this House, I look forward to her being able to exercise her language freely and with all the resulting consequences or, for that matter, privileges that apply in a multicultural society.

Mr STYLES (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, this evening I inform the Assembly about a wonderful event to be held this Saturday 28 May: the Darwin Waterfront Harmony Soiree.

This diverse multicultural event is being held in its sixth year in Darwin and is similar to that held earlier this month in Alice Springs which brought a number of multicultural groups together.

These types of multicultural events are a true celebration of the Northern Territory's multicultural diversity and as the Giles government's Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I am very happy to inform the Assembly about this Saturday's event to be held at the Darwin Waterfront from 4 pm to 8.30 pm.

There are 29 multicultural groups participating in this year's Harmony Soiree. Some of these groups are involved only with their specific culture's community stall, some groups are involved in the performance section only and some groups have both a stall and are also performing on the stage.

I thank Darwin's multicultural community groups for showcasing their cultures to Territorians through their interactive community stalls, vibrant stage performances and food stalls.

I also convey my thanks and appreciation to the Darwin Waterfront Corporation, Darwin Community Arts and the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory for their contribution towards, again, making this event a success, in conjunction as partners with the Northern Territory government.

I also acknowledge the members of the Chief Minister's Round Table for Young Territorians who will be helping out at the lantern stall this Saturday evening.

Additionally, I acknowledge and thank businesses at the Darwin Waterfront for donating prizes for the lantern competition. Seeing these colourful lanterns released in the Darwin Waterfront lagoon at 7.30 pm is always a sight to witness.

The community stalls in attendance at the Harmony Soiree this Saturday evening include:

- Milner Primary School and Nitmiluk School with lanterns
- African-Australian Women & Girl's Association with Come and try on traditional dress and accessories
- the Sikh Association with traditional dress, learning basic Bhangra steps and a cool drink called lassi to taste
- Greek Orthodox community with handicrafts and artwork, calligraphy, traditional snacks and tastings
- the Nepalese Association with cultural dress, musical instrument demonstrations, posters display and tastings
- the Africa-Australia Friendship Association with displays of costumes, instruments, art and craft, handmade toys, hair plaiting and braiding, henna painting, games, drumming and traditional cuisine tasting
- of course the Chung Wah Society, with Chinese calligraphy, learn to use chopsticks – always a good idea – dress in traditional Chinese attire, take photos with a Chinese lion, sweets and tea tastings
- the Darwin Bali Community with traditional costume and come and try on clothing, learn to make traditional decorations, headbands and plates
- the Pakistan Association with henna hand painting, an arts and crafts display and traditional music, come and try traditional dress, tea tasting and snacks

- Filipino Australian Association with displays of Filipino arts and crafts with dessert food samples
- the Congolese Association with hair braiding and cultural games, including stick standing
- the Nigerian Association with a cultural stall and Nigerian songs
- the Fijian Association with a display of Fijian cultural items
- the Islamic Society of Darwin with come and try on clothing, Arabic calligraphy, henna design, colouring for children and displays of Islamic art
- the Italian Sports and Social Club with an Italian photographic display and information on Italian culture and community
- the Keltikka Irish Dancers with a come and try Irish dancing and attire – sounds like one for us, Madam Speaker
- the Sri Lanka Australia Friendship Association with traditional arts and crafts, saree dress up and tea making and tasting
- the Pakistan Cultural Society with handicrafts and artwork, calligraphy, traditional snacks and pink tea, as opposed to black tea
- the Australia China Friendship Society with a demonstration of tai chi – always a good one – cultural displays and traditional dress, calligraphy, tea tasting, learn to make dumplings and sticky rice balls
- the lantern stall has lantern crafts and a candle collection.

There will be food stalls provided by Sri Lanka Friendship Association, Filipino Australia Association and Incredible India.

The performance schedule will commence on the stage at the Darwin Waterfront from 4 pm. Between 4 pm and up to 7:30 pm will be the following performances:

- the well-known Arafura Pearl with Kathy and Ali Mills, the Karen Community and the Darwin Rondalla Band
- Leah and Beck with African Songs
- Nepalese Community with adult dancing
- Darwin Bali Community with dancing

- Australian Japanese Association with dancing
- Pa'lyaa NT Association with Sudanese Madi dancing and drumming
- Chung Wah Society Dragon and Lion dancing
- Mandy Garling with O'Loughlin College students
- Australian Karen Organisation with folk dancing
- NT Thai Association with dancing
- Nirvana Hazara with hip hop
- Sikh Association with Bhangra dance and Punjabi drum
- Papua New Guinea Australia Social and Cultural Group
- Nepalese Association with children's dancing;
- Amalyn Manlutc, who is a Filipino singer
- Xango Capoeira Martial Arts dance and music
- Sri Lanka Australia Friendship Association with dancing
- Kassandra Kirby, who is a Filipino dancer
- Chung Wah Society Jade Dragon Dancers
- Tamil Society with dancing
- Greek Orthodox Community with dancing
- Winesia Dance group with dances from North Aceh, Indonesia
- Darwin Malaylee Association with Indian dancing
- the Australia China Friendship Society with dancing.

The list goes on, Madam Speaker.

After release of the floating lanterns in the lagoon of the Darwin Waterfront, there will be two more performances, the Filipino Australia Association with dancing and then a Nepalese band, the Yaks at Tanami, will complete the evening's performances. The final activity, after a wonderful night of entertainment, will be the fireworks scheduled for 8 pm.

I thank everyone involved in this Saturday evening's Darwin Waterfront Harmony Soiree. I

am looking forward to attending this fantastic event as it truly displays the great multicultural diversity we are very fortunate to have in the Territory.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.