



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Public Accounts Committee

Annual Report 2024-25

October 2025



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Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Parliament House

State Square

Darwin NT 0800

Web: www.parliament.nt.gov.au

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Chair's Preface

Established on 14 October 2024, the Committee's work program over the past year has focussed on examining Auditor-General's reports to the Legislative Assembly, responding to inquiry referrals, and consideration of Petitions referred to the Committee.

During the reporting period the Committee received five briefings from the Auditor-General. These briefings covered matters raised in his November 2024 and September 2025 reports to the Legislative Assembly; the findings of the triennial strategic review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office; and the Auditor-General's proposed *Annual Plan of Audit Work 2025-2026*. In addition, as part of its inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Project, the Committee received a briefing on the findings of the Auditor-General's August 2018 and May 2024 audit reports of the Darwin Ship Lift and Marine Maintenance Project.

In recognition of the common mission of promoting accountability and transparency across Territory entities to ensure proper use and management of public resources, on 19 March 2025 the Committee entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Auditor-General. As set out in Appendix 1, the MOU details the respective roles and proposed working relationship of the signatories.

As detailed in Chapter 3, during the reporting period the Committee received six inquiry referrals on a wide range of issues; three from the Treasurer, one from the Assembly, one from the Member for Araluen, and one from the Leader of the Opposition. Of these, the Committee has reported on two, deferred action on one due to legal issues, is currently finalising two inquiries for report by 31 October 2025, with the remaining referral to be finalised in the next reporting period.

Pursuant to Sessional Order 11, 15 petitions were also referred to the Committee for consideration as to whether they should be debated in the Assembly. As part of its deliberations the Committee sought advice from responsible Ministers on a number of occasions and thanks them for their prompt and comprehensive responses. The Committee subsequently recommended six petitions for debate in the Assembly.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Auditor-General for the high quality and professional assistance he has provided to the Committee, and all those that provided submissions to the Committee's inquiries or appeared before it at private briefings and public hearings. I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their collaborative approach to the Committee's work and their efforts to ensure matters of public interest are investigated and reported on.



Mr Clinton Howe MLA
Chair

Committee Members

Chair:	Mr Clinton Howe, MLA Member for Drysdale
Deputy Chair:	Mrs Laurie Zio, MLA Member for Fannie Bay
Members:	Mr Manuel Brown, MLA Member for Arafura Justine Davis, MLA Member for Johnston Mr Brian O’Gallagher, MLA Member for Karama

Committee Secretariat

Executive Director Parliamentary Support:	Dr Caroline Williams
Committee Secretary:	Ms Julia Knight
Senior Research Officer	Mr Will Dreyer
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Terms of Reference

Standing Order 177

Public Accounts Committee

- (1) Public Accounts Committee will be appointed at the commencement of each Assembly and have the following duties:
 - (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and each statement and report tabled in the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to the Financial Management Act 1995 and the Audit Act 1995
 - (b) to report to the Legislative Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit, any items or matters in or arising in connection with those accounts, statements or reports, or in connection with the receipt or disbursement of the moneys to which they relate, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of Parliament should be drawn
 - (c) to report to the Legislative Assembly any alteration which the Committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys
 - (d) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any question in connection with the public accounts of the Northern Territory
 - (i) which is referred to it by a resolution of the Assembly or
 - (ii) which is referred to it by the Administrator or a Minister
 - (e) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any matters within the executive authority of Ministers of the Territory to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Assembly should be drawn.
- (2) The Committee will consist of six¹ Members.
- (3) The Committee must take care not to inquire into any matters which are being examined by a Select Committee of the Assembly especially appointed to inquire into such matters and any question arising on possible overlap may be referred to the Assembly for determination.
- (4) The Committee will elect a Government Member as Chair.
- (5) The Committee will have power to appoint sub-committees and to refer to any such sub-committee any matter which the Committee is empowered to examine.
- (6) The Committee will provide an annual report of its activities to the Assembly.

Sessional Order 11

Action on Petition

Standing Order 121 is suspended and the following applies:

¹ Assembly resolution of 16 October 2024 provided that the Committee would have five members.

- (1) After a petition has been read in the Assembly, any member may move, without notice, that the petition be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for consideration to determine whether the petition should be debated.
- (2) If the Committee determines that the petition may be debated, it will notify the Clerk of its decision in writing and the debate of the petition will be set down on the Notice Paper as an order of the day for Debates on Petitions.
- (3) When the order of the day is called on, the member who moved that the petition be referred to the Public Accounts Committee will move that the Assembly note the petition. This motion cannot be amended. The mover and next member may speak for up to 10 minutes, and 4 other members may speak for up to 3 minutes. The mover may not speak in reply.
- (4) An order of the day for Debates on Petitions interrupted by the routine of business will be listed first of such orders of the day on the Notice Paper.

Adopted 15 October 2024

1 Introduction

Establishment and Functions of the Committee

- 1.1 The Public Accounts Committee was established by the Assembly on 16 October 2024 under Standing Order 177.
- 1.2 The duties of the Public Accounts Committee are to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any question in connection with the public accounts of the Northern Territory as it deems necessary, as well as any matter referred to it by the Assembly, Administrator or any Minister. The Committee also examines the reports of the Auditor-General.
- 1.3 The Committee also has a duty to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any matters within the executive authority of Ministers of the Territory to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Assembly should be drawn.
- 1.4 Pursuant to Sessional Order 11, the Committee is also responsible for considering whether petitions referred to it by any member of the Assembly should be debated in the Assembly.
- 1.5 During the reporting period, the Committee met 20 times. Details of these meetings are contained in the Associated Minutes of Proceedings tabled alongside this report.

2 Matters followed up on by the Committee

Strategic Review of the Auditor-General's Office

- 2.1 Section 26 of the *Audit Act 1995* requires that a strategic review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office (NTAGO) be conducted every three years. An independent reviewer is appointed by the Administrator following consultation by the responsible Minister (the Chief Minister) with the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor-General about the appointment and the terms of reference of the review.
- 2.2 Mr Michael Blake AM was appointed to undertake the 2024 review and presented his report to the Chief Minister and the Auditor-General on 20 November 2024. Pursuant to section 26(8) of the *Audit Act*, the *Strategic Review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office 2024* was subsequently tabled in the Assembly on 13 February 2025.²
- 2.3 Building on the 2018 and 2021 strategic reviews, the 2024 review made a number of strategic recommendations which sought to address issues that had been identified previously but not yet actioned including:
1. A budget that is aligned to the nature and timing of the NTAGO's operations and keeps pace with existing and emerging issues;
 2. An organisational structure, without changing the role played by authorised auditors, aimed at improving flexibility, succession planning and key person dependencies;
 3. A better-informed Assembly about the performance of the public sector by investing in a performance audit mandate, broader financial audit requirements and the need for key performance indicators to be reviewed or audited;
 4. A stronger relationship between the Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee; and
 5. Full review of the NT Audit Act making it more contemporary and removal of provisions that negatively impact the Auditor-General's independence.³
- 2.4 With regards to strengthening the relationship between the Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee, the review proposed that consideration be given to the following:
- a. That the PAC be established under an act of parliament with its role outlined and its relationship with the Auditor-General specified;
 - b. One of these roles be that it follows-up, at its discretion, reports tabled by the Auditor-General;

² Mike Blake AM, *Strategic Review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office 2024*, <https://territorystories.nt.gov.au/10070/988518>

³ Mike Blake AM, *Strategic Review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office 2024*, <https://territorystories.nt.gov.au/10070/988518>, p.3

- c. The report of the section 26 Strategic Review ... be tabled with the PAC and it take any action it considers appropriate;
- d. The PAC have a specified role in the development of the Auditor-General's work plan ...; and
- e. The Auditor-General consider entering, without in any way impinging independence on either, a memorandum of understanding with the PAC which should document respective roles and proposed working relationships.⁴

2.5 As set out below, while the role of the Public Accounts Committee is not yet specified in legislation, a number of strategies have been implemented during the current reporting period to strengthen the Committee's relationship with the Auditor-General.

Memorandum of Understanding

2.6 In recognition of the common mission of promoting accountability and transparency across Territory entities to ensure proper use and management of public resources, on 19 March 2025 the Committee entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Auditor-General, Mr Jara Dean. As set out in Appendix 1, the MOU details the respective roles of the Committee and the Auditor-General and the proposed working relationship of the signatories.

Figure 1: PAC enters into MOU with Auditor-General



From left to right: Mr Brian O'Gallagher MLA, Member for Karama; Mrs Laurie Zio MLA (Deputy Chair), Member for Fannie Bay; Mr Jara Dean, Auditor-General; Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston; Mr Clinton Howe MLA (Chair), Member for Drysdale; and Mr Manuel Brown MLA, Member for Arafura.

⁴ Mike Blake AM, *Strategic Review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office 2024*, <https://territorystories.nt.gov.au/10070/988518>, p.38; see also Recommendations 14 & 18, pp. 12-13

Auditor-General's Briefings

- 2.7 While not specifically required under its Terms of Reference, it is a long-held practice for Auditor-Generals to brief the Public Accounts Committee on the contents of their reports to the Legislative Assembly and associated matters. During the reporting period the Committee received a total of five briefings from the Auditor-General. Two of the briefings related to the findings of agency audits as reported to the Assembly in November 2024 and September 2025. The September 2025 briefing also included an overview of the Auditor-General's findings on the *Effectiveness of Internal Audit and Audit Committees in Government Departments*.
- 2.8 On 19 March 2025, the Auditor-General briefed the Committee on the findings of the triennial strategic review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office. In accordance with the MOU, in May the Auditor-General sought the Committee's feedback on the proposed *Annual Plan of Audit Work 2025-2026*. On 8 July 2025, the Auditor-General briefed the Committee on the proposed workplan, and feedback received from the Committee and the public sector.
- 2.9 As part of its inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Project (see Chapter 3), in July 2025 the Committee sought and received a briefing on the findings of the Auditor-General's August 2018 and May 2024 audit reports of the Darwin Ship Lift and Marine Maintenance Project.

3 Inquiries

Howard Springs Accommodation Village – Flood Evacuation Costs

- 3.1 Pursuant to clause 1(d)(ii) of its terms of reference, on 29 October 2024 the Committee received an inquiry referral from the Treasurer, the Hon Bill Yan MLA, regarding the costs associated with the flood evacuation during March and April 2023 which utilised the Howard Springs Accommodation Village (HSAV), to ensure due diligence was exercised in the expense of government funding (see Appendix 2).
- 3.2 On 10 December 2024, the Committee received a comprehensive briefing from the then Commissioner of Police and Co-Chair of the Territory Emergency Management Council; the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Logistics and Infrastructure; the Deputy Chief Executive Officer Strategic Enabling Services, Department of Health and the General Manager: Strategy and Programs, Department of Children and Families.
- 3.3 Based on the evidence received, the Committee found that the costs associated with the March/April 2023 flood evacuation to the HSAV reflected the prolonged period the centre was required to be operational and the number of people it was required to cater for. While the HSAV was the most viable option for an evacuation centre under the circumstances, it was acknowledged that it presented several challenges which necessarily impacted on the overall operational costs associated with use of the facility. Nevertheless, the Committee was satisfied that appropriate processes were followed, and due diligence was exercised in the expenditure of government funding.
- 3.4 The Committee tabled its report in the Legislative Assembly on 29 July 2025. A copy of the report and associated documentation can be found at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/howard-springs-accommodation-village>.

NT Government Road Works in Alice Springs CBD

- 3.5 On 28 November 2024 the Committee received a request from the Member for Araluen, the Hon Robyn Lambley MLA, that the Committee investigate the rapid and serious deterioration of a network of newly re-sealed roads in the Alice Springs central business district (see Appendix 3). Pursuant to clause 1(e) of its terms of reference, following consideration at its meeting of 12 December 2024 the Committee resolved to inquire into this matter, with particular regard to:
 - procurement processes for the work;
 - scope and costings of the work;
 - specifications of the work;
 - decision-making, management and supervision of the work;
 - deterioration of the newly re-sealed roads; and
 - any other related matters.

- 3.6 Following receipt of submissions, it became evident that contracts relating to the inquiry were not yet completed. Following advice from the Chief Executive Officer: Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, and not wishing to jeopardise or diminish the contractual rights and obligations of contracting parties, at its meeting of 19 March 2025 the Committee resolved to suspend its inquiry until such time as contracts have been finalised. The Department advised that the indicative expiry date for related contracts is mid-June 2026.
- 3.7 Information regarding this inquiry can be found at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/nt-government-road-works-in-the-alice-springs-cbd>.

Acacia Digital Patient Record System

- 3.8 Pursuant to clause 1(d)(ii) of its terms of reference, on 13 February 2025 the Committee received an inquiry referral from the Treasurer, the Hon Bill Yan MLA, requesting that the Committee investigate the costs associated with the implementation and management of the Acacia Digital Patient Record System (see Appendix 4).
- 3.9 The Committee received six submissions to its inquiry. However, due to the Committee's workload and associated reporting timeframes, at its meeting of 21 May 2025 the Committee resolved to defer public hearings until November 2025.
- 3.10 Information regarding this inquiry can be found at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/Acacia-Digital-Patient-Record-System>.

Darwin Ship Lift Project

- 3.11 Pursuant to clause 1(d)(ii) of its terms of reference, on 11 May 2025 the Committee received an inquiry referral from the Treasurer, the Hon Bill Yan MLA, requesting that the Committee investigate a range of matters associated with the cost and implementation of the Darwin Ship Lift Project and report back to the Assembly in the September 2025 sittings (see Appendix 5). Given the detailed terms of reference, the volume of material submitted to the Committee for consideration and the complexity of the matter, the Committee subsequently sought and received an amended reporting date to on or before 31 October 2025.
- 3.12 To familiarise themselves with the project, on 8 July 2025 Committee members undertook a site visit to the East Arm precinct where they were provided with a guided tour of the Darwin Ship Lift project and associated marine maintenance infrastructure site. The Committee received six submissions to its inquiry and held public hearings in Darwin on 24 July and 17 September 2025 with 14 witnesses appearing before the Committee.
- 3.13 At the time of writing, the Committee was in the process of considering the evidence received and drafting its report. Information regarding this inquiry is available at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/Darwin-Ship-Lift-Project>.

Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum

- 3.14 Based on a motion moved by the Independent Member for Johnston, Justine Davis MLA, and pursuant to clause 1(d)(i) of its Terms of Reference⁵, on 14 May 2025 the Assembly resolved that:

The Public Accounts Committee inquire into and report on the Auditor-General's November 2018 Report to the Legislative Assembly at pages 31 to 66 in respect of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, including but not limited to consideration of:

- (a) the full extent of overpayments to all IEPS [Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum] contractors
- (b) options for repayment by contractors of all unrecovered overpayments
- (c) in cases of prima facie evidence of fraud, the merits of legal proceedings based on advice from relevant government agencies

and that the committee present its final report to the Assembly on or before 31 October 2025.⁶

- 3.15 Following consideration of the Terms of Reference, at its meeting of 21 May 2025 the Committee resolved to write to the Leader of Government Business to request that the inquiry terms of reference be amended as the Committee did not consider it was best placed to respond to clause (c). Noting that such matters lie within the purview of the NT Police, Director of Public Prosecutions and the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure Investigation Unit, the Committee proposed replacing clause (c) with a new clause (c): implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations by the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and outcomes to date. On 22 May 2025, the Assembly agreed to amend the Terms of Reference accordingly (see Appendix 6).⁷

- 3.16 The Committee received one submission to its inquiry from the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure. Following consideration of the Department's submission, the Committee identified several matters relating to the Auditor-General's 2018 report it required further information on. As such, the Committee requested that the Department provide a written response to its queries. By way of follow up, on 25 September 2025 the Committee held a public hearing with departmental representatives.

- 3.17 At the time of writing, the Committee was in the process of drafting its report. Information regarding this inquiry can be found at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/IEPS#Subs>

⁵ Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, *Standing Orders (4th Edition)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/business/standing-and-sessional-orders>, Standing Order 177 – Public Accounts Committee, p. 52

⁶ Parliamentary Record, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 2 – 14 May 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/997743>, pp. 59-66

⁷ Parliamentary Record, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 6 – 22 May 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/997747>, p.3

Darwin Waterfront Corporation

- 3.18 On 21 May 2025, the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Selena Uibo MLA raised a series of allegations in the Legislative Assembly regarding the potential misuse of taxpayer funds and mismanagement of conflicts of interest by senior representatives of the Darwin Waterfront Corporation. Ms Uibo tabled a copy of a letter to the Public Accounts Committee urging the Committee to conduct an inquiry into the allegations.⁸
- 3.19 As set out in Appendix 7, following consideration of the proposed inquiry referral, at its meeting of 27 May 2025 the Committee resolved to inquire into and determine the appropriateness of the use of taxpayer funds and the management of conflicts of interest at the Darwin Waterfront Corporation with a focus on the claims asserted by the Leader of the Opposition in Hansard Wednesday 21 May 2025, specifically:
- a) Alleged creation of a made-up part-time job, reportedly unadvertised and resulting in a \$60,000 salary increase via a temporary higher duties allowance;
 - b) The higher duties allowance allegedly continued for up to six years, long after the temporary role ended;
 - c) Claims of funds being moved between the Darwin Waterfront Corporation and the AustralAsia Railway Corporation and their appropriateness;
 - d) Signing of a new four-year executive contract that was not advertised, not subject to the required job evaluation system review and signed six months before the previous one expired; and
 - e) Any other information relevant to the above
- 3.20 The Committee received four submissions to its inquiry and on 3 June 2025 held a public briefing with representatives from the Darwin Waterfront Corporation appearing before the Committee. Following the briefing, the Committee released a media statement noting that it had unanimously decided that none of the allegations as set out in the inquiry Terms of Reference had been substantiated. The Committee subsequently tabled its report on the inquiry in the Assembly on 31 July 2025. A copy of the report and Associated Minutes of Proceedings is available at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/public-accounts-committee/dwc#Report>.

⁸ Ms Selena Uibo MLA, Leader of the Opposition, *Parliamentary Record*, Draft Daily Hansard, Day 5 – 21 May 2025, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/997746>, pp. 71-2

4 Petitions

4.1 Pursuant to Sessional Order 11(1), petitions read in the Legislative Assembly may be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for consideration as to whether the petition should be debated in the Assembly. Following is an overview of the petitions referred to the Committee during the reporting period and the outcome of the Committee's considerations. Copies of all petitions and Ministerial responses tabled in the Assembly are available [here](#).

Petition No. 1

4.2 The Assembly referred Petition No. 1 to the Committee on 17 October 2024. The petition registered the concern of 463 petitioners with the affirmation model of gender care provided to Northern Territory children with gender dysphoria, and called for:

1. Suspension of all medical and surgical transitioning treatments for children in the Northern Territory to protect them from further injury; and
2. Commissioning of an independent inquiry, similar to the Cass Review, into gender care to investigate the legitimacy of the gender treatments provided in the Northern Territory and explore a better and more scientific alternative to treat gender dysphoria among children.

4.3 To inform its consideration of the petition, on 10 December 2024 the Committee was briefed on Transitioning Treatments for Children in the NT by representatives from the Department of Health. Given the sensitivity of the issue, at its meeting of 12 February 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

Petition No. 2.

4.4 Referred to the Committee on 22 October 2024, 109 petitioners called on Darwin Bus Network stakeholders – the Government, CDC (formerly Buslink) and NT WorkSafe – to immediately install fit-for-purpose driver protection screens in all Darwin buses, noting that bus drivers and members of the community deserve to be safe on public transport.

4.5 The Committee sought advice from the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure regarding the timeframe for completing the installation of driver protection screens. The Minister subsequently advised that as of 13 November 2024, driver protection screens had been installed on all operational buses in Darwin and Alice Springs (see Appendix 8).

4.6 Given that the Minister had also made this information public via a media release on 19 November 2024, at its meeting of 27 November 2024 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate as the matter had been satisfactorily actioned by the Government.

Petition No. 3

- 4.7 Petition No. 3 was referred to the Committee on 27 November 2024. From 715 petitioners, the petition called on the Government to take immediate and effective action to protect Litchfield National Park from the spread of gamba grass.
- 4.8 Following consideration of the petition at its meeting of 10 December 2024, the Committee notified the Clerk that it was of the view that the Assembly should debate the petition. The petition was subsequently debated in the Assembly on 11 February 2025.⁹

Petition No. 4

- 4.9 The Assembly referred Petition No. 4 to the Committee on 27 November 2024. 706 petitioners registered their opposition to the establishment of the *Territory Coordinator* under the proposed terms in particular:
1. Empowering the Territory Coordinator to direct decision-makers to make decisions within certain timeframes;
 2. Empowering the Territory Coordinator and Chief Minister to 'step in' and undertake an assessment themselves instead of the NTEPA or other relevant decision-makers;
 3. Empowering the Territory Coordinator and Chief Minister to exempt projects from approvals;
 4. The introduction of a 'primary principle' for decision-making that elevates the objective of driving economic prosperity above all other considerations.
- 4.10 The Committee considered the petition at its meeting of 10 December 2024. Noting that the Chief Minister had publicly advised that the Territory Coordinator Bill would be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for inquiry and report following its introduction in the Assembly in February 2025, the Committee resolved not to recommend that the Assembly debate the petition.

Petition No. 5

- 4.11 Referred to the Committee on 28 November 2024, 2067 petitioners registered their opposition to full term abortion and called on the Legislative Assembly to repeal the 2021 amendments to the *Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Act 2017*.
- 4.12 The Committee sought advice from the Minister for Health regarding the matters raised in the petition, including what action has or will be taken to address the concerns of petitioners. As clarified in the Minister's response (see Appendix 9), repealing the amendments is not relevant to the petitioners' concern about full term abortion. Following consideration of the Minister's advice and noting the sensitivity of the issue, at its meeting of 12 February 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

⁹ Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions - Day 1 - 11 February 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/987229>, pp. 804-07

Petition No. 6

- 4.13 On 28 November 2024, the Assembly referred Petition No. 6 to the Committee. 1054 petitioners registered their support for the return of Lee Point and Casuarina Coastal Reserve to the care, ownership and protection of the Larrakia people enacted across three phases:
1. An immediate moratorium on all land clearing at Lee Point
 2. A commitment to working with, and resourcing, all eight Larrakia family groups to work together to establish and manage a new Larrakia-owned entity which will co-manage Casuarina Coastal Reserve and Lee Point with Parks & Wildlife NT, and
 3. The transferral of ownership of Casuarina Coastal Reserve and Lee Point to this Larrakia-owned entity along with the resources needed to care for and manage country in a fully self-determined way by 2030.
- 4.14 The Committee wrote to the Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment to seek advice in relation to the matters raised in the petition. As set out in Appendix 10, the Minister advised that, as required under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*, the Parks and Wildlife Commission will be preparing a statutory Plan of Management for the Casuarina Coastal Reserve in 2025. The Minister also clarified the circumstances under which land clearing may occur at Lee Point and noted that Larrakia custodians have been involved in the identification of mature trees for preservation. Following consideration of the Minister's advice, at its meeting of 12 February 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

Petition No. 7

- 4.15 Petition No. 7 was referred to the Committee on the 28 November 2024. 165 petitioners registered their concern about the road infrastructure along Fred's Pass Road directly outside the Humpty Doo Primary and Pre-Schools. To ensure a secure environment for everyone residing, working and attending school in the area, the petitioners called on the Government, in collaboration with the Litchfield Council, to review and allocate the requisite funds and commit to upgrading the road infrastructure within a six-month timeframe.
- 4.16 Following consideration of the petition at its meeting of 10 December 2024, the Committee resolved to recommend that the Assembly debate the petition and notified the Clerk accordingly. The petition was subsequently debated in the Assembly on 11 February 2025.¹⁰

Petition No. 8

- 4.17 On 12 February 2025, the Assembly referred Petition No. 8 to the Committee. 649 petitioners registered their concern regarding the need to upgrade the Port Keats

¹⁰ Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions - Day 1 - 11 February 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/987229>, pp. 807-12

Road which services more than 2000 people in the Thamarrurr Region. Connecting the communities of Wadeye, Palumpa and nearby Homelands, petitioners noted that the road is vital for the region's liveability, mobility and economy. However, it was noted that the road is currently unusable for 4 to 6 months of the year which isolates communities, raises living costs, hinders access to essential services and prohibits economic development.

4.18 Given that the Commonwealth Government has committed part of the funds needed to undertake the required upgrade to the road, the petitioners called on the Northern Territory Government to also commit funding to implement the proposed works.

4.19 In response to a question in the Assembly on the upgrade of the Port Keats Road, on 12 February 2025 the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure, the Hon Bill Yan MLA, advised the Assembly that:

The Commonwealth only gave its permission to release the funds for this project on 20 August 2024, four days before the NT election ... DLI [Department of Logistics and Infrastructure] is still in negotiation with the Northern Land Council for access to gravel, layoffs and water along the 47-kilometre route. My advice is that the NLC is seeking that the NTG pays for water along that route, a position not agreed to by the previous government nor by this government. ... The CLP will honour this project and no, the funding has not been pulled and yes, our government will deliver this project because it's a federally funded program by the Australian Government.¹¹

4.20 Noting the Minister's response, at its meeting of 26 March 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

Petition No. 9

4.21 On 27 March 2025, the Assembly referred Petition No. 9 to the Committee. 116 petitioners called on the Government to immediately withdraw its proposal to establish the Territory Coordinator.

4.22 Given that the Territory Coordinator legislation was passed into law on 19 March 2025, at its meeting of 14 May 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

Petition No. 10

4.23 Petition No. 10 was referred to the Committee on 13 May 2025. 380 petitioners registered their opposition to the proposed Berrimah Road duplication project, noting that the project would prove detrimental to the community of Berrimah Road and would severely impact the Haileybury Rendall School and its community. With regards to the latter, the petition noted that the project would have significant impacts on the environment, infrastructure, safety, teaching and learning.

4.24 The Committee wrote to the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure requesting advice on the matters raised in the petition. The Minister advised that the Berrimah

¹¹ Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions – Day 2 – 12 February 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/987230>, pp. 853-4

Road duplication project had been reviewed and noted that any plans to upgrade access or other development works along Berrimah Road will proceed based on the current single carriageway configuration, rather than a duplicated carriageway (see Appendix 11).

- 4.25 Following consideration of the Minister's response, at its meeting of 21 May 2025 the Committee resolved to recommend that the Assembly debate the petition and notified the Clerk accordingly. The petition was subsequently debated in the Assembly on 29 July 2025.¹²

Petition No. 11

- 4.26 Petition No. 11 was referred to the Committee on 20 May 2025. This petition called on the government to provide a more appropriate level of funding for the Territory's screen industry and was supported by 363 petitioners. As noted in the petition, despite a 386% growth in the industry over the past six years, its budget of approximately \$500,000 is insufficient to sustain and grow an industry that has proven its worth both economically and culturally.
- 4.27 At its meeting of 21 May 2025, the Committee resolved to recommend that the Assembly debate the petition and notified the Clerk accordingly. The petition was debated in the Assembly on 29 July 2025.¹³

Petition No. 12

- 4.28 Referred to the Committee on 22 May 2025, Petition No. 12 called on the government to take immediate action to protect companion animals by providing a more appropriate level of oversight of the pet boarding and pet sitting sector. The submission was signed by 1,495 concerned citizens.
- 4.29 Following consideration of the petition, at its meeting of 8 July 2025 the Committee resolved to advise the Clerk that it was of the view that the petition should be debated in the Assembly. The petition was subsequently debated in the Assembly on 29 July 2025.¹⁴

Petition No. 13

- 4.30 Petition No. 13 was referred to the Committee on 22 May 2025. Signed by 283 petitioners, the petition called on the government to:
1. Acknowledge the dramatic growth of school students enrolled at the Dundee Beach School and the pressures being placed on the school.
 2. Acknowledge the work of the school council in developing the Dundee Beach School Masterplan and commit to the implementation of the masterplan.
 3. Prioritise stage 1 of the masterplan due to the imminent health, safety and student wellbeing.

¹² Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions – Day 1 – 29 July 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1006752>, pp. 59-62

¹³ Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions – Day 1 – 29 July 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1006752>, pp. 63-66

¹⁴ Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions – Day 1 – 29 July 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1006752>, pp. 66-70

- 4.31 To inform its consideration of the petition, the Committee sought advice from the Minister for Education and Training regarding current enrolment numbers, capacity of the school, and any planned infrastructure upgrades. As set out in Appendix 12, the Minister advised that given that there is capacity to cater for a further 21 students and the competing infrastructure projects across the department's portfolio of sites, stage 1 of the masterplan was unable to be accommodated in the 2025-26 infrastructure budget. Noting the Minister's advice, at its meeting of 24 July 2025 the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate.

Petition No. 14

- 4.32 On 22 May 2025 the Assembly referred Petition No. 14 to the Committee. Signed by 217 petitioners it called on the Assembly to support the:
1. Immediate resurfacing of the entire length of Boulter Road, Berrimah to provide a smooth, safe, and durable road surface.
 2. Realignment and construction of a safe and accessible footpath along Boulter Road to ensure pedestrian safety.
 3. Addressing flooding issues by improving drainage systems along Boulter Road to prevent water buildup and road damage during the wet season.
- 4.33 The Committee sought advice from the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure on the issues raised in the petition. Noting that Darwin City Council is responsible for maintaining Boulter Road, the Minister advised that he had notified the Council of the petition and his response and would continue to have discussions with the Council regarding the matter (see Appendix 13). At its meeting of 24 July 2025, the Committee resolved to recommend that the Assembly debate the petition and advised the Clerk accordingly. The Petition was debated in the Assembly on Tuesday 2 September 2025.¹⁵

Petition No. 15

- 4.34 Signed by 432 e-petitioners, petition No. 15 calling on the Legislative Assembly to retain all the current protections in the NT *Anti-Discrimination Act*, was referred to the Committee on 2 September 2025.
- 4.35 Following consideration of the petition, at its meeting of 10 October 2025, the Committee resolved not to recommend the petition for debate in the Assembly noting that there will be an opportunity to raise any concerns during the second reading of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2025.

¹⁵ Parliamentary Record, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 1 – 2 September 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1009061>, pp. 60-3

Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Memorandum of Understanding

Public Accounts Committee
and
Auditor-General for the Northern Territory

Members of the Committee

Mr Clinton Howe MLA – Member for Drysdale
(Chair)

Mrs Laurie Zio MLA – Member for Fannie Bay
(Deputy Chair)

Mr Manuel Brown MLA – Member for Arafura

Justine Davis MLA – Member for Johnston

Mr Brian O’Gallagher MLA – Member for Karama



Preamble

The Public Accounts Committee is appointed at the commencement of each Legislative Assembly in accordance with Standing Order 177. The role of the Public Accounts Committee includes to:

- examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and each statement and reports tabled in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to the *Financial Management Act 1995* and the *Audit Act 1995*; and
- inquire into and report on any matters within the executive authority of Ministers of the Territory which the Committee is of the opinion should be brought to the attention of the Assembly.

The Auditor-General is an independent statutory officer appointed under the *Audit Act 1995* by the Administrator of the Northern Territory, on recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. The Auditor-General's primary relationship is with the Legislative Assembly. The Auditor-General's role is to audit Territory public sector agencies and bodies to provide an independent view of their performance and financial management to the Legislative Assembly. This responsibility supports the Parliament's role as representative of all Territorians.

This Memorandum of Understanding between the Public Accounts Committee (the Committee) and the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory (the Auditor-General) reflects the common mission of promoting accountability¹ and transparency² across Territory entities to ensure proper use and management of public resources.

Supporting the Function of the Committee

The Auditor-General supports the Committee's functions and will work towards assisting the Committee in its role.

The Auditor-General's gateway to Parliament is through the Committee. The Auditor-General will provide an advance notice of their intention to table a report in the Legislative Assembly.

The Auditor-General (or the staff of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office) will offer to brief the Committee on all reports tabled in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to the *Audit Act* and any other legislation (for example the *Public Information Act 2010*). To ensure relevance of the briefings, the Auditor-General and the Committee will endeavour for briefings to take place at the Committee's meetings following the tabling of each report. The aim of the briefings is to discuss areas of interest to both parties and to encourage open and frank discussion between the Committee and the Auditor-General which assists the Committee in its role of examining reports of the Auditor-General.

The Auditor-General may bring matters to the attention of the Committee that the Auditor-General determines warrant consideration by the Committee in addition to, or in place of, a review by the Auditor-General. The Committee will give serious consideration to any such matters and notify the Auditor-General of its decision.

¹ Accountability means that *officials* are responsible for the actions and decisions that they take in relation to the *use and management of money, property and appropriations* and for the resulting outcomes.

² Transparency involves *relevant entities* taking steps to enable appropriate scrutiny of their activity.

Supporting the Role of the Auditor-General

Acknowledging that the Auditor-General's independence is essential to public sector accountability, the Committee will work with the Auditor-General to ensure that this independence is not compromised.

The Committee undertakes to support efforts to strengthen the independence of the Auditor-General and give due consideration to reports of the Auditor-General in reviewing the effective, efficient, economical and ethical use and management of public resources by both the executive government and the public sector in general.

The Committee will respond to the Auditor-General's reports as it sees fit.

The Committee may bring matters to the attention of the Auditor-General that it determines warrant consideration by the Auditor-General in addition to or in place of investigation by the Committee. The Auditor-General will give serious consideration to any such matters and notify the Committee of their decision.

The Committee and the Auditor-General will meet annually in time for the preparation of the annual audit work program and to inform the strategic direction of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office.

The Auditor-General will seek input from the Committee into the annual audit work program and will acquit back to the Committee the annual audit work program for the previous year.

Annual Declaration of Interests

The *Audit Act* requires the Auditor-General to act independently, impartially and in the public interest when performing or exercising the functions or powers conferred on him or her by the *Audit Act*. This independence is further regulated under the *Corporations Act 2001*, Australian Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* issued by the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board.

It is understandable that from time to time conflicts of interest will arise and that the mere existence of a conflict of interest does not imply wrongdoing. However, at all times it is important to ensure that such conflicts are identified, disclosed and managed in a rigorous and transparent way. This promotes public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the role of the Auditor-General.

Public sector employees are required to disclose any financial or other private interests to their chief executive officer. The *Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Policy* requires all employees to declare their interests to the Auditor General.

In the interest of openness and transparency, the Auditor-General will provide an annual statement of interests based on information required to be disclosed by members of the Legislative Assembly. The Auditor-General will update the statement of interests as soon as practicable if circumstances change.

Auditor-General's Gifts and Benefits Statement

On a quarterly basis the Auditor -General will forward to the Committee an extract from the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office's gifts and benefits register detailing gifts and benefits offered, received or declined by the Auditor-General during the previous quarter.

Auditor-General's Expenses

On a quarterly basis the Auditor -General will forward to the Committee expenses incurred in the course of official duties and functions. Considering that the authorisation of expenditure for the Auditor-General is performed by subordinate staff of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office, providing this information to the Committee will improve the scrutiny and transparency over the expenditure of public funds by the Auditor-General.

Obligations to Protect Information

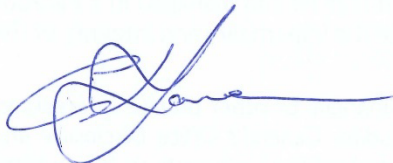
In reaching this Memorandum of Understanding each party respects the rights and obligations of the other concerning matters of privilege, confidentiality, legislative and procedural requirements.

The *Audit Act* imposes strict confidentiality requirements on the Auditor-General, the Northern Territory Auditor General's Office personnel and authorised auditors. Section 23 (3) of the *Audit Act* prevents the Auditor-General from disclosing anything that came to his or her knowledge in the performance of the functions or the exercise of the powers under the *Audit Act*.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee and the Auditor-General will meet periodically and/or on an as needs basis, initiated by either party but at least annually to discuss the plan of works.

The Committee Chair or the Auditor-General may initiate an informal meeting outside of scheduled meetings of the Committee.



Clinton Howe MLA
Committee Chair

19 March 2025



Jara K Dean
Auditor-General

19 March 2025



Appendix 2: Howard Springs Accommodation Village – Flood Evacuation Costs



TREASURER

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.yan@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8700

Public Accounts Committee – Howard Springs Accommodation Village – Costs associated with Flood Evacuation March/April 2023

I refer to the Public Accounts Committee for further investigation the costs associated with the flood evacuation during the March and April period of 2023 which utilised the Howard Springs Accommodation Village.

The overall cost of \$12.7M to the Northern Territory Government is significant and requires further investigation to ensure due diligence was exercised in the expense of government funding.

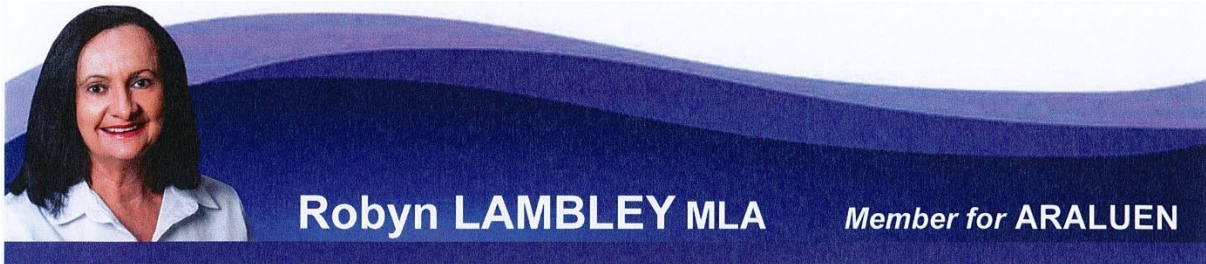
I request that the Public Accounts Committee investigate the use of government funding in relation to this matter and report back to Parliament with the Committee's findings and recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Yan'.

Hon. BILL YAN MLA
MEMBER FOR NAMATJIRA
TREASURER

Appendix 3: Inquiry Referral from the Member for Araluen



Mr Clinton Howe
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
NT Legislative Assembly
Via Email: Clinton.Howe@nt.gov.au

Dear Chair and Members of the Public Accounts Committee,

**Referral to the Public Accounts Committee:
NT Government Road Works in the Alice Springs CBD**

I refer a matter of public importance for inquiry or investigation by the Public Accounts Committee of the NT Legislative Assembly.

There has been a rapid and serious deterioration of a network of newly re-sealed roads in the Alice Springs central business district (CBD). These roads were sealed in mid-2024 (see *Attachment 1*) and were a part of the NT Labor's Government's "Alice Springs CBD Revitalisation Program". These roads have literally come unstuck. Significant patches on all stretches of this CBD road network have turned into liquid tarmac.

It raises one critical and obvious question: **How can this happen?**

Other questions have been raised around:

- the original procurement of the work
- the scope and costing of the work
- the specifications of the work
- the decision-making, management and supervision of this work
- exactly who is responsible for the poor product that was delivered
- and who pays

Whilst I am not proposing a witch hunt, the lines of accountability within the NT Government for this poorly executed and even more poorly delivered NT Government funded project must be identified. Public scrutiny of this project is essential.

It is pleasing to note that this infrastructure disaster has been given the serious consideration it deserves by the new government, and I understand that they are planning to repair the roads in the coming weeks (see *Attachment 2*).

Background

The former NT Labor Government funded a project to “revitalise” the Alice Springs CBD. This project commenced in early 2020 and was apparently completed in July 2024. This was *three years* later than the planned date of completion. The whole project has been an extremely drawn out process for the Alice Springs community. People are fed up by the incompetent way in which many aspects of this entire project have been managed, something the Public Accounts Committee might also wish to investigate.

The roads within the Alice Springs CBD started to deteriorate in August 2024. A problem called “bleeding” with the tarmac started to effect significant portions of these newly sealed roads. Under intense public scrutiny it was revealed by local experts in road construction that these roads had been re-sealed incorrectly. Apparently, the roads should have been resealed using “hot mix” but a much cheaper option was used called “spray pave”. Questions have been raised about the quality of the emulsion product used by the contractors, possibly being low grade or faulty.

The impact of this debacle

This botched project has had a major impact on the usability of the roads and the whole amenity of the Alice Springs CBD. Pedestrians have been literally walking through liquid tar on the roads of Alice Springs. In trying to ameliorate the impact of this mess, we now have trucks spraying water on the roads every day and gravel has been spread on the bleeding tar to try to minimise the damage. It looks terrible. We have signs throughout the CBD warning people about the risk of gravel flying up from the road and breaking windscreens (see *Attachments 3 - 6*).

The extensive further works required to fix this mess will be to the detriment of CBD businesses and at enormous inconvenience to the public, not to mention at great expense to the government.

This problem is very public and very disappointing. It is also completely unacceptable.

I request that the Public Accounts Committee make their own inquiries into this debacle on behalf of the people of Alice Springs. We must ensure that this type of gross mismanagement does not occur again. Alice Springs deserves better.

Yours sincerely,



ROBYN LAMBLEY MLA
Member for Araluen
28th November 2024

Attachment 1 - NT Government Stakeholder Notice, April 2024
Attachment 2 - NT Government Stakeholder Notice, November 2024
Attachment 3 – 6 - Photographs of the CDB Roadworks

Appendix 4: Inquiry Referral: Acacia Digital Patient Record System



TREASURER

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.yan@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8700

Public Accounts Committee - Acacia - Costs associated with implementation and management

I refer to the Public Accounts Committee for further investigation the costs associated with the implementation and management of the Acacia digital patient record system.

I request that the Public Accounts Committee investigate and assess the following:

- The difference between the initial project Budget and the cost of procuring, implementing and managing the Acacia system to date
- A timeline of each of these cost revisions with an explanation for each revision
- Any issues that were raised during implementation of the system, when the responsible Minister was notified of these issues, how long it took for these issues to be resolved, if they were resolved at all, and their cost
- The impact to the health system, and the cost, of any rollbacks/suspensions of using the software in hospitals that occurred during implementation
- The current status of implementation against the original staged project plan and the outstanding steps, and their cost, required for project completion

Yours sincerely

BILL YAN



Appendix 5: Inquiry Referral: Darwin Ship Lift Project



TREASURER

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.yan@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 31 46
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8700

Public Accounts Committee

Dear Chair

In 2015 the Darwin Shiplift was proposed with a \$100 million commitment by the CLP Government. The project has faced years of delay and cost escalations so that by the 2024/25 Labor Budget the estimated cost had climbed to \$515 million.

The former Labor Government executed final contractual commitments before the August 2024 Northern Territory general election pushing the Territory past the contractual point of no return. Termination would trigger significant break costs.

Construction is now under way and major equipment is on order. Additional cost pressures in the order of hundreds of millions are now anticipated.

The Finocchiaro CLP Government is committed growing our defence and maritime industries and this project has significant benefits to the local economy.

We want to be open and transparent with Territorians on the costs of the project and ensure steps are taken to minimise further delays and cost blow outs.

I respectfully request that the Public Accounts Committee inquire into the following:

Economic & Strategic Benefits

- Updated demand (defence, offshore energy, coastal shipping, super yachts, fishing).
- Direct/indirect jobs, supply chain impacts, skills development.

Contractual Commitments & Optimisation Options

- Key obligations and risk allocation in the executed agreements.
- Feasible design, staging or pricing refinements that do not breach current contracts.

Cost, Funding & Fiscal Exposure

- Capital and lifecycle cost including escalation and contingency.
- Funding sources (Territory, Commonwealth programs such as NAIF).
- Ongoing budget impacts.

Governance & Project Control



- Adequacy of oversight, probity and cost control processes.

Regulatory & Legislative Settings

- Legislative and regulatory requirements.

Delivery Risks & Mitigation

- Construction, supply chain, workforce and inflationary risks.
- Interface with naval, port and land use planning.
- Contingency plans for cost or schedule overruns.

Opportunity Costs & Regional Impact

- Economic losses from past delays.
- Possible further action needed to fully realise the benefits.

Reporting

Final report with findings and recommendations to be Tabled in September 2025 sittings.

Yours sincerely



BILL YAN

11 May 2025

Appendix 6: Inquiry Referral – Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Inquiry into the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum

Terms of Reference

On 22 May 2025, the Assembly resolved that:

The Public Accounts Committee inquire into and report on the Auditor-General's November 2018 Report to the Legislative Assembly at pages 31 to 66 in respect of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, including but not limited to consideration of:

- a) the full extent of overpayments to all IEPS contractors;
- b) options for repayment by contractors of all unrecovered overpayments; and
- c) implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations by the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and outcomes to date.

and that the Committee present its final report to the Assembly on or before 31 October 2025.

Appendix 7: Inquiry Referral: Darwin Waterfront Corporation



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Inquiry into the Darwin Waterfront Corporation

Terms of Reference

On 27 May 2025, the Public Accounts Committee resolved:

Under Standing Order 177(1)(e) the Public Accounts Committee is to inquire into and determine the appropriateness of the use of taxpayer funds and conflict of interest management at the Darwin Waterfront Corporation with a focus on the claims asserted by the Leader of the Opposition in Hansard Wednesday 21 May 2025, specifically:

- a) Alleged creation of a made-up part-time job, reportedly unadvertised and resulting in a \$60,000 salary increase via a temporary higher duties allowance;
- b) The higher duties allowance allegedly continued for up to six years, long after the temporary role ended;
- c) Claims of funds being moved between the Darwin Waterfront Corporation and the AustralAsia Railway Corporation and their appropriateness;
- d) Signing of a new four year executive contract that was not advertised, not subject to the required job evaluation system review and signed six months before the previous one expired; and
- e) Any other information relevant to the above.

Appendix 8: Ministerial Advice – Petition 2



MINISTER FOR LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.yan@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8660

Mr Clinton Howe MLA
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Via email: LA.PAC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Howe

Thank you for your correspondence dated 13 November 2024 regarding the timeframe for completing the installation of modified driver screens in all Darwin buses.

Community safety is the Country Liberal Government's top priority. Unfortunately, an unacceptable level of anti-social behaviour is being experienced on the public transport network.

Due to the safety risk, on 18 October 2024, the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (the Department) took urgent action by intervening in the bus contractor's rollout of upgrading the driver screens and took immediate steps to keep drivers safe through:

- expediting installation of the modified driver screens; and
- providing security guards on all buses that did not have modified driver screens by 5pm of that day.

From 21 October 2024, the Department provided a daily report on the progress of the upgrade of driver screens in both Darwin and Alice Springs until all screens were completed.

I am pleased to advise that as of 4 November 2024, driver protection screens were installed on all operational buses in Darwin and as of 13 November 2024, all driver protection screens were installed in Alice Springs.

The Government will continue to put bus driver safety at the forefront and with the introduction of new legislation addressing serious anti-social behaviours, it is envisaged that a reduction of these behaviours will be evident in the future.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

BILL YAN

29 NOV 2024



Appendix 9: Ministerial Advice – Petition 5



MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.edgington@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8635

Mr Clinton Howe MLA
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Via email: LA.PAC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Howe

Thank you for your correspondence dated 10 December 2024 in relation to Petition No 5. (Ref: COMM2024/00015.17).

National guidelines on pregnancy care recommend screening for foetal abnormalities as a core component. Sometimes the diagnosis is not able to be determined until later in pregnancy and late term abortions are performed due to severe congenital abnormalities which are not compatible with life. These occur mainly at 24-26 weeks gestation. "Full term" refers to 37-42 weeks gestation. In the NT, terminations have not occurred at "full term" gestation.

Termination after 24 weeks is an extremely uncommon procedure, involves very thorough assessments, requiring significant input and considered decision making. It is highly distressing for the parents as they have had to make a very difficult decision about their baby before birth due to the severe abnormalities. Public discourse about late term abortion is a painful reminder for these parents of their loss.

The amendments in 2021 to the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Act, allowed terminations after 24 weeks gestation only after assessment by at least two medical practitioners who have considered all relevant medical circumstances and professional standards and guidelines. This allows health professionals to provide safe compassionate care to families in the most distressing of situations. Repealing the amendments is not relevant to the petitioners concern about "full term abortion".

Yours sincerely

STEVEN EDGINGTON

- 6 FEB 2025



Appendix 10: Ministerial Advice – Petition 6



ACTING MINISTER FOR LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.burgoyne@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8700

Mr Clinton Howe MLA
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Via email: LA.PAC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Howe

Thank you for your letter dated 10 December 2024 forwarding the terms of Petition No. 6 regarding the Return of Lee Point and Casuarina Coastal Reserve to the Larrakia people.

The following information is provided to assist the Public Accounts Committees' consideration of the matters raised by the petitioners.

1. Co-management and transfer of Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR) and Lee Point to a Larrakia-owned entity.

The suburb of Lee Point comprises multiple land tenures including vacant Crown land, land held under Crown Leases and freehold land held by the Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Housing Australia (DHA) and private interests. A plan showing the respective land tenure is at Attachment A.

In July 2024, Lots 9458 and 9375, Town of Nightcliff (CCR) were declared a park under section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* (TPWC Act).

The terms of joint management for parks and reserves with Traditional Owners are established under section 25 of the TPWC Act, park-specific legislation and sub-ordinate legislation, leases, and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (as applicable).

There are currently 33 joint management arrangements in place for parks and reserves in the Northern Territory. These joint management arrangements have mostly resulted from negotiated settlement of land and/or native title claims. Native Title has been determined not to exist over most of the land at Lee Point including CCR (shown in red on Attachment B).

In 2025, as required by the TPWC Act, the Parks and Wildlife Commission will be preparing a statutory Plan of Management for CCR.



2. Land clearing at Lee Point

The development of Lee Point has been subject to a range of planning and approval processes since 2014, as follows:

- development of the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015;
- introduction of the Lee Point Area Plan;
- two development permits for development of residential lots over Lot 9370 and Lot 4873, Town of Nightcliff. This development was also subject to environmental assessment under both the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the NT *Environmental Assessment Act 1982*; and
- a development permit for development of a leisure and recreation (golf course) and addition to an existing caravan park over Lot 9461 and Lot 9289, Town of Nightcliff.

All the planning and approval processes for development at Lee Point included public consultation, including the ability for traditional custodians to express any concerns related to potential impacts of clearing of native vegetation on cultural heritage.

Through consultation with Larrakia custodians it was requested that custodians be involved in the identification of mature trees within Lot 4873 for preservation. The Development Permit issued for Lot 4873 requires a landscaping plan to be submitted that demonstrates the preservation of mature trees identified in Lot 4873.

Under the NT Planning Scheme 2020 (NTPS 2020), Development Consent is required to clear more than one hectare of native vegetation in areas subject to the Clearing of Native Vegetation Overlay (Overlay) (shown in green on Attachment C). All clearing within Zone CN (Conservation) requires consent.

Clearing of native vegetation in areas subject to the Overlay must meet the requirements set out in Clause 3.2 of the NTPS 2020. This ensures that clearing in these areas does not:

- impact on the conservation value of land within Zone CN; or
- unreasonably contribute to environmental degradation of the locality.

No consent is required for clearing of land not subject to the Overlay. For your awareness, with the exception of Lot 9458, Town of Nightcliff, which is currently Zoned (OR) Organised Recreation, all land at Lee Point, that is not subject to the Overlay already has a valid Development Permit, allowing for its development.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely



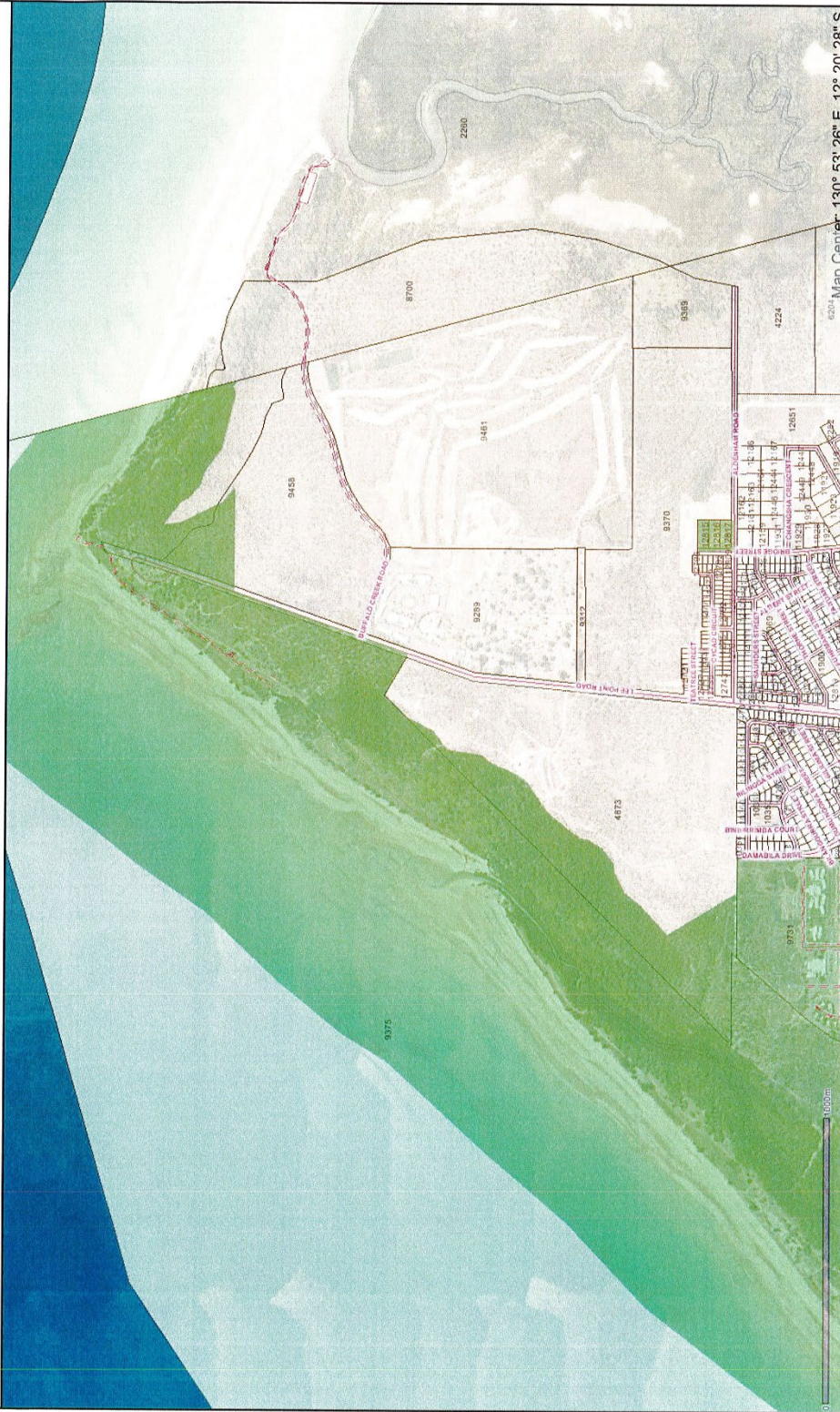
LIA FINOCCHIARO

- 9 JAN 2025



Lee Point
Land tenure and ownership

Lee Point - Clearing of Native Vegetation Overlay



Created by IMG
 Bottom Left: -12° 21' 09", 130° 52' 04" Top Right: -12° 19' 46", 130° 54' 47" Approximate Scale: 1:17,000 Datum: GDA 1994
 Data for information purposes only - accuracy not guaranteed
 N.T. Land Information System Copyright Northern Territory of Australia

Appendix 11: Ministerial Advice – Petition 10



MINISTER FOR LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.yan@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8660

Mr Clinton Howe
Chair
Public Accounts Committee

Via email: LA.PAC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Howe *CLINTON*.

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 May 2025 in relation to Petition Number 10 'Opposition to the Berrimah Road duplication project'.

In the 2024-25 Australian Government Budget, \$80 million was committed to duplicate Berrimah Road from the Stuart Highway to Tiger Brennan Drive.

Due to the current fiscal environment and as part of the CLP Government budget review processes to inform the Northern Territory 2025-26 Budget, the Berrimah Road duplication project was reviewed. This review has focused on managing budget constraints to rebuild our economy and prioritising infrastructure we need now. Based on this, the Berrimah Road duplication has been reprioritised.

Following the budget announcement, which commits to reprioritise this project, be assured any plans to upgrade access or other development works along Berrimah Road will proceed based on the current single carriageway configuration, rather than a duplicated carriageway.

I thank the Member for Fong Lim for raising concerns on behalf of the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Yan'.

BILL YAN

19 MAY 2025



Appendix 12: Ministerial Advice – Petition 13



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Parliament House
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Mr Clinton Howe MLA
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
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Dear Mr Howe

Thank you for your correspondence on 9 July 2025, regarding Petition No. 13, which requests prioritisation for the Dundee Beach School's (the school) infrastructure. The following information is provided for the Public Accounts Committee's consideration.

The school, which is located at 500 Namarada Drive in Dundee, has 47 students enrolled, including:

- 11 pre-school to Year 3 students
- 17 Year 4 to Year 6 students
- 10 Year 7 to Year 9 students
- 9 Year 10 to Year 12 students.

A recent site survey conducted by the Department of Education and Training (the department) and the Department of Logistic and Infrastructure identifies a capacity for 68 students across 4 classrooms. This comprises of 3 classrooms at the school's Namarada Drive site and a converted classroom (in a Department of Health facility) located 650 meters away.

The converted classroom has been secured and available for use by the school since Term 1 2025 (at the school's request) and has a capacity of 10 students. The new classroom has only been used on occasion, as it is not on the same site as the school. The principal recently advised that the school intends to use this classroom full-time for Year 10 to Year 12 students.

In December 2024, the school's infrastructure masterplan was finalised which identifies a staged approach for progressive upgrades, including:



- Stage 1: new classroom and new ablution block
- Stage 2: open school yard, garden/veggie pad, genset and fuel tanks, undercover basketball court, bitumen driveway, loading bay, parking and drop-off/pick-up
- Stage 3: administration building, gate, footpath and flagpoles
- Stage 4: proposed – new classroom/storeroom and undercover veranda seating area.

The estimated total project cost is \$8.7m, with Stage 1 estimated at \$1.9m.

Stage 1 of the project was not prioritised for 2025-26 as there is capacity at the school with the additional site, and there are competing infrastructure projects across the department's portfolio of sites.

The department has a finite infrastructure budget and the budget is allocated accordingly to balance the needs of all schools across the Northern Territory.

The department will continue to work with the Dundee Beach school to prepare submissions for available infrastructure funding and work with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure on innovative and cost-effective methods of delivering infrastructure enhancements for the school.

Yours sincerely



JO HERSEY

22 JUL 2025

Appendix 13: Ministerial Advice – Petition 14



MINISTER FOR LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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Mr Clinton Howe
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Via email: LA.PAC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Howe

Thank you for your correspondence dated 9 July 2025 about Petition No. 14 regarding resurfacing of Boulter Road, Berrimah and consideration as to whether the petition should be debated.

Boulter Road is identified as a strategic link in the Berrimah North Area Plan established by the Northern Territory Planning Commission. As the area develops it will require future upgrades to accommodate increasing traffic volumes. Upgrading Boulter Road will require detailed planning, design and dedicated capital funding.

Boulter Road is under the care and control of City of Darwin. Boulter Road was originally constructed as a rural profile road. As such, it lacks footpaths due to the presence of open, unlined drains along the verges. Boulter Road's surface is currently in poor condition, with extensive patching, cracking and recurring potholes during the wet season.

Potential resurfacing via a reseal is an appropriate interim treatment to seal cracks and minimise pothole formation during the wet season. I am advised an order of cost estimate to complete resealing of the full length of Boulter Road is approximately \$250,000.

The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure does not have any funding allocation for the repairs and maintenance of roads managed by local government. City of Darwin receives funding to support local road infrastructure through the Australian Government's Roads to Recovery program and the roads component of the Financial Assistance Grants.



I have provided notification of this petition and my response to City of Darwin and will continue to have discussions with City of Darwin on these priority maintenance and improvement works to be considered in future funding arrangements.

Yours sincerely



BILL YAN

17 JUL 2025

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