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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 3 – Assent to Bills Passed in February

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 167 I advise that I have received Message No 3 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to the bills passed during the February 2017 meeting of the Legislative Assembly. The message is dated 13 March 2017.

BAIL AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 18)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Offending on bail, particularly by young people, is a prevalent issue in the Northern Territory and one that causes great concern amongst community members.

On the other hand, remanding people, particularly young people, in custody before they have been found guilty of an offence should be, and is, the option of last resort.

The Territory Labor government is committed to addressing the cycle of crime in our community in a holistic way.

In February the Chief Minister announced the most comprehensive overhaul of the youth justice system in the Northern Territory's history. The \$18.2m reform package included 52 youth diversion workers and an additional \$6m for non-government organisations to deliver evidence-based diversion programs. I note that this morning Minister Wakefield announced that new and improved training has begun for 25 new recruits who will take up key roles as youth justice officers in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre.

As part of the reform package, young people on bail will be provided with individualised support and a comprehensive range of programs to stop reoffending and meet bail requirements, including options for supported accommodation.

The bill I present in the Assembly today is not aimed solely at young people. The amendments contained in the bill will apply to both adults and youths. However, it is clear to our government that there are strong concerns within our community about current youth offending.

The proposal given effect in the bill is to expand the use of electronic monitoring to bail granted by police.

Electronic monitoring has been used by community corrections in the Northern Territory as a tool to monitor and encourage compliance with non-custodial sentencing orders and parole since 2014. It has also been available to courts to impose as a requirement of conduct agreement for accused persons on bail. Community corrections report that it is a very useful tool.

Internationally, I note that a 2005 Home Office review of electronic monitoring of youths on bail in England and Wales found indications that electronic monitoring improved compliance, especially when it is part of a support package.

Electronic monitoring is considered in a bail assessment when a restrictive movement requirement, such as curfew or an exclusion zone, is being recommended.

Currently a court may impose an electronic monitoring requirement only if satisfied, after considering a report by the Commissioner of Correctional Services, that the person is a suitable person for electronic monitoring. Presently, the *Bail Act* does not provide for electronic monitoring as a requirement on police bail.

Extending the use of electronic monitoring to police bail will provide an additional tool for police in improving compliance with restrictive movement bail requirements. The ability to monitor compliance with

restrictive bail requirements electronically will bring benefits to police, accused persons on electronic monitoring and other persons residing with the accused person, particularly children.

Currently, police have to doorknock or drive by to monitor compliance with curfews and rely on other forms of intelligence regarding whether an accused person is in an exclusion zone. This is labour intensive and haphazard and can create unnecessary tensions.

Doorknocking to ensure compliance with a curfew can be extremely disruptive to other members of a household, for example children who may be woken up in the middle of the night.

It can also impact on the accused person to be fit to go to work or school the following day, and will likely have an impact on other members of the household. If police know through electronic monitoring where the accused person is supposed to be, there is no need to attend a residence.

The use of electronic monitoring on police bail is intended to encourage compliance with bail requirements, particularly curfews, which could lead to a downward trend in reoffending.

Electronic monitoring, particularly if used in conjunction with other support measures, including youth diversion workers and supported accommodation, may offer the opportunity to be a circuit-breaker in the cycle of reoffending.

I have mentioned that for the court ordered electronic monitoring that is currently available under the *Bail Act*, an assessment as to the accused person's suitability for the electronic monitoring is conducted by the Commissioner of Correctional Services.

This is an extensive report that can take several days to complete. It would be impractical and inappropriate for police to conduct the same fulsome type of assessment.

Pursuant to section 33(3)(b) of the *Bail Act*, the decision to grant or refuse police bail needs to be made within four hours of charging a person with an offence. Police will need to be satisfied that the person is suitable for electronic monitoring based on information that can be provided within that time frame by the accused person, their solicitor—if present—and, if the accused person is a youth, their accompanying responsible adult.

A not dissimilar risk assessment is already undertaken by police when considering bail and the suitability of requirements such as curfew or non-association with certain persons. Northern Territory Police will develop appropriate checklists, drawing in part on the type of questions asked by Correctional Services staff when they do court ordered assessments.

The government is conscious of the risk of net-widening by extending the power to impose electronic monitoring on police bail. NT Police will develop robust protocols for its use to guard against this risk.

As police will not be undertaking a full assessment as to the suitability of a person's residence and do not have the power to enter the residence, the accused person will be fitted with an electronic bracelet and given a recharger.

Police will not be entering a person's home to install a monitoring unit, which is what happens with court ordered electronic monitoring administered by Correctional Services.

Police will be required to include a residential requirement as part of the conduct agreement as there must be a place for the recharger to be plugged in.

It is important to note that electronic monitoring on police bail is not intended to replace court ordered police monitoring. It is an interim measure, pending a complete assessment as to the accused person's suitability, which can be ordered by a court. In addition, it does not remove an accused person's right to a bail review under section 33(3) of the *Bail Act*. It is simply an additional tool to assist with improving compliance with bail requirements.

I will now turn to the details of the bill. Part 2 of the Bail Amendment Bill 2017 amends the *Bail Act*.

Clause 5 amends section 27A(1) to insert new paragraphs (iaa) and (iab).

Section 27A is the provision that sets out the requirements that may be included in a conduct agreement under grant of bail.

New section 27A(1)(iaa) empowers police to include electronic monitoring as a bail requirement, requiring an accused person to wear, or have attached, an approved electronic monitoring device. The person must not tamper with, destroy or interfere with the device and must comply with the reasonable directions of a police officer regarding the use of the device. For example, it needs to be recharged daily.

New section 27A(1)(iab), read with new section 28(3A)(a), gives additional powers to courts to enlarge the police electronic monitoring requirement when an accused person first appears in court. This provision is necessary as there would otherwise be a gap between electronic monitoring on police bail ending and electronic monitoring on court bail commencing, as the court needs to order and consider an assessment regarding suitability by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. This process takes approximately one week.

Clause 6 amends section 27B of the *Bail Act* to empower police to put on and remove an electronic bracelet from an accused person who has entered into a conduct agreement which includes a police electronic monitoring requirement. Correctional Services already has these powers.

The powers given to police under section 27B will not extend to entering people's houses to install equipment.

Clause 7 amends section 28 to prescribe parameters to the exercise of the new police power to impose an electronic monitoring requirement on police bail.

As I have explained, there logically needs to be a residential requirement as part of the conduct agreement.

The authorised member must also be satisfied that the accused person is suitable for electronic monitoring. This, as I have also explained, will be done by an oral assessment.

Section 28 is further amended to provide that a court may only enlarge police bail pursuant to new section 27A(1)(iab) where the accused person was subject to electronic monitoring on police bail up to the time of their appearance in court and that the court orders a full assessment report from the Commissioner of Correctional Services.

The provision reinforces that electronic monitoring on police bail is an interim measure only, pending a full assessment.

A court can, of course, completely dispense with an electronic requirement. However, if electronic monitoring is contemplated over a longer period of time, it is appropriate that a full assessment be carried out, as is currently required under section 28(3) of the act.

Lastly, current section 28(3) is rewritten as new section 28(3A)(b) and new section 28(5). There is no policy change involved. The rewriting is a consequence of the other amendments to section 28.

Clauses 4 and 9 insert new definitions in section 3 and a new section in 52B of the *Bail Act* of 'approved police monitoring device' and 'police monitoring device'. These definitions are necessary as devices are currently approved by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. However, for electronic monitoring devices provided on police bail, the Commissioner of Correctional Services will have no involvement.

The devices need to be approved by the Commissioner of Police.

Part 3 of the bill makes necessary consequential amendments to other legislation.

Clause 12 provides a minor amendment to section 5(2)(k) of the *Sentencing Act*.

Section 5(2) of the *Sentencing Act* sets out the matters that a court must have regard to in sentencing.

Section 5(2)(k) provides that a court must have regard to time spent in custody or on an electronic monitoring requirement when on bail.

The current reference is to section 27A(1)(ia). Reference to a new section 27A(1)(iaa) and (iab) is added.

Finally, in clause 14 there is a consequential amendment to Regulation 3 of the Surveillance Devices Regulations to add electronic monitoring on police bail to the list of permitted tracking devices under section 13(2)(d) of the *Surveillance Devices Act*.

I commend the bill to members and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
Pass Bill through all Stages – Bail Amendment Bill (Serial 18)

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Bail Amendment Bill 2017 (Serial 18) passing through all stages this Assembly meeting.

We are seeking to suspend standing orders to pass the proposed Bail Amendment Bill 2017 on urgency, lying aside the standard 30 days that a bill must be required to sit before passage. As detailed in my second reading speech this morning, this legislation is urgent.

The public is asking the Assembly to act urgently to combat crime. Our government has listened and we are taking immediate action with this bill. Our government is responding swiftly and strongly to the concerns of our community. I implore other members of this Assembly to listen to the community and support the government's urgency motion.

Parliamentary procedure is important. Our government has respect for the parliamentary process, but our government is unapologetic about taking urgent action to fight crime by seeking to pass this bill on urgency.

Community safety is of paramount importance. Anything that is within our power to make our community safer is something we must act on. That is why we are taking decisive, immediate action with this legislation to urgently combat the recent spike in crime across the Northern Territory.

Our government has worked on this new bill and new police bail electronic monitoring policy as urgently as possible.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has called for our government to snap our fingers and change the world overnight, but our government has instead acted responsibly and, over recent weeks, we have made sure we have worked through this policy and legislation in a proper way to get it right as urgently and efficiently as possible—listening to community concern.

In contrast to the former CLP administration, this means ensuring decisions are made through the proper Cabinet processes after listening to and talking with the community. I acknowledge the hard work of many members of the government, who have been talking to the community about the electronic monitoring police bail proposal. They have been listening to their communities. We have heard the concerns.

We have seen Ministers Wakefield and Lawler and the Member for Brennan at public meetings with the Palmerston community, listening and explaining our policies, informing the community of the strong action we are taking to clean up the mess of the last four years. That is how good government works. I am proud to be a member of a team that has strong processes, listens to the community and takes decisive action, like we have done today, while still respecting the parliamentary process.

The bill introduced to the Assembly today needs to pass on urgency. We gave notice yesterday, and we have outlined the bill and our case for urgency. We provided briefings, and we will continue to do so, to every member of this Chamber so they can understand the need for this bill to give police the tools they need to tackle crime.

Like many members of our community, I am fed up with those responsible for the recent spike in property crime. The stories we have heard in my electorate and the community often involve senseless, random acts of violence by youths. It is unacceptable. It has become clear that some of this recent offending is by people on bail, particularly young people. Unfortunately, the rate of offending by those on bail is too high. Our Police Commissioner recently said there has been a 20% increase in breach of bail offences by young people over the last two years. That increase is unacceptable.

Our government seeks to bring the Bail Amendment Act to this Assembly on urgency because we need to give police the tools, right now, to do their job of combatting crime in our community.

This bill creates new powers for electronic monitoring to be a condition of police bail. Increased electronic monitoring and a more visible police presence will help secure and protect businesses and homeowners being hit by this crime wave.

Expanding electronic monitoring to police bail to through this bill will ensure bail conditions will be more effectively monitored and policed. That should happen urgently, as soon as possible. By bringing in this legislation on urgency we are ensuring that police can implement this new tool into their operations as quickly as possible.

We cannot afford to wait until the next sittings in May to pass this bill. I have been fortunate enough to receive detailed police briefings on how they will immediately implement the operational changes that will flow from this legislation being passed this week. The improvements to police operations demonstrate why the Assembly should pass this bill on urgency. We respect the process in this House, but we have a case of urgency that needs to be considered.

Currently police have to doorknock and visit houses to monitor offender compliance with curfews. This takes our police away from doing other tasks, like protecting our community. It is an unnecessary waste of resources, especially when this monitoring of compliance of bail conditions can be done through the electronic monitoring process.

This bill, if passed on urgency, will immediately free up police resources. Not only is the minister for Police meeting the failed commitment of the previous government, which failed to provide police with the resources to do their job, but we will also be freeing up police through this legislation so there will be more police on the beat in our community.

Police will be empowered to fit electronic monitors onto people who are on police bail. Police will then receive alerts directly from the monitoring company in the event of a tamper with the strap, the event that an offender is absent from a zone at the start or end of curfew, or if they enter an exclusion zone. Police can then immediately access this data and respond more quickly to any breach of bail conditions. This will hopefully prevent crimes from occurring. That is why it is important that we pass the bill this week in the House.

If police are unable to prevent a breach from occurring, which is sometimes a reality, the data from the electronic monitoring can then be used in court proceedings. This mechanism not only acts to prevent crime but also aids in the potential conviction of repeat offenders, which the community has been calling on us to put into place.

This is clearly an improvement to the current framework. It should be implemented as soon as possible for the safety of our community.

More electronic monitoring gives police an extra tool to encourage positive behaviour change in a quicker time. This will prevent the escalation of offenders into repeat offenders. By passing this reform on urgency, the Assembly will be taking steps to complement the government's broader, long-term anti-crime measures.

In February our government announced the most comprehensive overhaul of the youth justice system in the history of the Northern Territory. This included an additional \$18.2m in new funding to be spent annually to help stop crime before it happens and break the cycle of crime that has been going on for far too long.

We took strong action to fix the broken youth justice system, with victims of crime being given a voice to directly tell offenders about the impact of their behaviour through victim offender conferencing.

Our reforms include 52 youth diversion workers across the Northern Territory—I spoke earlier about the 25 Minister Wakefield visited this morning; an additional \$6m for NGOs to deliver evidence-based diversion programs that work; and focusing on the enforcement of bail conditions for the first time in the Territory's history, with young offenders on bail being provided with individual support and a comprehensive range of programs to stop reoffending and meet their bail conditions.

The electronic monitoring reform at the centre of this Bail Amendment Bill complements those previously announced measures. I acknowledge the Chief Minister and my colleague, the Minister for Territory

Families, for this detailed work and evidence-based approach that will create long-term change in the Northern Territory.

The electronic monitoring reform will immediately strengthen the ability of police to monitor bail conditions. It is another tool for intervening in the lives of those troubled persons to try to stop them from falling off the cliff into a life of crime.

We must act quickly to stop offenders becoming repeat offenders. By passing this bill on urgency we can give police these powers now while our long- and medium-term reforms progress, while we continue to recruit youth justice officers and drive long-term generational change. This is a mechanism our police need now.

This bill is a product of listening to the community. I acknowledge all my colleagues who have been listening to their communities, doorknocking, holding community events and making sure, as a government, we are putting victims of crime first and listening to our police about what they need right now to help make our community safer.

Our police need this legislation urgently. It gives them new powers and tools that they can immediately put to use in the fight against crime. By addressing this bill on urgency, all members in this Assembly have the opportunity to join the government in putting community safety first.

I thank the members opposite who have availed themselves of briefings, along with the government members, and I hope all members support this proposal to debate this legislation on urgency.

Madam Speaker, I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, there is no question that the Territory is in urgent need of reform to the *Bail Act* and arrangements concerning the utilisation of electronic monitoring. However, the use of the term 'urgency' in this context is a bit misleading, given that crime in the Territory has been building to epidemic levels for months. Yet, this is the first time the Gunner Labor government has taken any real steps to address the problem in the short term.

The fact the Attorney-General can stand in this House with a straight face and say that I have been requesting her to snap her fingers is an absolute joke. It shows the complete disregard you have for Territorians and that you have not been taking this issue seriously. We could have passed this bill in the House a month ago. You dragged your heels on this. Mark my words; Territorians know it.

From the outset it is clear that this decision to amend the *Bail Act* during sittings in order to provide increased electronic monitoring was, at best, an afterthought by your government. Any defence of that is a farce.

For months and months the opposition has supported the public outcry on this issue, including views provided by concerned citizens in Palmerston, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine—everywhere has been calling for the increased use of electronic monitoring for youth offenders and associated changes to the *Bail Act*. Nonetheless, it was only after mounting pressure and the endless public pleas for reform that the government responded with little more than an uninformed thought by the Chief Minister during the last sittings.

In just an hour of Question Time on 15 February, the Chief Minister announced that he was finally fed up with this recent spike in crime and wanted to—better late than never—take a decision to address this. What followed was a vague description of legislation that would, in theory, grant police the power to order electronic monitoring with the input of a court.

No details on how this would be accomplished were provided. That is because you had none. It was a spur-of-the-moment attempt for your government to appease the public and the press by floating a policy idea to see if it would stick to the wall.

In fact, the Chief Minister indirectly acknowledged, during Question Time in the February sittings, that the then hypothetical amendments to the *Bail Act* would not have been prepared and that no drafting instructions had been provided to Parliamentary Counsel at that time. That admission means that Cabinet had not approved any drafting instructions at that time. The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice and all the other involved departments had not been consulted. No vetting of the notion had taken

place. The government was operating on the fly, without consultation, in a manner that it has so often criticised the previous government of.

In other words, the only urgency on the part of your government was the desire to make up for almost six months of inaction and indecision with rushed legislation that had not been thought through and did not, at that point, have the benefit of vital input from all the experts, such as police and the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. No one who needed to be involved had been involved at the time of your announcement.

Increased electronic monitoring and changes to the *Bail Act* are desperately needed; we acknowledge that. They were urgently needed in October last year. Police statistics show us that in the three months following the Gunner Labor government coming to power, commercial break-ins increased by 70% in Darwin and 47% in Alice Springs. Home break-ins Territory-wide in the same period increased by 32%.

Looking at the numbers for our cities is devastating. In Darwin home break-ins have increased by 81% and in Alice Springs, 31%. But that is nothing compared to Palmerston, where home break-ins have increased by a staggering 127%. Let us just think about that. That number means that at the end of November home break-ins had more than doubled from the previous year. Those numbers do not tell the human part of this story, and that is what this government seems to have forgotten.

Sue Newsom, whom I met with before the February sittings, was welcomed to her new home in the Territory by a group of youths breaking into her home while she slept. They stole her car and deprived her of a sense of safety and security. Sue moved to the Territory to work hard and make a better life for herself and her partner, accepting employment in the new service station in Palmerston, and now she is surely rethinking the decision to come here. And who could blame her?

On the same weekend that Sue's home was broken into, 37 homes and businesses were broken into and 11 cars were stolen. That is on a single weekend. While all this was building to a crescendo, the top office holders of the Executive Council were on holiday. There can be little question that had the government taken decisive action at the time all those months ago, either by stepping up on hot spot policing, facilitating the increase in electronic monitoring or putting together changes to the *Bail Act* prior to the end of last year, a high proportion of those crimes would not have occurred.

People like Sue Newsom and the scores of people affected by crimes over the holiday period would have been grateful for this government's action. Had the government come to parliament last month with a worked-out, finalised bill on electronic monitoring, any number of crimes might not have been committed in that period.

It is ironic and disappointing that during the February sittings, the three days we could have debated this bill, a number of crimes were committed in the Territory. Several overnight property offences hit Karama, suspected to have been undertaken by youths, on 14 February, which was the first day of sittings. On the same day, 110 grams of cocaine and \$130 000 in cash and assets were seized in Woolner, where two males and a female were arrested.

On 15 February, the second day of sittings, two youths unlawfully entered a store in Virginia while another group of youths entered St Luke's Anglican Church in Gray.

Since the last sittings ended on 16 February, when we were still ready and waiting to debate this bill to have it in place to address serious crime, residents and businesses have been suffering. The Deck Bar was broken into twice in one week, and Ally's Barber Shop in Nightcliff was broken into the same week, in the Attorney-General's electorate.

At least six electrical transformers in Gray and Moulden were criminally damaged, cutting power to several locations and raising a potentially serious fire risk, not to mention harm to individuals.

An 87-year-old woman was attacked and hit with a golf club in her home in Alice Springs by a burglar trying to steal beer. The attacker was a 15-year-old boy, and this was not his first offence; he had already been charged with a series of unlawful entries that month.

A 17-year-old stole a car and committed traffic offences in Karama. Another car was stolen in Ludmilla, this one by five youths. Only three of the five were arrested last time I checked.

Earlier this month an elderly couple exited their car to open their front gate when their bag was stolen in broad daylight. These offenders have no shame and no reason to hide. This is a day before the two separate assaults on police in one night, one in the Narrows and one in Smith Street.

Just last week we saw a series of unlawful entries to Darwin businesses. Another car was stolen by youths in Anula; a 15-year-old was charged for breaking into a Bellamack property and stealing a car; and there was a weekend ram-raid of Darwin businesses, which included the Puma service station in Pinelands.

These are just the offences that were reported in the news or publicly by Police, Fire and Emergency Services. In addition to these was a plethora of reported and unreported crimes being posted through community Facebook pages on a daily basis, particularly in Palmerston. These community Facebook pages, which were once dedicated to community pride, small-scale trading and local activities are now rife with reports of crime and suspected criminal behaviour. They detail break-ins, car thefts, and people chasing trespassers out of their yards, and community members share ideas on how to deter young criminals.

More worrying than the reported crime is the comments on these pages about residents contemplating taking matters into their own hands because they no longer feel safe or protected in their neighbourhood. For example, the owner of the Deck Bar was forced to take matters into his own hands with high definition cameras on loan. He is also considering a camera for his home. He noted that this does not seem to be a deterrent to crime, but at least it is useful to identify the perpetrators. It turns out he was correct, sadly, as the Deck Bar was broken into once again on Monday night, making it the third time in just a few weeks despite the presence of these cameras.

On Monday night the lead story on Channel Nine news was about two separate break-ins in the area. One at the home of a single young woman, who now cannot sleep at night, and the other at a home with three children in the bedroom as thieves ransacked the house. No parent should have to wake up in mortal fear their child may be harmed.

To that end, Territorians are going it alone, taking extreme measures to attempt to prevent crime themselves. The Totem Fencing company is offering residents razor wire to deter thieves. When homeowners are considering razor wire to protect their properties we know the problem has reached a point where government, as usual, no longer has a path forward.

The community has been putting up with rising crime rates for far too long. People are at breaking point. They are looking to the government to move quickly and efficiently to gain a foothold on the problem, and they have been continuously disappointed.

This Labor government is very quick to point out the failings of the Country Liberals, including the chaos that was present in the former government, and fair enough. However, the truth is the Gunner Labor government has brought its own brand of chaos, timidity, indecision and lack of resolve into the Territory government. The government is so concerned with trying to please everyone that it ends up doing a disservice to all Territorians.

The answers to crime are not new or complicated, but they require tough decisions. The Territory deserves a government that will make the difficult calls ...

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Spillett, your time has expired.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, we seek the permission to debate and seek passage of this bill on urgency.

Since coming to government we have acted strongly and quickly in response to Territorians' concerns. We have provided certainty to Territory police with the extra 120 cops who were promised by the CLP in 2012. At no stage in the four years the CLP was in government did it deliver on its promise of extra police.

I sat with the Police Commissioner and said, 'I want you to have certainty; I want you to have a four-year recruitment plan so that you know the police who are going through your college and into your police force.' The Police Commissioner can now operate over the next four years with complete confidence in what is happening with Territory police. That allows them to be more thoughtful and intelligence led in their operational decisions.

That never happened during the four years of the CLP. At no stage could the CLP provide our police with certainty. We did that. I have sat with police and asked, 'What other tools do you need?' We have worked with them on explosive devices for tyres that are safer for the public and safer for police to operate. Through the bill we are debating now, electronic monitoring of youth and adult offenders during the police bail stage, we are giving them the tools they need.

Yesterday we passed the evidence-in-chief legislation on body-worn cameras. We rolled out the 850 cameras, something we picked up along the trail from the CLP, but we are making sure it is being rolled out across the Territory. There are enough cameras now and the legislation has been changed to improve the use of those cameras. It is good legislation.

We have provided 54 extra youth workers to make sure we do everything we can to stop crime before it occurs. We heard from the Member for Drysdale that this is about what happens after the crime has occurred. We have to do more to stop crime before it occurs. We now have 54 youth workers, supported by 18 experienced police and six detectives, who will work on investigating and supporting families at risk before crimes occur. The important work of trying to reduce crime in the Northern Territory involves stopping it before it occurs. The 18 police officers who have been diverted into that area—it was a decision that could only be made by the commissioner because it provided certainty for the 120 extra police.

The electronic monitoring legislation that we are seeking passage and support of—for police during the police bail stage—never passed during the CLP's four years. The advice from police is that this trend started two years ago, but at no stage did the CLP members act. Now they are trying to pretend those four years did not happen.

Until the CLP actually takes responsibility for its chaos, which lead to a failure of policy and action, it will not be credible in these kinds of debates in this Chamber.

I say to the CLP members, you have to take responsibility for the fact that in the 18 months this trend was rising you did nothing. We are now cleaning up the lack of action and urgency from the CLP by seeking urgency on this bill. We want to give police the powers they need; this advice has come from police and we want that to give police. They described it the other day as a very powerful tool for changing behaviour. It fills in the gap between the police bail stage and the court stage, which can be up to two weeks. We are looking at filling that gap.

We believe there is a case for urgency and we support that case. I thank the public servants who have done some seriously hard yards to get this bill ready to be debated on urgency. I think they have worked incredibly fast, despite the criticism of the opposition, to get this bill before the House. I support the work they have done and I support the request for urgency.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, I am very interested in the argument for urgency that the government is presenting this morning. It seems like only yesterday I heard the government say it would not be like the CLP; it would not try to push through any legislation on urgency because it was wrong not to consult with the community and not respect the processes of parliament. Here we are, six months into its term of government, and we are pushing something through on urgency which is not urgent at all.

It is a good piece of legislation, but all good pieces of legislation should be properly scrutinised by the people of the Northern Territory and by this parliament. The harking of the government members, when they were in opposition, about the injustice and unfairness of not properly debating issues such as this within allocated time frames—it is hypocritical that we are in this position today.

So be it; the not-so-urgent urgent legislation to change the *Bail Act* to solve all the problems of law and order and crime throughout the Territory this summer is all a bit 'too little, too late'. I say on behalf of the previous CLP government, we have not seen crime at this level in Alice Springs for over four years, probably even five or six years.

I think the statistics we will see very soon for this quarter will demonstrate a very significant spike in crime in Alice Springs and Central Australia. That is not due to any wrongdoing, lapse or negligence by the former CLP government; I think it is because you guys have worked too slowly. You have not had your eye on the ball. You came to government almost by default. The CLP messed up big time. We have heard six months of you telling us at every opportunity how the CLP messed up and that it was one mistake after the other. The CLP lost the election and you won.

You were not prepared. You do not have a policy on law and order. I have been waiting for six months for you to tell the people of Alice Springs and the Northern Territory what your policy is regarding how you intend to enforce law and order, particularly through this summer. We have not heard what your policy is.

We were presented with the juvenile justice package a month ago. Around 8 February you told us you would spend \$18m a year on changing the way you go about detaining youths and looking after juvenile justice in the Northern Territory. Since then there has been very little detail on what you are doing. There was some sort of announcement this morning from the Minister for Territory Families. Everything has been moving at a snail's pace.

Now we have this amendment to the *Bail Act*, which I saw for the first time 30 or 40 minutes ago ...

Ms Fyles: You were offered a briefing on Monday!

Mrs LAMBLEY: I am an Independent member with no resources. The Chief Minister has not provided us with any resources. That is a fact.

Members interjecting.

Mrs LAMBLEY: You can scream and carry on all you like, but the five Independent members of parliament have absolutely no resources and no assistance to help them with their parliamentary work whatsoever.

Members interjecting.

Mrs LAMBLEY: You can scream and shout all you like, but that is a fact.

I received this amendment today. I have been very busy preparing for parliament. I have been looking at the changes to the *Medical Services Act* and other legislation, but you thumped this down on my desk this morning saying it is urgent and that I have not taken up an offer of a briefing. I have not had time, nor have I turned my attention to something you decided is urgent for the Northern Territory.

You are overstating the effectiveness and importance of this legislation. It will not change crime on the streets of Alice Springs tomorrow; it will take 30 days for you to pass it. By that stage things will be cooling off in my part of the Territory, in Alice Springs, and crime will subside, as it normally does in the cooler months of autumn and winter. It is too little, too late. You have not had a proactive approach or been preventative in your approach to crime in the Northern Territory at all.

I was amazed to see the news item on Channel Nine last night about how the level of crime in Darwin at the moment has almost been made into a joke. People are going to extreme lengths. We are hearing about vigilante ...

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Araluen, your time has expired.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I will read something from September 2015:

***Mr ELFERINK (Attorney-General and Justice):** Madam Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill, Serial 136, passing through all stages during these sittings.*

...

***Ms FYLES (Nightcliff):** Madam Speaker, there is a golden rule that runs through all Westminster parliaments that we do not rush legislation. Legislation is the basis of our society and communities. It forms the laws that govern us every day. The most important thing we do in this House is pass or reject legislation. It is so important it requires our system, the executive, to provide time for proposed laws to be considered, tested and discussed.*

Also, the shadow Attorney-General at the time, Ms Walker, said:

In addition to seeking out a briefing, we always consult with stakeholders. They can be NAAJA, the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory, CAALAS, the NT Law Society or NT Legal Aid, depending on the legislation. We target particular stakeholders to ask, 'What is your view on this bill?' I do not support urgency when the issue here is about a flawed process.

It is funny how history is forgotten. The argument that John Elferink, the previous Attorney-General, made is that we needed it then to protect the community from the ice epidemic. What was our argument? It did not need to go through on urgency, because we needed to consider the bill properly.

Crime is not a new thing. I have sat in parliament listening to debate after debate on how we will fix crime in the Northern Territory, but you do it properly and with consideration. You have a legal and technical bill that needs time for consultation with various groups regarding if it is a workable bill and if there are technical issues in relation to how this bill will work.

If you are so concerned about law and order—you introduced the Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Video and Domestic Violence Evidence) Bill on Wednesday 30 November. I received all the briefings before the last sittings in February—you did not pass it. If you thought it was that important—and I heard speech after speech praising that legislation. You held it back from the February sittings and only did it yesterday.

Ms Fyles: We listened to police who have been training officers to use it.

Mr WOOD: No, you did not say anything about that. You had it on the books—there was no amendment to that legislation; it was the same legislation that was available in February and you did not bring it forward. Domestic violence is just as important an issue as crime, yet we had a chance to look at that bill, get a briefing and support it.

You are rushing this through by using the same technique the CLP used. 'This side is soft on crime and you are tough on crime.' How many times have I heard that? It is not an excuse to get around the process to make sure the bill is a good bill.

Ms Fyles: We listened to police; they asked us to roll out a staged approach.

Mr WOOD: I am not debating whether I support or do not support the bill. I am simply saying that if you do it properly you do not make mistakes. If you do it properly you allow this parliament to consider it in due process to be able to speak to those people, as your once shadow Attorney-General said, to find out if there are any issues in relation to the introduction of this bill.

You will not change crime overnight just because you rush this thing on urgency. You will look good; you will be able to have press releases that say, 'The Labor government is tough on crime and we are doing things'. That is the politics of it, and unfortunately the politics gets in the way of the process, or, in this case, the process gets in the way of the politics.

We need to do this carefully, the way you would normally do it. I have supported urgency bills from time to time, but they have been shown to be urgent. This one is more about looking good in the eyes of the public rather than putting it through the normal process, coming back to parliament and debating it fully. You will more than likely get what you want, but you might find some issues that need to be looked at before this bill comes back.

I do not think you are doing the right thing and I will not support this on urgency.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the opposition supports this motion on urgency; I do not think we have too much choice.

We have pushed for change in this legislation for some time, since crime has become an issue for us. However, I fully support what the Deputy Opposition Leader has stated, that this bill should have been introduced previously. Exactly as the Member for Nelson has said, urgency on bills needs to be considered properly.

We hear from the other side, 'We have consulted on this bill; we have spoken to all these people.' The biggest joke I see happening at the moment is through some of the debate yesterday about the *Liquor Act* review. We had people on the other side making commitments on what they will do. They are now bringing in a review. 'We will consult after we have made a decision'. Part of the irony of that is—it will be interesting to see what the backbenchers do tonight.

A criticism levelled at us yesterday was that we did not consider the health of Territorians, but we did. The first motion ever brought into this parliament was to work jointly on alcohol, and what did we see? One person from government spoke; not one backbencher spoke on it.

Who really cares about Territorians? Who really consults? You people definitely do not.

This is pure political pressure being applied, so you have to look good. We have been telling you to introduce these changes for months. While you were all on holidays we asked for these changes.

Yes, these are changes we have called for, and we will support the motion on urgency, but all it does is show the incompetence of the people opposite in not getting the House in order. They had no plan. The plan came about with the flick of a switch in the middle of the night.

I will be interested to hear people speak tonight. It should be good.

Motion agreed to.

LIMITATION AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) BILL (Serial 16)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

In September 2015 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which I will now refer to as the Royal Commission, released its report on the redress and civil litigation which, amongst other things, recommended that:

- state and territory governments remove limitation periods that apply to a claim for damages resulting from child sexual abuse
- such amendments operate retrospectively
- the amendments preserve the court's existing jurisdictions and powers to stay proceedings
- the amendments be implemented as soon as possible.

This bill implements those recommendations of the Royal Commission. I have outlined that we have another Royal Commission taking place in the Northern Territory, so I want to make it clear that this is the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which I will continue to refer to as the Royal Commission.

The current *Limitation Act* provides that an action founded in tort must be commenced within three years from the date on which the cause of action first accrued.

For minors, the limitation period commences when the minor reaches the age of majority, that is, 18 years of age.

To date, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria have removed limitation periods for child abuse cases.

The Australian Capital Territory has more specifically enacted legislation to remove limitation periods in relation to child sexual abuse that occurred in an institutional context.

Western Australia and Tasmania have proposed similar bills to remove the limitation periods.

New South Wales and Victoria have implemented broader amendments applying to sexual and serious physical abuse, and, in limited circumstances, psychological abuse, whether or not that abuse occurred in an institution.

I will now explain the substantive clauses of the bill.

Clause 4 of the bill inserts new section 5A into the *Limitation Act*. New section 5A removes the limitation period on actions for damages for personal injury arising from child abuse if that person was a child at the time of the alleged abuse.

The child abuse covered by the amendment will be sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and psychological abuse arising out of the sexual or serious physical abuse, regardless as to whether such abuse took place in an institution.

The provision resembles closely the New South Wales and Victorian legislation.

The bill adopts a broader approach and is not limited to sexual abuse, as the effects of abuse can be equally traumatising regardless of where the abuse occurred or the form of abuse. There is no reason to limit the bill to apply only in instances of child sexual abuse, nor should it be limited to certain places where the abuse occurred, such as institutions.

Sexual abuse and serious physical abuse are not defined in the act, and it will be up to the court to determine whether conduct amounts to those types of abuse in each case. The Royal Commission, for example, considered that sexual abuse is 'any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards'. It might include sexual activities that do not involve physical contact, such as exposure to pornography.

'Serious physical abuse' is also not defined in the bill. However, the bar is set higher at serious physical abuse so that it does not cover minor instances of physical abuse.

Psychological abuse arising out of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse can include psychological abuse where the child is made to feel erroneously complicit in the abuse or is coerced into covering up the abuse.

It could cover sexual grooming situations, and situations where the psychological abuse co-occurs with sexual or serious physical abuse and it is difficult to determine what of the conduct actually caused the personal injury.

Evidence before the Royal Commission was that survivors of child abuse can continue to be affected decades after the harm was actually inflicted. The Royal Commission's research revealed that the average time to disclose childhood sexual abuse is around 22 years.

Limitation periods are a restriction to justice and ignore the compassion that survivors of child abuse deserve. This bill recognises the vulnerability of children and provides adequate time for survivors of child abuse to comprehend and respond to the harm.

Importantly, the bill applies retrospectively, which means limitation periods will not apply regardless of when the abuse occurred.

Clause 8 inserts a new Division 2, which provides that previous judgments, including agreements entered into in relation to a settlement of a matter, determined on the basis that the cause of action was statute barred, do not prevent a cause of action being brought before the court.

Judgments entered into may be set aside by the Supreme Court on application or by the court hearing the action, and the case may be reopened. However, in accordance with the long-standing legal principle of *res judicata*, it is not intended that a matter be able to be re-litigated if the substantive cause of action was determined on its merits by a previous judgment.

In addition, the bill preserves a court's inherent power to dismiss or permanently stay proceedings to ensure that a fair trial is not compromised where a lapse of time has a burdensome effect on the defendant. The bill demonstrates the government's compassion and commitment to support survivors of child abuse by removing time barriers and allowing them the opportunity to bring their claims before a court.

I comment the bill to honourable members and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Note Statement – Education in the Northern Territory

Continued from 14 March 2017.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the Minister for Education's statement.

As a minister for the Gunner Labor government, a former teacher, a parent, and the member for the remote electorate of Barkly, I have an acute appreciation for education, especially in our regional and remote areas.

Over three decades I taught children throughout the Barkly region, and I have seen firsthand the importance and outcomes of a good education. If a child has a good start to life, including a good education, their future will be bright.

The Gunner Labor government has invested in Territory children. Children are at the front and centre of this government's policies. We understand that every child deserves the best start in life. Children are the future of the Northern Territory, and investing in their education is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. If children are ready for school on the first day of the term, the Territory will have a promising future.

In stark contrast—and this will remain in history—instead of investing in children and a prosperous Territory, the CLP government slashed funding to education and youth services throughout the Northern Territory. Minister Lawler reminded us of the extensive cuts the CLP made in its term. In four years it ripped \$114m out of the Territory education budget. It decimated teacher numbers by over 500 full-time equivalent staff. Reducing teacher numbers reduces educational outcomes and has a severe negative impact on Territory children and the future of the Northern Territory.

As a government, we appreciate teachers and understand they are the lifeblood of education. Teachers inspire, influence and support students through their educational journey. Teachers are pivotal to a child's future. The Gunner Labor government will recruit 500 more teachers by 2026. Some of these will be local recruits and will be eligible for government employee housing. We understand that a secure and rewarding job is the best way to improve a person's quality of life.

Minister Lawler spoke about the additional \$20m the Michael Gunner Labor government has invested in preschool, transition and secondary students, and schools with high proportions of Indigenous students. More than 15 schools in the Barkly will benefit from this funding.

A new \$6.5m early childhood integrated learning centre will be built in Tennant Creek to provide early childhood education, childcare services, child health and family support. Two million dollars will establish sport, art, culture, language, learning on country, and social and emotional learning programs for middle years students in the Barkly and Katherine regions. Tennant Creek High School has been funded for significant staff and key programs to engage students. These funds were lost under the CLP government.

Some of the other schools to receive funding throughout the region include Minyerri School, employing a local Indigenous person to assist with the school's everyday operations and office; Jilkminggan School, for a VET training facility to engage secondary students in learning support; and Robinson River School, employing an extra teacher to enable classes with closer age groups. Jilkminggan, Mataranka and Minyerri will all have new Families as First Teachers programs starting in Term 2. I congratulate the minister on those initiatives.

School across the Territory will see improvements under this Labor government.

VISITORS
Girraween Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Barkly, can I jump in, while you are talking about schools, to welcome those clever rural students, the Year 5/6 students from Girraween Primary School, accompanied by their teacher, Sally Phillips. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr McCARTHY: That is probably a great cue to talk about teachers. It is probably time to shift off this wonderful and eloquent speech and talk about teachers.

A number of my colleagues have had very important and distinguished teaching careers, such as Minister Lawler and the Member for Arnhem.

When we saw those poor, shallow and ill-conceived fiscal strategies from the CLP that looked at cost-cutting across the board in the four-year Territory budget, as an opposition we were shocked to see education featuring front and centre, incurring significant cuts that directly impacted on schools' ability to employ and retain good teachers in the Northern Territory. Teachers are the integral connection between our children and a good education. They are the facilitators of good education.

I had the privilege of working in Sydney. I went back to university for a year. I got a part-time job in a local school, and I enjoyed the crossover from the remote areas of the Northern Territory into the suburbs of Sydney. I remember there was a significant cohort of Vietnamese students at that school. At parent-teacher night, after meeting the parents and discussing their child's progress and the school's plans for their education, I left with a pocket full of business cards that were mostly Vietnamese restaurants. I felt very honoured to receive that acknowledgement.

I went to one of those restaurants to do a bit more research into the school community. I talked to the family and the kids there that night. I said, 'This is a very positive interaction. It is a very special relationship, but I am most interested in the interest you take in your children's education.' It was explained to me in the context of the hierarchy and the cultural perspective of a teacher. There was God, then there was the family, and then there was the teacher.

It was explained even more clearly. 'Do not think you are high and mighty, Mr or Mrs teacher; it is just that you present the best opportunity to facilitate our children's realisation of their full life potential and future prosperities.' That made a lot of sense to me. Teachers are very important people who have the special ability to facilitate our children's learning, growth, development, wellbeing and opportunity to participate in society to the best of their ability.

The Michael Gunner Labor government has invested in children and has a plan to work with families and respected experts to improve the lives of children and deliver long-term, generational, economic and social benefits.

As the Minister for Housing and Community Development, I know how much housing can impact on a child's education. Housing in remote Indigenous communities has been inadequate and overcrowded and has resulted in poor health, social and educational outcomes. The Michael Gunner Labor government will change this. It is investing a record \$1.1bn to build and improve thousands of remote homes across the NT. I am proud and privileged to be the minister who will oversee the program that will help children in remote Indigenous communities to achieve their goals and dreams through a good education and good health.

Through the Room to Breathe program we will start to build the first additional living spaces in the coming months, commencing in April. For children to attend school they need to be healthy, yet the Territory has significant housing problems that have severely impacted many Territorians for too long. Overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities has led to poor health.

Overcrowding and disadvantage in remote communities can increase the risk of preventable conditions, such as otitis media, trachoma and rheumatic heart disease. Tragically, around 90% of children in remote areas have some form of otitis media, which can cause hearing loss.

Let us briefly talk about otitis media, which is a middle ear condition that is completely preventable. If you live in good housing there are a couple of important protocols for you to remember, such as washing your face, washing your hands and blowing your nose. Those are very simple daily routines to prevent what is a very serious middle ear condition that can lead to significant hearing loss. If you cannot hear your parents, brothers, sisters or teachers properly, your learning will severely be impacted.

Addressing otitis media, with its links to improved housing, is part of a good government's policy. We realise there is a problem, and we are now putting together policy to see that it can be addressed.

Otitis media may impair a child's hearing, similar to the level of hearing under water. If it goes undiagnosed and untreated, children may struggle to hear and struggle through school. Otitis media can lead to language and speech problems and can impact on a child's ability to learn as well as their willingness to participate and engage in learning.

Trachoma is an eye disease also associated with disadvantage and poverty which can lead to blindness. It is contagious and, in overcrowded conditions, can spread easily. If a child cannot see then they will have great difficulty learning.

Rheumatic heart disease is caused by strep bacteria and is easily spread in overcrowded conditions in the home. It can reduce the quality of life and cause disability or premature death. Rheumatic heart disease can require hospitalisation and heart surgery. If a child is unwell, in hospital or required to travel for medical treatment they will miss out on school and, consequently, their education. All three of these conditions are 100% preventable through better living conditions. To achieve a good education, children need to be healthy, attend school and be engaged.

I am determined to ease overcrowding and improve disadvantage in remote Indigenous communities through our remote housing program, and the element I am most focused on is local decision-making and engaging the local community in the program from start to finish.

If we can get young people engaged in managing tenancies, cyclical repairs and maintenance and the middle level construction of Room to Breathe, and if we can get Aboriginal businesses coordinated in the remote towns and connect them to the homelands to deliver better housing outcomes in existing homelands, homes and communities, it will be a whole cohort of people participating at every step. As I said to the Aboriginal peak housing body at a meeting recently, this will repeat what young people need to know about their grandfathers and grandmothers, who have led the way in the past; it is about reengaging the new generations.

In regard to advocating for better services and education, there is a really wonderful section in my speech about engaging children and delivering good housing, and links to good health and education. A good house leads to good health, and a good education leads to a good job and a happy, healthy life.

The remote housing reforms I have highlighted are essential to a good education, good health and a good job. The Michael Gunner Labor government remote housing reforms include working with local people to build homes where they feel good and where they belong.

As part of our remote housing reforms to ease overcrowding we will make government employee housing available to local public service recruits. There is currently no government employee housing available for local public servant recruits, and we recognise this as inequality. I have listened to residents of the Barkly community and other electorates regarding the shortage of government employee housing for local recruits and the impacts of overcrowded houses on people participating in the important jobs in their community.

Overcrowded conditions make it difficult for people to get a good sleep, which can impact on children getting to school and the adults in the family getting to work. This has been an ongoing issue for many years. Prior to the election we announced the NT Labor government's employee housing policy for local recruits, which will be accessible to locally-recruited remote government employees.

Making government employee housing available to local recruits is part of the \$1.1bn, 10-year remote housing program to improve and increase the number of houses, living spaces and rooms available to Territorians living in remote communities. Local decision-making is a key to rolling out the housing program—\$20m per year for government employee housing.

We have begun the work with government agencies to ascertain their needs in delivering this policy, which will begin in the 2017–18 financial year, after the Labor government's first budget. In cases where there are eligible employees but no available housing, options may include building new houses, upgrading and expanding existing housing, and other options that will be jointly determined by the government and local people. I am pleased to talk about all that. We will do what is right and equal. We will level the playing field.

This government is investing in education, remote housing, job creation and children right across the Northern Territory. With the provision of good housing, Territory children will have a better chance at a good education and a brighter future, and will contribute to better social and economic outcomes.

VISITORS

Michael and Didamain Uibo

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the parents of the Member for Arnhem, Michael and Didamain Uibo. Welcome to Parliament House. Keep an eye on her.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr McCARTHY: To the students in the gallery, I want you to listen very carefully. I will test your hearing. I want you to repeat after me with this chant: 'Whether the weather be fine or whether the weather be hot, we'll weather the weather whatever the weather, whether the weather or not.'

That concludes my speech on education.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, that is a hard act to follow, but I will try.

I support of the statement the Education minister made yesterday about our Labor commitment to education. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that is dedicated to putting our Territory children front and centre in everything we do.

I am honoured to hold two assistant minister roles with the Minister for Education. These assistant portfolios are in the areas of remote education and the Families as First Teachers program. These two roles allow me to have direct input and access to the minister's office and to information regarding education issues across the Northern Territory, and they allow me to learn more about education in the various parts of the Territory I have not yet been able to visit. I get to look at the wide set of challenges faced by our kids, their families, caregivers, teachers, school staff, policy makers and the wider communities, and ensure that Territory children receive the best access to a quality education, no matter where they live.

I am lucky to have had a predominately positive schooling experience growing up in the NT. As a Territory girl through and through, I completed all my primary and secondary school here. I am a product of the public school system, and I am proud to have contributed to Territory education as a secondary teacher for five years. I spent one year teaching in Darwin at Casuarina Senior College, the school I graduated from, and four years teaching in my family's community of Numbulwar, located in remote southeast Arnhem Land, in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

My family history, which I shared in my inaugural speech, is one which holds education as a constant theme in our work and life. Both my parents, Mick and Didamain, who are here in the gallery today, I am proud to say have been teachers and principals. They are now enjoying their retirement, obviously watching their daughter in parliament, and they have become great-grandparents.

Last year my older sister Jocelyn completed her first year of early childhood teaching at Karama Primary school. My eldest niece recently became a young mum, three months ago, and has returned to school this year to undertake her Year 11 studies. The support from her school is a testament to Territory education. The support staff, teachers and community, no matter the circumstances of a student, ensured the value and importance of education is always displayed.

As the education minister said yesterday:

A good education can change lives ...

I believe this to be true. As a teacher I tried to do this every day in the classroom by providing extracurricular opportunities for students outside the classroom context. The minister expressed the ongoing commitment by our Labor government to giving our kids the best start to life.

The minister talked about the Families as First Teachers program, also known as FaFT. I am excited to be the assistant minister for FaFT, and I am working closely with the early childhood adviser in Minister Lawler's office to better understand the details of the FaFT program, its delivery and outcomes. I have enjoyed seeing firsthand the positive impact FaFT has in the communities across the Arnhem electorate, and I have been privileged to meet some of the FaFT coordinators in other programs across all NT electorates.

FaFT has had ongoing success in remote schools and communities, so much so that five scheduled new remote and regional FaFT sites and five new urban sites have been developed for 2017. The newest FaFT site was opened at the beginning of the school year in the Darwin suburb of Ludmilla and was officially opened by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Children last week. The Labor government understands the importance of focusing on young children and their families at the start of their learning journeys.

Another commitment the Labor government has made which puts children at the heart of government is the children's subcommittee of Cabinet. The Territory Labor government's early childhood development plan is about driving generational change for all Territory children.

In the past few months I have had the pleasure to visit two outstanding childhood facilities: the Gulman child and family learning centre in Ngukurr, which is in the Arnhem electorate; and the Braitling Preschool, in Alice Springs. These two facilities are not only wonderful education facilities, but strong, supportive and effective learning hubs in their communities, which are accessed by children, adults and families.

Our government is committed and dedicated to supporting children and families in the Territory by investing in education. It is not only a good thing to do, it is the right thing to do. Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding architects of the American *Declaration of Independence*, once said, 'An investment in knowledge pays the best dividends'. The Territory Labor government is doing this. We are investing in our kids and, in doing so, we are investing in our future.

Over the next four years our Labor government is committing an additional \$124m into our Territory schools. Every school in the Territory, both government and non-government, will receive \$300 000 as a boost towards addressing their self-identified needs and which will maximise learning and teaching for their students. Again, we cannot expect positive outcomes in education without properly investing in our education system.

One of the most significant parts of the minister's statement is \$8m of the \$124m, set aside over four years, which will be used to focus on early intervention strategies and support services for our Territory children. I am confident that the financial commitment for more student support services will make a real difference to student learning and outcomes. Support services are essential because not every child learns the same way. Extra learning support will enable students to maximise their learning so they have opportunities to gain the most from their learning and school experiences.

I want to share a personal example of the lack of support services and early intervention having a negative impact on a child's learning. When I was teaching senior secondary in Numbulwar, the health and hearing team was doing targeted checks with students who had a history of hearing problems. One of my students, a 17-year-old in Year 11, did not want to go for the hearing test. The first day the student ran away from school to hide from the hearing team. I found out later that afternoon the student had had a very painful ear operation when she was younger, and she was afraid to be tested again.

The second day the student did not attend the clinic for their hearing check-up. On the third day I ended up talking to the student's mother and asked for permission to take them to the clinic to get the hearing test. I took my entire secondary class to the clinic to show the student our support and demonstrate the importance of attending regular hearing checks. The other students waited patiently in the waiting room while I went in with the student and one of her best friends so she could have the hearing test.

I learned that day that my student was 50% deaf in one ear. I was shocked. I had been teaching this student for 18 months and was disheartened to think this everyday school attender may have missed out on an enormous amount of learning over the last few years due to this critical hearing barrier. This is a situation that I sincerely hope will not be repeated for any Territory student—provided that support structures are put in place and that we encourage cross-agency relationships and sharing to best support Territory kids' learning.

The Territory education system is in the unique position of having over 40% Indigenous students. We also have 46% of students living in remote parts of the Territory, which is coupled with some of the highest levels of socioeconomic disadvantage in the country. The delivery of education in our unique Northern Territory comes at a cost that must be borne in order to achieve strong outcomes in the future so all NT students are given the best chance to access a quality education.

This would never have happened under the brutal funding cuts that were witnessed under the CLP government. I know about these cuts, as I was teaching in Numbulwar and felt the impact of them on my school. I am given hope by the minister that more support for students and schools has been identified, with the focus including cross-agency support services in the form of speech pathologists; occupational therapists; psychologists; speech, language and communication teachers; and the new conductive hearing loss education adviser.

The 20 disability teaching scholarships to Territory teachers to grow local capacity will make a huge impact on Territory education and will support our students, their families and the school staff and communities

they work in. The expansion of flexible learning centres in the Territory is an exciting development. I completed one of my teaching practicums when I was studying in Queensland at a flexible learning centre in Townsville. This experience opened my eyes and my mind to how education models can be utilised to best support students and the way they learn, particularly those who may not be comfortable in mainstream school settings.

The FLC I was at for two months was an enjoyable and enriching learning experience for me. I was also able to witness the productiveness of the FLC working directly with families and students in their local context. I am very interested to learn more about our NT flexible schools and how we can adapt and cater for a wide range of learning experiences for young people across the Territory.

I am comforted by the minister's statement, which explicitly states that we are dedicated to providing safe and supportive schools across the Territory, where our diversity is valued and respected. I will speak more with the minister about the support for LGBTIQ students in Territory schools. I have a particular interest in these support services in regional and remote schools.

It is a devastating fact that our LGBTIQ students are more likely to be bullied and feel isolated and ostracised, and they are statistically high risk when it comes to suicide. The high rates of contemplation, attempts and completions of suicide for LGBTIQ and Indigenous students are an alarming concern which requires sensitivity and direct action.

Mental health services in regional and remote parts of the Territory are so important, and I look forward to supporting the minister in my role as assistant minister for remote education, as I have observed and experienced the distressing lack of mental health support services for students and staff, with the devastating loss of a transgender student—also my relative—who took their own life in 2013 at just 16 years of age. I think of this young person often and it breaks my heart to think of what they would be doing now if they were alive, as a 20-year-old.

Supporting schools to identify their needs and developments in information and communication technology, or ICT—an example provided by the minister was Urapunga School, in the electorate of Arnhem. This small and very beautiful school will now have the ability to upgrade computers, which will be a vital tool in allowing the remote students of Urapunga to access up-to-date technology and improve their skills in the area of ICT. This is a simple example of how resourcing a school based on the needs of the students will make a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Further funding and support for remote secondary schooling is extremely important. It is hard work to support students in Year 12, and even more so in a remote context. In the four years I was teaching secondary school in Numbulwar we had just one student gain their NTCET, through the then NT Open Education Centre, now known as the NT School of Distance Education, or NTSDE.

I am very proud to share with the Assembly that in 2013 the solo Numbulwar Year 12 student was also the Telstra top remote Indigenous student in the Northern Territory. They received their award for their hard work and dedication at a ceremony in Parliament House. It was an affirmation not only to the student but to me as one of the two teachers, as well as one tutor, who worked tirelessly to support this remote student accomplish their Year 12 requirements in their own community.

The partnership between the community school and the NTSDE is important and unique. It allows secondary students in remote contexts to complete their senior school studies in their own communities with their families to have the support they need and deserve. I support the extra support our government has committed in regard to increased access to student pathways, such as vocational education training, supporting language and culture in schools, and learning on country programs.

One example I want to share with the House is the strong learning on country program which I attended last week at Angurugu School on Groote Eylandt, in the Arnhem electorate. I was heartened to hear from the principal that the learning on country program has been running actively and smoothly. The program has the interest of the students and staff, and the support of the families and communities on Groote. There is a great partnership between Angurugu School and the Anindilyakwa language centre to provide strong language and culture-based learning for the younger generations on Groote. I am lucky to be sporting this beautiful kimono, made on Groote with bush medicines and dyes as part of the learning on country program—with the collection of the materials and dyes for the young people to use.

This government believes local decision-making delivers better outcomes and lasting solutions. We will introduce community-led schools so Indigenous communities will have a stronger voice in how their

schools are run. There are 17 schools in the Arnhem electorate, including three homeland schools. I am privileged to have visited each of these schools in the past year, both as a candidate prior to the Territory election and now as the current local member. I look forward to more visits to the Arnhem electorate's schools. In my experience, schools in small places are considered to be the central hub of activity in the community, and I enjoy supporting schools in my new role.

In the words of the famous former South African President, Nelson Mandela:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

We cannot expect a positive future if society and government do not invest in children and their education. Every child deserves the best start to life and continued support throughout their learning journeys in order to support a strong Territory now and into the future. Knowledge is power.

I look forward to supporting the Minister for Education and my colleagues in working to empower more Territorians in education and building a strong future for our Territory children.

I commend the minister on her statement.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I thank the Education minister for making a very comprehensive statement about what our government is doing in a very important area. It is a privilege, as Chief Minister, to speak on this debate after two members of parliament who have considerable experience on the front lines of teaching, especially in remote communities.

We heard a very informed contribution from the Member for Arnhem about our education policy. The Member for Barkly has significant experience in education as well. Our Education minister also has significant experience in the area of education, making sure our Territory kids get the best education they can get.

Our entire team has considerable experience across many areas, and it is fantastic to hear the contributions to the minister's statement. We need considerable experience—doing our best by Territory kids was a clear promise from us going into the election, and it will be crucial in how we shape the Territory and solve the generational problems we have seen from government to government.

To get on top of issues with chronic illness, incarceration rates, an unskilled workforce, alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour—the list goes on—we want to break the cycle. It starts with doing right by our kids. We have the subcommittee of Cabinet; we have ministers and members of the team with significant experience in this space; and we have valuable public servants who have been given this direction.

We have changed the way we govern, with the new subcommittee of Cabinet, to provide a focal point and direction, and we have a very passionate and committed non-government sector. We have fantastic teachers, support staff and parents in our school communities, who are involved—it is about providing purpose and direction. We are achieving that through our ministers for Children, Health, Territory Families, Education, Housing, and the list goes on.

We made a very clear commitment about doing better by our kids, and that means doing things differently. We have much to do and we will be very busy, but we must be busy because a strong education and training system is the difference between a stagnant community and a dynamic community. It is the difference between the next generation of Territorians being able to claim the Territory's rightful place in the Asian century through business, investment and innovation. It is the key to empowering the bush to lift itself onto the economic mainstream to create sustainable jobs and industry on country. It may be the key to tomorrow's mums and dads putting three square meals on the table for their kids, owning their own home or setting up a life for their family.

Education is powerful. A quality education system may be the difference between a family deciding to move to and stay in the Territory, and them leaving the Territory. Education is crucial. Every child deserves access to a good education and every government has a duty to provide a good education system. It is not only about doing what is right by our children; it is smart governance.

Education is transformational; it is one of the most potent agents we have, along with decent housing, to ending intergenerational cycles of welfare dependency and contact with our overburdened health and justice systems—to closing the gaps. We have much to do because unfortunately the previous government did not recognise, as we do, the importance of investing in our kids.

We heard very passionately from the Member for Arnhem, who was on the front lines in the schools when this happened. The CLP's decision to cut \$114m from the education budget had an impact; this meant a reduction of 500 full-time equivalent staff, including 300 fewer staff members in our schools. The government is putting \$124m back into education. Of this, \$20m has already gone back into school budgets so there are more teachers, specialists, support staff and resources for our students.

Importantly, this gives schools the certainty to plan. Like I was discussing earlier about providing certainty to police, we also want our schools to have the certainty to plan and be confident, knowing they are funded and supported to make plans that go beyond a year. It is crucial. We made five-year commitments to the non-government sector so people have the capacity to plan beyond 12 months. That is very powerful in providing confidence and certainty.

As we have heard, more money will go to preschool, transition and secondary students, and schools with higher proportions of Indigenous students. An extra \$8m will go to tackling challenging behaviours and supporting children with a disability. Part of this money will establish a re-engagement centre for our kids who struggle in the traditional education system, and we based that on the successful model getting excellent results in Malak.

Over the next four years, every government and non-government Territory school will get \$300 000 for new works and repairs and maintenance as part of the building better schools initiative. This is not only important for schools, but it has the dual benefit of improving school infrastructure and getting work into the hands of tradies and contractors throughout the Territory, in towns and the bush. In addition, there is \$5m for a four-year program to refurbish and upgrade homeland schools, which will commence with the much-needed works to improve facilities in the Yirrkala Homelands School. As I said, these works will not only deliver for schools but for tradies.

Another exciting initiative of this government is the Healthy Life Creative Life program. The Member for Barkly is a huge advocate for this program, which will fund alternative education pathways for students in the Barkly and Katherine regions with \$2m per year. This program will bring together the sport and arts communities to develop and run programs in schools, engaging kids' artistic and sporting talents. It is a fantastic initiative, and I thank the Members for Barkly and Katherine for supporting it.

I keep saying and will continue to say that we must have our kids ready for school on day one, term one, year one. The process begins at pregnancy. The evidence is overwhelming that the first 1000 days of a child's life are critical for later health and wellbeing. That is why we are expanding programs with runs on the board such as playgroups, Nurse-Family Partnerships and Families as First Teachers. Parents always want the best for their children, but they may not always have the right tools.

Through Families as First Teachers and Nurse-Family Partnerships we have seen important relationships being developed to help give parents those tools. FaFT is about equipping parents in developing good reading habits and preparing healthy meals, and with the Nurse-Family Partnership arrangements we are seeing nurses helping parents and removing tensions from the household.

The results of the Nurse-Family Partnerships have been dramatic, with improvement in infant mortality, which we can all agree is fantastic, and a reduction in family violence. They remove tension from the household. People can be very stressed when they have their first child and they do not necessarily know what to do. A child does not come with an instruction manual. The Nurse-Family Partnerships deliver help, support and experience through what can be a difficult, high-pressure time and, as we can all agree, a very valuable time in your life as a parent.

The FaFT program operates in 27 remote communities, and we will open a further 10 sites.

I am proud of the investments this government is making in my electorate of Fannie Bay. I will speak briefly as the Member for Fannie Bay. Almost \$700 000 has gone to Darwin High School, which has allowed the school to move from a budget deficit to a surplus. It has allowed the school to hire tutors and maintain its current teaching staff so its students can access all subjects. There was significant pressure on Darwin High School about the subject lines and what the schools was delivering.

There was \$250 000 for Darwin Middle School, which allowed the school to put on three extra teachers and give them extra capacity to provide lower student-teacher ratios and better continuity in the classroom. For example, previously some classes had to be shared between two teachers because of resourcing constraints. With this extra funding there is now scope for dedicated classroom teachers.

There was \$60 000 for the NT School of Distance Education, which is now on the Bullocky Point campus, and that will assist with the delivery of programs for students undertaking study via distance education. We are supporting the Darwin High School and Darwin Middle School master plan for Bullocky Point.

There will also be \$60 000 going to the Parap Primary School.

Education is also critical when it comes to northern development. For the Northern Territory to grasp its rightful place in the Asian century, and for Darwin to realise its destiny as the great economic and cultural capital of northern Australia, we must equip our young people with the right skills in fast-moving currents of this fast-moving century.

Our government has already shown its commitment to Territory jobs through our bigger and better Home Improvement Scheme; the \$22m Immediate Works Stimulus Package; the fast-tracking of \$120m worth of infrastructure projects to get money flowing to business and industry; the \$10 000 tradies scheme for first home buyers; and our strengthening of buy local measures, including the replacement of the 'value for money' definition in government procurement guidelines with 'value for Territory'.

We must also turn our eyes to jobs and industries of the future. We must draw more students and professionals from around the world and the country because we offer the exceptional opportunities, training, education, lifestyle and jobs.

As Minister for Northern Australia, and Trade, Business and Innovation, I am proud of our government's \$39m investment over the next five years for infrastructure at Darwin High and Middle schools, and the NT School of Distance Education, to support the delivery of science, technology, engineering, arts, maths and other programs. This will provide new classrooms, new and innovative programs, and teaching and learning spaces.

We are also pleased to introduce coding to our schools. Coding is emerging as an essential literacy for the 21st century, and we need Territory kids at the forefront. Another example of our growing partnerships with institutions is with the government of South Australia. We are also working with the University of South Australia to better equip Territory teachers.

To better promote enterprise education in schools we are fostering strong relationships with professional associations like InspiredNT through events such as National Science Week, the Industry Skills Advisory Council and the science and mathematics teachers associations.

As a government we must help create pathways from school and training to jobs. That is why we are collaborating on initiatives aligned to emerging industries, such as maritime training, the pastoral futures program, learning on country programs and girls in trades. Our government will continue to work with young people on bettering these pathways, increasing participation and addressing shortfalls. This action will include a youth employment plan.

Last month 16 members of the NT Chief Minister's Youth Round Table met for the first time in 2017 with government ministers. These members are a direct link between young people and Cabinet, and they ensure we, as a government, stay keyed in on all youth issues. It was a pleasure to meet them with the Minister for Territory Families.

History shows us that local decisions are usually the right decisions. That is why over 10 years, beginning now, our government will give local decision-making power back to the bush in the areas of local government, health services, looking after children, law and justice, housing and education. This government will talk eye to eye with people in the bush, not down at them. We will listen, not command.

As the responsible minister, I am proud to be leading what will be one of the most significant reforms to Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory in years. I thank the Members for Namatjira and Arnhem for their contributions as co-chairs.

We have a lot of work to do in this space. I thank those members, as I do all our bush members and Indigenous members of our team, for helping us provide leadership in this area. The community-led schools initiative is part of the wider hand-back of local decisions. More than 40% of students identify as Indigenous and almost half have a language background other than English. Forty-six per cent of our students are located in remote and very remote areas.

The community-led schools initiative is about engaging the bush and equipping our remote kids with the tools they need to participate in the economic mainstream while still maintaining their crucial links to land, language and lore. The community-led schools initiative is about community buy-in. It is about making sure mums, dads, aunties, uncles, grandparents and kids support the curriculum, the schools and the outcomes. This is about getting kids to school every day. It is about schools being responsive to the community's needs. That will happen when there is community control and community-led decision-making in schools. It is already working in Gunbalanya.

Recently, after a 12-month consultation and engagement process, the community elected its inaugural Gunbalanya school board. The elections were overseen by the Australian Electoral Commission, and the turnout was incredibly encouraging. There were 91 parents who voted on eight members from 31 nominations, and 60 students voted on two positions from four nominations.

We are busy; we have to be busy. Unlike the previous government, we are putting kids at the front and centre, and we will continue to do that. For all the Territory's natural beauty, resource wealth, industry and agriculture, our young people are the Territory's greatest asset. We will put them first, at the centre of our government's decision-making.

I thank the Minister for Education for bringing this statement to the House. It is always a pleasure to talk about what we are doing for children. We will report back on the significant work we are doing.

I commend the Minister for Education, as well as the minister for Housing for his work as part of the children's subcommittee. I also commend the Ministers for Health and Territory Families, and the Minister for Children, who is currently helping to contribute to the growth of the Northern Territory population.

We will put children first. I fully support the team, the minister and the work that is happening, and I commend this statement to the House.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand in this Chamber and speak about education. It is a core of my life journey and everyone else's in this Chamber and in the Territory. Education has led me to this place where I have the privilege to represent the Territory and Territorians. Despite all the things that divide us, this is common ground in here.

I stand here today as a product of Territory education. As a born-and-bred Territorian—raised in Darwin, Jingili, Howard Springs, Darwin River and Moulden—one thing that has stayed with me is the magnificent education I received from my teachers. The support of my parents—there is a story there in which my mother was forced, due to family constraints, to leave at Year 6 to help with her family as the youngest female. She inspires me because, once we grew up, my mum studied to become a trainee Aboriginal health worker at Bagot community before getting a Masters of Primary Health Care. That is the strength in education. It led the way for us.

My family has benefited from education. We have many teachers in our team. Member for Barkly, we might have short-changed you with 28 years of teaching experience—about 45, apparently. We also have the award-winning Member for Arnhem. Very little is said about the Member for Nightcliff's teaching. The first time I met her—it was so memorable for her that she forgot—I was a cricket development officer at St Mary's and the Member for Nightcliff was there as a teacher.

The Minister for Education is paving the way for education, leading and inspiring not only our party but the Territory. We are very fortunate to have someone with experience and knowledge in the classroom and the corporate sector, as a Deputy CEO of Education, as well as a principal. She was a principal of a school I went to many years ago—she was not the principal then—which is Jingili Primary School.

This is the bread and butter of our Labor values. This is the root of equal opportunity and a fair go for all. Everyone has the opportunity to get an education. No matter where you are in the Territory or what your background or circumstances are, you are able to have an education if you want one. It is the role of all governments, past, present and future, to provide that opportunity and ensure it is a quality education through quality teachers and culturally appropriate training. In regard to remote and urban schools, it is important that they have the appropriate cultural training.

We give everybody the opportunity, regardless of their socioeconomic or geographical background or situation, to access a quality education. I do not think we have ever had someone with such a reputation and knowledge coming into the role of Minister for Education.

I look forward to supporting the Minister for Education, as do my Caucus colleagues. Any journey in changing or trying to improve things is about acknowledging what has happened in the past. One of the disgraceful things we saw under the previous government was the drop of 160-odd teachers, 300 support staff and nearly 500 frontline and support staff in education. We have to acknowledge that.

As opposition members we put up with four years of listening to the rhetoric of the previous government, saying there were no cuts. 'We never got rid of anybody in the education sector.' That was not entirely correct once the figures were shown. Those cuts were disgraceful. They hurt our schools and students, but there is a positive, and that is the improved Year 3 minimum standards, which went up 12%. They did have some wins in that area.

The Member for Spillett, the Deputy Opposition Leader of a party of two, said yesterday that it is not about throwing money at solutions. We agree, but it is about how you focus the spend and what you plan to do. I can tell Territorians, the opposition and Independent members that we have a plan. The first step was to get the right person into the role. We have done that. We have a strong plan about leading education over the next three to four years.

Let us plan to lead education over the next two or three terms. Let us plan for the future, because we will come and go but our titles stay the same. We want our children to continue to go to school; we want to keep them there and for them to get the best education. We need to make sure youth are engaged in education so they can be more productively focused and less likely to be distracted away from education and towards crime and antisocial behaviour, which we have seen an increase in over the last few years.

We are taking strong measures and a coordinated approach to the long-term benefits of our children who are getting distracted, committing crimes and causing antisocial behaviour. I ask Territorians to please stick with us. We have a plan. We are rolling that plan out but it will take time for those plans to kick on. We have plans that can immediately address some of those issues.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

VISITORS

Malarndirri McCarthy and Kirsty Hunt

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome Senator Malarndirri McCarthy to the gallery, as well as Councillor Kirsty Hunt from Litchfield Council.

Members: Hear, hear!.

MOTION

Making Decisions and Delivering on Promises

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, this is an important motion after what we just heard in Question Time, which was pretty disappointing. The only time we see determination, focus and zeal from the Gunner Labor government is when it comes to avoiding decisions.

The only time we see any gumption from our Chief Minister is when it comes to avoiding taking a position, treading water and keeping the hamster wheel of government turning, making out the government is acting without actually acting. It announces inquiries, committees, committees of inquiries, panels of experts, economic summits, audits, surveys, advisory boards, consultation boards and feasibility studies, just to name a few.

Announcing these reports and studies does two things for government members. It makes them look like they are doing something and, hopefully, it may give them their agenda. We hear the government speaking about attracting private investment in its economic summits, but what do businesses want? What can government do to help business confidence?

Businesses want certainty. They want to know the policy settings of government are stable and will not change, and, if they do change, they want to know those changes in advance. Businesses want to know what the policies of the government are so they can put their time, money and effort into growing a business.

What happens when you announce a review of an area of government policy which affects a business? The business waits, looks into alternatives and maybe invests elsewhere in a different industry or a different state. The Gunner Labor government's fear of making decisions and possibly getting things wrong continues to prevent it from acting. It is spooked.

In opposition, Labor used to talk about the instability and chaos of the CLP government. However, the only fair way of describing the current government is in regard to uncertainty and instability, which creates a climate of chaos and dysfunction. When all aspects of government policy are under review it makes the Territory a fundamentally unstable place to do business. Through its determination to avoid or postpone decision-making, the government has brought in its own form of chaos—the chaos of uncertainty, timidity, indecision and lack of resolve. The government has brought in its own form of dysfunction, paralysis and inertia.

No one knows what will happen, including the Chief Minister and his office. The Gunner Labor government is so concerned with trying to please everyone that it ended up failing everyone. The answers to the questions facing government are not new or complicated, but they require tough decisions. The Territory deserves a government that will make the tough decisions in a timely manner and when the facts and circumstances warrant decisiveness.

It saddens me to say that the Gunner Labor government has a simple template for operating; that is to say it has a manual, a template, for doing nothing. From observation—not from an FOI request—here is how the how-to manual of the Gunner Labor government works. An issue presents itself that requires some kind of decision.

Step one: appoint a panel of experts and issue a media release about the panel of experts, with reporting dates six to 12 months from now.

Step two: issue a media release to coincide with the first meeting of the panel of experts.

Step three: have the panel invite submissions from the public or send out a survey. I note that the Chamber of Commerce said it had received 26 surveys in this step. It needed to consult on which of the 26 it had to fill out.

Step four: if anyone from the media asks a question, decline to answer the question and direct the request to departmental officers or to the panel of experts.

Step five: if anyone from the public asks a question, decline to answer the question and direct the constituent to make a submission or present a survey.

Step six: if the opposition asks a question, decline to answer the question and offer a departmental briefing. This is all we have so far. Despite being six months in, without exaggeration, we are yet to see any outcomes. So what happens next?

Step seven: have the panel issue a draft report and ask for further submissions on the draft report to check where any resistance might be. Issue a media release.

Months later—step eight: issue the final report along the exact path of least resistance. Issue a media release saying the government is considering its response to this important issue and will respond in due course. We will not go past step nine because then we would have to take our shoes and socks off.

Finally—step nine: hope everyone forgets it and announce a new inquiry.

Calling an inquiry is a regressive pattern of behaviour. This has happened time and time again. This is the logic of a government that is scared to make a decision, is spooked by its own shadow and looking to kick a can along the road. The old expression is, 'kick a tin along, wheel the barrow back'.

I would not be surprised if, in response to criticism of the number of inquiries, the government announces another survey into the optimum level of inquiries. Maybe in the 27th survey sent to the Chamber of Commerce, members can ask about the best number of surveys.

From the government's point of view, why does it have to do anything? It is safe with a big majority and does not want to stuff up. The problem with this way of thinking ignores the needs of Territorians and the job the Labor Party was elected to do.

I know some of you are thinking that sometimes, very rarely, the Gunner government does make decisions. For these issues it seems to have a slightly different *modus operandi*.

Step one: make a bad decision before someone is asked for it.

Step two: do not answer media on it.

Step three: eventually, after weeks of pressure, wheel out the Chief Minister, who commits to the original decision and says there will be no change.

Step four: announce a review of the policy.

Now we can go back to the original template where the government can hope that somewhere, somehow, people will provide a rationale for the government to latch on to as why it did what it did in the first place. The most recent example of this is the alcohol review announced by the Minister for Health. Who knows, maybe someone will come up with the reason for the 400 square metres. We are hoping—maybe you can do a survey on it.

The Gunner Labor government was elected on three main promises: consultation; transparency; and, most importantly, to create jobs.

Mr Gunner: And we are doing it.

Mr HIGGINS: I pick up on the interjection. I would love some of the mute backbenchers to participate in some of these debates on GBD.

I will use the example of alcohol. How hypocritical was your party when the first motion moved by opposition was to have this parliament look at alcohol without the politics. From a politician who supported the Banned Drinker Register, was outspoken against my own previous government on that issue as well as the issue of water and floor price—I had the gumption to do it. You people need the gumption to stand up in General Business and speak on behalf of your constituents. We will be very happy to listen to you and give you a dedicated time slot in the next three-and-a-half hours.

Unfortunately, like the inquiries and surveys, after six months we can clearly see that these three promises were not sincere. Like the inquiries, they are empty, expedient words to fill the space when people ask about policies. They consult but not when they do something. They merely consult in a way to avoid doing something. What consultation was done on your half-day holidays? Speak about that in the next three-and-a-half hours.

Let us look at the very few government decisions that have been made and compare those actions to what was promised before the election. With the Dan Murphy's fiasco did the government consult on the 400 square metre ban? Did the government consult with Territorians on where or not they wanted a Dan Murphy's in the Territory? Did the government consult with the airport before putting the cod wash on the airport's plan to expand? Did the government consult with the building industry before stopping \$40m in construction activity in Darwin? The answer is no. Not a bit, but no.

The only consultation was with the business competitors of Dan Murphy's. Belatedly, less than 24 hours after Dan Murphy's announced a legal challenge to the laws, a review was announced. There you go; look at that; I have forgotten which step it is, but it is one of them—not into the original decision but into the other aspects, including the BDR, but apparently not the lockout laws or the floor price, as we have heard today. We read in the newspaper maybe it will include the floor price. This is against the government's own election commitments.

This will probably be used as a fig leaf of cover to get rid of mandatory treatment of alcohol and the temporary beat locations, those policies which have done so much to transform Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine.

The next promise was transparency. Was the decision to introduce a 400 square metre maximum floor space transparent? Not even a media release—remember, that is in the steps you have to take. You have to release multiple media releases. Everyone found out after the event, when it was published in the *Northern Territory Government Gazette*. That is not a media release. The government claimed it was transparent because it was an election commitment, but, as we all know, the government was not transparent with Territorians.

The only people the government had been transparent with were the AHA, the business competitors. No one else was aware that this, or a proposed maximum floor size, was an issue for discussion. The first motion the opposition brought to this parliament, I will remind you, was to call for a bipartisan, whole-of-parliament approach to alcohol. Not one of you had the gumption to stand up and speak about it. How interested are you in this problem, which your minister says is the biggest problem in the Territory? Not one of you stood up, and you had the hide to accuse us of not being concerned about it.

The very first motion we offered you was an olive branch, but no one wanted to take it. Gutless! We moved it because we believed the politics should be removed from this issue.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31: offensive words. I will not have the Leader of the Opposition refer to me as gutless. I want him to retract that comment.

Mr HIGGINS: Madam Speaker, I am referring to the issue as gutless.

This was rejected by the Labor Party members. They wanted the politics kept in—no consultation with the opposition or Independent members. Having read the then Opposition Leader's reassurance and commitment to the AHA, we know precisely why they did not want to commit to it.

The next promise of government was to create new jobs. The government promised to create 12 000 to 14 000 jobs each year. How did this decision play out? How did stopping a \$40m investment create jobs? What did this decision mean for tradies? How many tradies and subcontractors missed out on work because of this decision? As we can see, the government's actions do not line up with government promises. They talk the talk, but they do not walk the walk.

Let us look at another example of when the government made a decision—the part-day public holidays. The government promised consultation, but was there any consultation with the people who pay the increased wages? Did anyone even know this issue was in discussion or under consideration? There was no consultation with the hospitality sector or the Chamber of Commerce. They merely received a phone call, not even a media release, informing them of a decision made just before the announcement.

The government promised transparency, but was there any transparency in this decision? We still do not know why the government did this. We presume it is some sort of payoff to the unions for all their support to the Labor Party during the election, but the fact is we still do not know. The government's media release on the issue of strengthening the economy and supporting population growth—we could not even get Wicking to do a cartoon on that. It is laughable; it is probably the most ridiculous and ridiculed document produced by the government in its six months.

There is so much spin in the release that it made itself dizzy. The decision is most certainly not transparent. The final promise of government was to create jobs. Did the decision on part-day public holidays create jobs? Anecdotally, some places did not even open on the new public holidays because of the penalty rate issue. Not only were no new jobs created—in Question Time the Chief Minister said it was part of the plan to have these wonderful half-day holidays—but those people in existing jobs lost shifts.

Two days before Christmas the Minister for Corporate and Information Services issued a media release announcing that she was abandoning the tender for 10 000 square metres of office space in Palmerston. That is as criminal as sacking people. She said she would instead build it in the Darwin CBD. This has the potential to be a massive investment, potentially much bigger than Dan Murphy's. Once again, let us evaluate this action against the Labor Party's own promises. Did the government consult people before making this decision?

I am not aware of any consultation; the mayor of Palmerston was not aware of any consultation; no one I know was aware of any consultation. A massive investment was stripped from Palmerston despite all the rhetoric before the election of being newly-committed to Palmerston. Were the members for Brennan and Drysdale consulted? I would love to hear that. There was stone cold silence. So much for fighting for Palmerston!

I wonder if they were they ever consulted. I am extremely interested to know the results of that consultation process, and I look forward to hearing their contributions. Was the decision to abandon this tender transparent? Absolutely not. We got a media release just before Christmas, announcing that a completed public tender process will be redone, this time placed in the Darwin CBD.

Here is the transparency of the decision—this line is the entire explanation:

The process run by the CLP Government was not focused and was done without any clear understanding of what was in the interest of Territorians and the public servants involved.

How hypocritical! What does it tell you? Nothing. That is the level of transparency and accountability under this government. 'We changed it because—CLP, bad; ALP, good.' We need to add that as step 10.

We will be watching the outcome of this decision with interest. Will this decision create jobs? No, the initial jobs that would have been created in the construction near Palmerston have now been pushed back by at least a year.

The government promised to create jobs now. The government promised 12 000 to 14 000 jobs in its first year. I have tabled the press release. All I got from the Chief Minister today when I questioned him about it was waffle. It was the sort of waffle that you get out of consultation from this government. Each year there was meant to be 12 000 to 14 000 jobs. For those who are not very good at mathematics, that is 48 000 or 50 000 jobs in this term.

We will be watching. Remember, I said we will keep an eye over your shoulder. We are now in the seventh month of the Gunner Labor government, and we, like all Territorians, are desperate for the government to fulfil its promises, not to stop jobs, put a moratorium on jobs, release a survey or summit on jobs, or push back construction jobs for at least 12 months with no reasoning other than that the previous signed tender documents were not focused.

Let us go to the cyclotron. This is the final case study of government action that I want to look at. We all know the facts; in the most recent federal election, both parties and both candidates for Solomon promised \$15m to build a PET scanner and cyclotron at the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre with radiation oncology in the grounds of RDH. Everyone was relieved at the remarkable level of bipartisanship by everyone involved. And what happened? The government decided to unilaterally change the offer and location, and demand more money from the federal government. Otherwise it will not build a cyclotron.

Who did the government consult with on this? Did it consult cancer sufferers in the Northern Territory? Did it consult with the federal government? Did it consult with AMA? It obviously consulted with its own departments. Was this a transparent decision? No.

Firstly, we have not had any rationale as to why the government decided to shift the location and abandon building a cyclotron. At the same time, it is still unclear whether a cyclotron will be built. There have been very mixed messages issued. We imagine the announcement will be in the May budget in a ham-fisted attempt to get credit for the federal government's money. I only hope the Treasurer sees through that and does not allow her party colleagues to push otherwise.

Have the mixed message led to more jobs? No, just more delays, and not only in the physical work but for Territorians suffering with cancer. When will the PET scanner be operational? What is the cost of flying the radioactive isotopes here? How much will they degrade en route? These are logistical questions that need to be answered due to the government's unexplained, aloof and un-transparent decision to abandon the cyclotron.

In summary, this government only consults when it wants to do nothing and then, bizarrely, with all these surveys, does not consult on the very rare occasions it has acted. The vast majority of time, the government's only action is to hold inquiries and avoid risk and responsibility. Most of all, it avoids making decisions. It does anything to avoid making decisions. That is completely understandable, because when it is forced to make a decision, they are risky and questionable decisions, seemingly done as a payback to outside interests.

Each and every day the Gunner Labor government is failing Territorians. In opposition, Labor made bold promises and targets for job creation. We are still waiting to see what implementing these promises will look like. Instead, we see more of the same. We see inquiries, studies and reports. We will see no action. The government was elected on a promise of consultation and transparency, and creating 12 000 to 14 000 jobs each year, but, as we have seen from each of these decisions, when the rubber hits the road the government does not consult.

The government is not transparent and it is stopping jobs with every decision. But, more than that, no one knows what the government will do. Everyone is under review, businesses have been brought to a halt, supply companies in the oil and gas fields have already laid off people and closed, and people in business

and farms in the rural area have no idea what is happening with water licences or what the economic summit will recommend for other businesses.

Each of these reviews has been going on so long they have missed the chance to be part of the preparation of the 2017–18 budget. The first time we might see action from any of these reviews, summits, inquiries and surveys is in the 2018–19 budget next year. Maybe we will have a mini-budget half way through this year—the one we missed last year.

All this brings uncertainty and instability. The government, in its determination to be stable, does nothing. Ironically, it is bringing a huge level of instability to all the Territorians and businesses affected by the plethora of reviews. In the government's focus on not offending anyone, it is letting everyone down. The Chief Minister has brought his own brand of instability to life in the Territory. The government is so focused on trying to please everyone that it ends up failing everyone.

Territorians deserve a government that will make decisions, including the tough ones, where they need to be made. Territorians deserve a government that will not just make those decisions but will own them and not hide behind experts, surveys and processes or blame the previous government.

Members of the public are over the excuse, 'You did this and that when you were in government'. You are paid to make decisions and do things. When you spill milk at home, do you run around and try to find who spilled it, or do you clean it up? My wife cleans it up.

For the good of all Territorians, I hope the Chief Minister starts to overrule his backroom advisers and have a go, make some decisions, provide some certainty and direction to business, and move on from the crazy phase that has every aspect of government policy up in the air with a question mark next to it, depending on the results from the next survey.

I will be very interested to see how some of these backbenchers, here today on their day off—they do not have to ask any questions. They have their speeches prepared about education. We did not have the Bail Amendment Bill today, but I am sure it will come up tomorrow. I am sure they can make some contribution. There is a great opportunity—in the next sittings there will be a fantastic opportunity. The budget is coming down. You should be standing up here during GBD saying, 'Treasurer, these are the things my constituents want'. Stand up there and say it.

We might make it easy for you and move a motion next week so people can have that opportunity. So far we have found that your tongues are cut out. You do not say anything on these days.

I moved multiple motions during GBD when we were in government. The opposition at the time got upset and said I was abusing GBD. It is General Business Day, not opposition day. This is your opportunity to practise. Get up and speak. I cannot bait you any more to defend yourselves. I am waiting for you to have something constructive to say.

Ms MANISON (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I will amend that motion then speak to the motion.

I move the following amendment: remove all words after 'that' and replace them with, 'The Assembly acknowledges the government for making decisions in the best interest of Territorians and calls on it to continue delivering on its promises'.

This motion required some amendment because the Leader of the Opposition and I are in two very different places at the moment. We are a long way apart in our views about how we are doing things in government and delivering on our commitments. We hit the ground running from the moment we were given the honour and privilege of becoming the next Northern Territory Government.

I make no apologies for doing things differently; I want to make that clear. If you were to reflect upon where things were at this time in 2013, and look at the first six months of the previous government—it is important to put it in context. Clearly we are doing things differently. We observed what happened under the previous government, and we made strategic and intentional decisions on how we would approach government if we were fortunate enough to be elected.

I remind honourable members of the first six months of the previous government. It walked away from its election commitments straight away. The first was when the government said it would reduce the cost of

living but then put power prices up by 30%, water prices up by 40% and sewage prices up by 25%. These are the biggest cost-of-living pressures that families face.

The previous government then outsourced the decision-making responsibilities of government to the Renewal Management Board; we nicknamed them the million dollar men because they were being paid horrendous amounts of money to decide what to slash and burn. We saw protests form at the greatest rate I have ever seen out the front of this House—ordinary people saying they had had enough of government within the first six months.

Government then delivered the mini-budget. I made the decision to reorder our government's priorities and incorporate our election commitments by going through the mid-year report. That process is part of the reporting standards expected within government under the financial management and transparency legislation. We went through the mid-year report as normal because we wanted to get on with the job. We were honouring and delivering on our commitments, and we hit the ground running. That is why we chose not to do a bells and whistles fanfare and slow things down with a mini-budget process; we decided to get on with the job and hit the ground running.

By the time we had gotten to this point in 2013 we had the Wanguri by-election, which I was thrilled to win; thank you very much. I am delighted to still be in this parliament today. It was a rather large swing against the government at the time. We also had a new leader of government. I do not think anyone will forget that it got to the point where within six months they had booted out their Chief Minister.

The Member for Blain went to the election after doing the hard yards, years of commitment to the Country Liberal Party, having been the Opposition Leader, and they kicked him out after six months. They had a huge Cabinet reshuffle. We then saw about 18 Cabinet reshuffles over four years. We had two-and-a-half Chief Ministers; no one will forget the midnight coup, when the former Member for Katherine decided he wanted to have a crack at the job.

We are doing things differently for a very good reason. There is not one member of this team who has not felt under the pump from the moment we were successful in winning government. We have been working flat out to deliver and honour the commitments we made to Territorians. It is wonderful to be part of such a hard-working and diverse team which is doing its job every day to represent its constituents.

We were elected on some pretty firm commitments regarding jobs, investment in kids and the bush, restoring trust and, let's face it, integrity in government. People lost a lot of trust in government. The Territory suffered significant reputational damage as a result of those four years. We are rebuilding international ties. Let us not forget that when the Member for Blain, who was Chief Minister, lost his job he was in Japan on a trade mission, which was possibly the most inappropriate time you could overthrow your Chief Minister. He was representing the Territory's interests on a trade mission to grow jobs, the economy and trade.

It will take some time—but we have hit the ground running. As a government, we are restoring trust and integrity, but, most importantly, putting Territorians first and delivering for them. That is fundamentally what people wanted to see. They want to know they can get on with their lives and the government will do what they need it to do. Sadly we did not see that in the last term of government. We are working, as a government, to tackle many of the issues which came up due to the instability, chaos and madness of the last four years of government.

We are now, a couple of years down the track, experiencing the results of cuts to youth services, for example, and the consequences of not having enough support for disengaged youths—young kids who go off the rails and do not have the support they need.

In coming to government, as Treasurer I have been given some challenging figures. We have been left with significant challenges with debt and deficit, but in the time the CLP was in government it sold TIO, leased the port and sold the bus service.

We are now experiencing a slowing economy. When the CLP members came to government they knew there would be a significant increase; the economy was on the up. We have some real challenges when it comes to revenue coming into the Northern Territory, particularly through GST and payroll tax, but we are determined to do what we can as a government.

People were telling us before the election that they wanted a stable government that would not put the handbrake on the economy. They did not want to see a government that was not focused on Territorians.

That is what we have been delivering to the Territory. We are very proud of the fact we went with the detailed jobs plan and will be delivering more jobs for Territorians.

We will face some significant challenges this year, especially on days like today—a significant number of people turned up for work and found out they had lost their job. We will see the construction phase eventually move to the operational phase at INPEX. That will put more strain and pressure on people across the Territory.

When we came to government we knew 2016 had been a particularly hard year. We listened to the concerns people raised with us. We knew we had to invest in jobs and make sure we were supporting local businesses and the economy. We made decisive moves as soon as we got into government to deal with this. In our first week I had the privilege of serving as a minister; we were sitting down with the Chamber of Commerce and strengthening our buy local procurement plans, because we knew it was all about making sure Territory businesses get the support they need. Government spends significant money in the Territory economy.

It is about making sure local businesses have a fair crack and see the benefits. There is more to value than just dollars. We know about the flow-on effect of keeping people in the Territory. We have had issues with population growth for the last few years. Losing people from the Territory is one of our biggest risks and challenges. We must keep people in the Northern Territory, so we changed the Buy Local policy.

I was thrilled to make changes to first home ownership conditions in the Northern Territory, targeting stamp duty for established homes. We had areas in the Northern Territory where established homes were not selling. That reinvigorated activity in the property market, but, most importantly, the 330 people who have now purchased a home—thanks to the stamp duty changes for first home buyers—will now call the Territory home for a very long time.

We are very proud of giving people an opportunity to get their foot in the door of the property market, build up a bit of equity and build their future. Often, that first home is not the dream home; it is just what you can afford at the time to get a foot in the door. This creates opportunity for people's long-term plans. Hopefully they will move on to a bigger and better property years down the track as their family grows. Yes, we are committed to that.

It was also clear when we came to government that we needed to take faster action to bring forward our election commitments, because we need to see more jobs supported over the next 12 months. That is why we announced the fast-tracking of \$120m worth of election commitments. We would not wait until 2018–19 or 2019–20; we were bringing them back to 2017–18 and getting them on the books. We were getting those jobs out the door and investing in construction. Investment in infrastructure will support jobs and keep people in the Northern Territory. It is also investment in quality infrastructure to enhance services, create more economic development opportunities and, importantly, make the Territory an even better place.

We brought forward some great projects. The Palmerston Police Station will be welcomed in Palmerston. We will do significant works on the Katherine police station, the multistorey car park at Royal Darwin Hospital and the new home for rugby league at Warren Park. We are also building an indoor netball centre at Marrara.

We are targeting works at the Alice Springs Women's Shelter and the Tennant Creek family and children centre, looking at early childhood development. We brought forward Room to Breathe; there are significant funds there this year. We have more repairs and maintenance money in this financial year for remote public housing.

We did not turn our back on the \$1.7bn infrastructure program. The previous government saw there were real troubles and that jobs needed to be supported. At that time there was slowing in the economy. It was not the time to take the foot off the pedal in regard to infrastructure investment. The previous government saw that and, in the last budget, brought forward the \$1.7bn infrastructure program. We ensured the brakes were not put on that. We have continued to get that money out the door to the construction and civil sectors. We made sure there was investment in housing to support local jobs and enable better infrastructure across the Northern Territory.

As minister I have phoned in many times to say, 'Make sure this infrastructure money is going out the door. How are the procurement teams going? Are we getting these contracts out the door?' We have continued to see record months of infrastructure projects and awarding of tenders. We need to get them out the door to support jobs. That has been flat out.

We also introduced the Immediate Works Stimulus Package—\$10m for community groups—to support local businesses and jobs. It will give us the long-term gain of quality infrastructure to support the communities—churches, multicultural halls, sporting groups and childcare facilities.

We have made the investment of an extra \$5m to urban public housing and \$5m to support the steel manufacturing sector, which has been doing it tough for a long time. We are making sure that investment is in quality infrastructure, such as bus shelters and parks, making sure we also have good tourism opportunities. That is a wonderful part of the Territory lifestyle. People love getting out to the parks.

We are putting \$2m into our remote health clinics. There are works that needed to happen. We have brought them forward to support jobs.

We have brought back the Home Improvement Scheme, but we went bigger and better. The tradies told us they were not happy with it not being continued. We acknowledge that we got that wrong, so we brought it back bigger and better to ensure the dollar-for-dollar contribution and invested in supporting local tradies and small businesses in the Territory.

We have made sure we are investing in tourism infrastructure, such as the arts trails. We are making sure there are more reasons for people to jump in the car and, from the top to the bottom of the Northern Territory, see our exquisite art. We have the finest Indigenous art in this country; it should be showcased and marketed to Australians and the world as a major drawcard for the Northern Territory. If they want to see the best Indigenous art, this is the place to come.

We will invest in tourism opportunities. We see great opportunities in China and India. We have committed to an extra \$5m to attract visitors from those markets. Strengthening activities in these markets, including cooperative marketing campaigns with key airlines, based on research, so we can address drives, barriers and perceptions. We are looking to continue that work.

I pay tribute to the previous government for its work on attracting airlines into the Northern Territory, particularly the direct air route from China. I carried on the work of the previous government in that area, too. The former Member for Casuarina, Kon Vatskalis, was a very high promoter of that, as was the former Chief Minister, Paul Henderson..

We are looking at opportunities in those markets. We have a growing Indian population in the Territory. In my electorate, and in the new suburb of Muirhead, we have a fantastic Indian community. Alice Springs is absolutely thriving. I love going to the Malayalee Association events. It is always a good time out with our Malayalee community.

We have some great opportunities to get more people to come to the Northern Territory. We know how big China and India are, and that there is a growing middle class—growing economies of people wanting to spend more money and to have tourism opportunities, or visit family. Let us get them here. We are investing in that to see how we can bring more people into the Northern Territory.

The Chief Minister is at the front line to build trade relations and opportunities. He has been to China, Korea and Japan, rebuilding relationships. We have a wonderful Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, who is promoting trade opportunities with the Northern Territory through the primary industries sector, looking at what opportunities are there for mining as well.

Another commitment we honoured was upgrading facilities at the Berrimah export yards, providing \$4.1m to the NT Livestock Exporters Association. That is a commitment we have already worked on delivering. It is very important; we have to support that sector and we want to see our pastoral industry thrive, so we will continue to support it.

Another economic driver we are investing in is remote housing. There is an economic driver there; there is also a social gain. We said we were delivering the \$1.1bn housing program in remote parts of the Territory. We will use our commitment to leverage the federal government, following the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, to get them to also come to the plate and invest more, because \$1.1bn will not get us there. But it is a significant commitment by any Northern Territory Government to put that amount of money into remote housing.

It is a critical investment and, if we get it right, it will deliver a few benefits. The first will be better living conditions, less overcrowding, healthier spaces for families for washing clothes and food preparation, and

people getting a better night's sleep so they are more productive people. Kids will be ready to go to school to learn, and people will be ready to go to work the next day.

It also creates sustainable employment opportunities in communities, delivering housing repairs and maintenance, property and tenancy management. It is about creating jobs in the long term. If we overcome some of those barriers for people—work, education and housing are key contributors—we will see some vast improvements in the Northern Territory, socially and economically. It is a no-brainer.

We have been lobbying the federal government with regard to Defence. We see great opportunities, working side by side with Defence, but we are not silly. I was listening to the new Premier-elect in Western Australia the other day—we have seen what has happened in South Australia with submarines and so forth. Every jurisdiction will muscle in and do what it can to get its portion of Defence expenditure. We have been working to advocate for more Defence work to come to the Territory sooner rather than later.

We will continue to state the case for why the Territory should be a priority area of investment and the strategic benefits of that investment. There will be significant investment in the future, and we will do everything we can to ensure we get it sooner. We will put pressure on the Commonwealth Government through its Defence procurement, to maximise the benefits to local businesses. That is critical.

As I said before, the Primary Industry and Resources minister has been doing a huge amount of work, selling the Northern Territory. He has been knocking on doors, talking to the big companies and doing what he can to make sure they know this place is open for business and has many opportunities. He has been doing a fantastic job in that sector.

I will talk a bit about the work we have been doing for kids. We are working on putting together a 10-year plan for early childhood development. If we get that investment in up front we will achieve far better social outcomes and save a lot of money down the line. We will have less chronic disease, less unemployment, fewer people incarcerated and less alcohol and drug abuse. These are the benefits of what we can achieve if we get things right in the early childhood space. We are investing in kids. We said we would put kids at the centre of government decision-making. We have an incredible calibre of people on our expert reference panel, which is advising government on the best pathway forward with investment in children. We are very proud of that.

We are investing in schools, which is where we saw big cuts under the previous government. We saw significant changes in schools across the Northern Territory. Some schools suffered large cuts to teacher numbers. Investing in those schools is something we need to do; it is the right thing to do. It was a significant recurrent expenditure commitment from us, which we will honour, to make sure we get the right support into the classroom for kids across the Northern Territory.

Some of things we have done relate to the issue of trust. After the last term of government there were many questions about trust, integrity and transparency. Work is well and truly under way to look at establishing the very first independent commission against corruption in the Northern Territory. The Attorney-General is leading the charge there. A huge amount of work is under way to draft legislation to establish the first ICAC for the Northern Territory. We need to give people more trust in government now, particularly after the last chaotic four years.

It will be a powerful tool to make sure Territorians feel they have an arm, independent of government, that can seriously scrutinise some of government's activities if it feels there is something that needs to be scrutinised. It will be an important step in bringing back some of that trust in government and restoring the reputation of the Northern Territory.

We will hold an inquiry into political donations, which will be a very important element of restoring trust. We saw some pretty murky situations in the last four years where the lines of transparency and appropriateness were blurred. This will go a very long way to looking at the issues concerning political donations. It needs to be done because people have lost so much faith. A huge amount of work has been done on this.

We have also made sure that if a minister jumps on a plane and flies overseas there will be full disclosure and reporting of it, rather than waiting to go to the estimates process and ask the Chief Minister. The previous Chief Minister did everything he could not to provide information about travel. We had concerns about travel in the last term, so we have been reporting on that.

We committed to undertaking a thorough inquiry into the issue of hydraulic fracturing. That is a huge body of work, which is happening at the moment—again, Territorians said they did not trust the previous government. We received a lot of mixed responses and concerns about the previous work that had been undertaken. They needed more certainty, and many questions remained unanswered. We have a thorough process to look at the issue of hydraulic fracturing and provide feedback to the government. Government can decide whether to ban or allow it, and government would ensure it is a highly-regulated and monitored process if it were allowed.

I never thought water would become the big issue it became in the previous term of government. Water is critical to every living being on this planet. People have a lot of care for water resources. We heard some serious questions regarding water.

Ms LAWLER: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I request an extension of time for the member, pursuant to Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.

Ms MANISON: We have hit the ground running and there is a body of work being done, but it is about giving people the confidence that government is doing things properly in responding to people's needs. The water committees have been re-established, and we are asking for more work to be done around strategic Indigenous reserves, because that issue left many Indigenous Territorians feeling disappointed that the government had scrapped them.

We have done a great deal of work around the machinery of government changes to make sure government agencies work more cohesively together. We received feedback that there was an agency for absolutely everything. We were missing some natural efficiencies and synergies in government agencies. Bringing them into our machinery of government changes has resulted in a more efficient public service which is far more strategically aligned to deliver for Territorians. That is very important.

The Minister for Territory Families is doing a huge amount of work in the justice system. When we came to government there was a great deal of attention on the youth justice system. We have some real problems with youth. When you cut all the youth support services in the Territory—guess what? As the years go by and those kids do not receive support, those kids will not get better; they will get worse.

We are undertaking the most comprehensive overhaul of the youth justice system in the Northern Territory. We are employing 52 new youth diversion workers across the Northern Territory to target this area because nobody wants these kids to go off the rails. We want to make sure that if these kids end up interacting with the youth justice system, we get them to a point where they get on the right path, or, even better, we stop them causing trouble in the first place.

We have discussed some really important bills in parliament, one on body-worn video cameras and one looking at the issue of domestic violence. We also have the Bail Amendment Bill being debated. We will honour the commitment of 120 additional police officers, which the previous government failed to do. We are working flat out to make sure we get all this done.

The Opposition Leader mentioned the cyclotron and PET scanner. I almost fell over because, my goodness, you had all that time in government to get on with that project. It has been a big topic of discussion for federal elections. I would be very proud to be part of a team where I see a Health minister deliver this in the Territory. Ours will deliver it. She is one of the hardest-working people I have ever met in my life. She is also one of the most determined people I have ever met. If you want a job done, give it to the Minister for Health because she will get it done. I have no doubt she will deliver that project for the benefit of Territorians.

The previous Labor government was very proud to deliver something that was around for many federal elections, that is, the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre. Delivering the opportunity for people to receive that treatment here in the Territory was a great move. It used to be that everyone had to get on a plane to receive treatment, which was a pretty miserable existence for many people. I am very proud that I can stand here and say we will deliver that in this term of government. Other governments failed to do that.

It has been an incredibly busy period for the government. We have an incredibly busy three-and-a-half years ahead of us. We have a team that is committed to working in the best interests of Territorians and delivering on its commitments. We are acting decisively. We are doing things differently to the previous government, and I make no apologies about that whatsoever.

We are delivering on jobs. We are delivering on our promise to invest in Territory kids. We are looking at the issues regarding how to make life better for people in the bush. We are looking at growing our economy through investing in strategic infrastructure. We are making sure we are pulling the right levers when it comes to supporting jobs at this very difficult time through the right stimulus measures, making sure we get people to stay in the NT and looking at the opportunities ahead. More investment in tourism, for example, or looking at how we can grow the mining and agricultural sectors—looking at how we can get more Defence spending here and grow those sectors. We are reinvesting in areas that were, unfortunately, cut, such as youth justice and education, areas that are critical to the future of the Northern Territory.

We are ensuring we do all this with Territorians, side by side. We will not follow the example of the previous government and the decisions that left Territorians behind. Sometimes that warrants further discussion, but that is not a bad thing.

It has been an incredibly busy period. As Treasurer I am faced with handing down a difficult budget. I make no ifs or buts about it; it will be challenging. I am confident that we will deliver a Territory budget that will move this place forward, support jobs, invest in kids, create economic opportunity for the Territory, deliver better services and honour our commitments to Territorians. I am adamant about that.

The next four years will be tough because the economic conditions in the Territory are challenging, but we will deliver for Territorians to the best of our ability. That is why I believe we need to amend this motion. I am really proud of the team and how hard they have been working since coming to government. We are doing things differently, but, ultimately, this is about delivering on the commitments we made to Territorians. We are doing that. We are acting quickly and decisively, putting Territorians first.

That is in stark contrast to what we saw over the last four years, and it is something I am proud of. We are delivering on jobs, restoring trust, putting more into the bush and making sure that, overall, the Territory is a better place for everyone.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is interesting to see the sheer arrogance of the Deputy Chief Minister in General Business, disregarding our motion, using the numbers of her team to flex her muscles, showing they are really tough and that there are 18 of them. 'Look at us; we can trump anything you want to do.' It is a shameful sabotage of our motion.

We have called on the government so many times—particularly the backbenchers, who we never hear from unless it is a government puff piece to pat itself on the back—to participate in GBD. It shows the strength of the glass drawer on the other side of the House. They could have used this opportunity to defend their actions in response to our motion. They do not have to support the motion but could have defended themselves. It shows clear arrogance in the way this government conducts its business.

To that end, pursuant to Standing Order 94, I move the following amendment to the amendment proposed by the Deputy Chief Minister: delete the word 'government' and replace it with 'the government's poor track record'.

Ms Fyles: Will that be circulated?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes, I have it written here.

Speaking to the amendment, it goes to the core of the lack of decisive leadership that we continue to see from this government. Taking responsibility and making decisions is a true test of leadership. In the Northern Territory the issues at stake are in relation to jobs and the approach that will work best to create the conditions under which many good jobs will be created for Territorians.

One thing that is clear to us, the opposition, is that the people of the Northern Territory are over this Gunner Labor government avoiding making decisions. Leaders need to lead. Common sense needs to replace political nonsense, like the performance with have seen from the Deputy Chief Minister this evening.

I have always held you in high esteem, Deputy Chief Minister. You do not normally pull stunts like this. It must have been gut-wrenching for you to do it, because it is not your natural style. I am sure the Attorney-General put you up to it. It is much more befitting of her style in this parliament. It is a disgraceful and arrogant display of flexing the muscles, using your backbench for the only thing it seems good for, that is, a vote. You never get to hear anything from them. They are gagged; they are not allowed to speak. We feel bad for them. Clearly their electorates think they have a lot to contribute, so you could afford to let them off the leash a bit. Common sense must prevail.

Today our message to the government, for the benefit of all Territorians, is very clear: this Gunner Labor government needs to stop acting like an opposition. You are in government and you have mentioned how convincingly you run government, yet you are unconvincingly using that power to stall and not make decisions in the best interests of our community.

As with our stand on alcohol, we have been saying we want to work with you, not against you, for the benefit of all Territorians. We cannot afford to play games when it comes to the future. We are all here to make a positive difference and contribution. We are here because our electorates thought we were the best representatives to bring their concerns into the parliament and make change for the future.

This government seems intent in forging ahead in its haphazard way. It needs to pay more attention to a key number of forward-looking measures and appreciate that the economic trend is not their friend. It would appear, from seven months of the Gunner Labor government, that when the going gets tough the government gets inquiring, banning or reviewing. It is time for this government to get going with decisions.

We welcome the Gunner Labor government's reconsideration of the Home Improvement Scheme, albeit a little late in the piece. They reconsidered and reinstated it, and we have welcomed that. We championed it, long and hard. The community signed petitions and called for it; business organisations called for it and the government eventually listened, and we welcome that. This very successful Country Liberals scheme will support and maintain the skilled Labor base that we need in the Territory, especially as the INPEX construction phase moves into completion. If we lose our tradies we will lose a critical aspect of our ability to develop our resources, attract investment to build major projects and ultimately grow our economy.

Being honest with Territorians means admitting there are big red flags for your government, a stalling economy, increased interstate migration and catastrophic falls in private business investment. You need to be honest with Territorians about how the Gunner Labor government will achieve its pre-election commitment of 14 000 new jobs. It was astonishing in Question Time today that the Chief Minister could not answer this question. He continued to deflect onto the previous government, which is a hallmark of this new government.

I am not sure why he would deflect to the previous government when it comes to his pre-election commitment of 14 000 new jobs. It was his promise, something he committed to delivering. We are part way through our first year, which assumedly means we are halfway through achieving 14 000 new jobs. It is not a crazy, left-of-field question, asking the Chief Minister how that is progressing.

You must have KPIs on how many new jobs you have created. It is your election commitment, promise and measure; it has absolutely nothing to do with the previous government. It is something you came up with. We took a guess; you are halfway through the first year, and half of 14 000 is 7000. Are we on track at around 7000? The answer could have been, 'We have achieved 8000, or 10 000, or zero'. But no answer from the Chief Minister was forthcoming; he just continued to roll through the ineffective schemes that you put in place in an attempt to create growth without bringing back the tradie voucher, which you ultimately had to do because the schemes you had in place before were not working.

Asking the Chief Minister that question today on 14 000 new jobs is not left-of-field, and the fact we could not get an answer is telling of where this government is at with its election commitments. I want to speak more about why this government needs to stop spinning and start listening and leading honestly and openly on the economy, as it promised Territorians it would.

We, the opposition, are seriously concerned about how this government feels it is appropriate to dip into contingency reserve funding to operate its programs. It begs a really important question; what will happen when we have a genuine need to use these emergency funds? If you dip into the emergency bucket when there is no emergency, what do you turn to in the event of an emergency? The Country Liberals built that fund up to \$252m; that is a fact.

We are concerned about the government dipping into this contingency fund. It would have been great to hear from the Deputy Chief Minister in her amendment motion about why they were doing that. Instead it was full of rhetoric about the previous government. The Leader of the Opposition has said in the media that the opposition is writing a blank cheque to the government for strategic infrastructure.

We encourage the government to take on good debt, but it is very frustrating to see that this government, instead of taking up this unprecedented level of bipartisanship and cooperation that we are offering, is not looking to increase its strategic infrastructure spend.

You are not looking to increase good debt to build a bigger, better Territory. Instead you are doing the exact opposite. Your costings indicate that your recurrent expenditure over the forward estimates will increase by 350%. That means the wages bill is going up. Recurrent expenditure is the type of spending that sends a state, territory or household broke. The opposition does not want this government to send the Territory broke. It is reckless, silly and short-sighted.

The government is increasing its recurrent expenditure and spending our rainy day emergency fund at a time when its revenue streams are falling significantly. It puts a question around how future generations of Territorians will have to deal with its legacy. Will they have to pay more? Will they have to put up with a much reduced level of service delivery? Both of those outcomes sound awful to me. All children in the Northern Territory deserve a future as big and bright as their dreams. We should be as good as any other place in Australia, if not better.

This economic naivete and lack of leadership is evident in the fracking ban. It is an easy way to pay back the left factions of your party, the Lock the Gate Alliance constituency, but banning hydraulic fracturing, a practice that has been occurring in the Territory on a commercial scale since the 1950s, significantly limits the opportunities for Territorians. True leadership and good management appreciates that bans are kneejerk reactions which kill confidence and certainty. The numbers speak for themselves.

Private business is down by 18.1% year-on-year to December, with a marked deceleration in the December quarter 2016. The rate of decrease of private business investment is accelerating. As a proud Territorian it gives me no pleasure to quote these numbers in the House this evening. That is why there was no-one happier than the opposition when the government reinstated the Home Improvement Scheme.

The Leader of the Opposition and I know that the effect of this decision could see up to \$80m of economic benefit to the Territory. That is a clever spend of taxpayers' money. We need more cleverness and ideas like that coming from this government. Leveraging public money to draw in private capital investment is clever. If we had more decisive leadership we might see some of these ideas coming forward.

A fortnight ago the Australian Bureau of Statistics demonstrated that the Country Liberals' Home Improvement Scheme is working. Private capital formation figures showed robust growth in comparison with public capital formation figures, which, by any take, were anaemic. Households, mums and dads, are doing the heavy lifting in the economy at the moment, which is not sustainable in the long run. Ultimately this government will have to come to the party and start to pick up some of the slack.

The question we keep hearing from people is, 'What happens after the Home Improvement Scheme?' What happens when all the renovations that are likely to be done are done? Where is the plan? Where is the leadership? Simply put, there seems to be no coherent economic narrative or believable plan from this government. This Gunner government is yet to show Territorians that it understands our economy.

Private investors are looking at the Territory and asking themselves, 'Why risk investing when the government can come in at the last minute and change the rules of the game?' That is exactly what we have seen with the Dan Murphy's case. The opposition, like all Territory businesses and investors, wants certainty, stability, clarity, transparency, openness and accountability. With this Dan Murphy's debacle we see a new government dying in the ditch, blocking jobs and keeping private investment out of the Territory.

Data from the ABS for housing finance and dwelling approvals for January 2017 shows an alarming decline. Housing finance is down by a trend average of one-third and dwelling approvals are down by a trend average of half. These are bad statistics. Why are they bad? One in four people in the Territory is employed directly or indirectly in construction. We know that 20% of gross state product is due to construction activity. The massive falls in these two important measures can only mean one thing for Territorians, and that is job losses. Territorians deserve a government that takes the economy seriously and has a plan for jobs.

I reflect back on our very basic question to the Chief Minister today, asking him to report back on where the government is at. No information was provided. I accept that the Chief Minister did not have the information in front of him, and that is fine. Quite often the Deputy Chief Minister will say, 'I do not have it in front of me, but I will get it back to you as soon as possible'. That is always an option for the Chief Minister. We hope that if he is listening to this debate he will opt to come up with those numbers and get them to us. We will accept that. To not answer a question and not give any details is not acceptable, and it is not what Territorians expect of our leader.

We see mismanagement and misplaced priorities which are very busily directing reviews, inquiries, reference groups, expert panels and processes, but not results. Again, we continue to extend our hand of help across the aisle. We want the Territory to do well. Now is the time for big ideas and bold actions. We need to be brave and have a big vision.

I remind the Deputy Chief Minister that governments cannot tax an economy into prosperity. A government—especially this government—cannot inquire, consult and review its way into prosperity either.

It is an exciting time to be an Australian, especially a Territorian. Our people are doing big things around the world. People are also hurting and businesses are concerned. We have a big, resilient, can-do attitude, and that will get us through tough times. But what we need, and what Territorians want and deserve, is a government that has that same positive vision, shows leadership and has an economic plan.

We have seen the results of government in the last seven months—a slowing economy, massive increases in outward migration, no climate for private investment, an \$80m cut to the infrastructure budget, no mini-budget and the list of cases of mismanagement goes on.

My colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, listed an extended sequence of random decisions made by this government that contradict its own policies, is not coherent and does not make much sense or stack up. One of the decisions he mentioned was the snap decision on the part-day public holidays. For a government that wants to attract people to the Territory, its number one flagship policy in retaining and attracting people to live and stay in the Territory was to have two part-day public holidays on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

I do not know how the government put those ideas together or how it thought it would keep people in the Territory or attract people, but the result was that businesses closed their doors. Whilst it is very aspirational and important that people are paid well, if businesses close their doors then their employees are paid nothing—that is the price paid by many Territorians in that fragile time of the year, the very slow period over the Wet Season and Christmas.

I have mentioned Dan Murphy's and the jobs that situation cost. It brings into question this alcohol review that has been announced and the fact government is dealing with alcohol policy. We have heard the Attorney-General say floor prices are out, lockouts are out, the BDR is in and the 400 square metre rule is in. Why are you bothering to conduct a review if you are dictating what you will and will not do anyway? It is a facade and I do not think anyone is buying into it.

My colleague raised something close to home in my electorate, which is moving Health employees to Palmerston. Before that decision was made, was a business impact study conducted to see the potential impacts of not moving Health officials into Palmerston, or the benefits of moving them to Palmerston had it gone through? There are serious questions regarding that decision.

Last, but not least, another issue my colleague raised was the PET scanner and cyclotron. It is amazing that we still have no confirmed information from the Minister for Health as to what is happening with that. We know that the \$15m promised by the federal government is 100% on the table. It would cover a PET scanner and a cyclotron at the Alan Walker centre. Why we have seen a delay and the sacrifice of the cyclotron just so we can move the PET scanner to RDH is beyond me. The Minister for Health has not explained that properly, and we have not gotten to the bottom of that issue. That is another issue that is lingering, waiting for some type of resolution.

In conclusion, government cannot deliver what it cannot pay for, and eventually its debts will have to be paid back. There is a huge amount of potential in the Northern Territory, and we are very eager to work on building a bigger and better Territory, now and for the future.

To the Gunner Labor government, all Territorians are waiting for you to show leadership.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek clarification; was the previous amendment to this motion passed around? I do not have it on my desk. I am a little confused about what I am talking about—some people would say that is normal for me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The first amendment was put by the Deputy Chief Minister that the Assembly acknowledges the government for making decisions in the best interests of Territorians and calls on it to continue to deliver on its promises. The second amendment that was put was by the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition that the amendment proposed by the Deputy Chief Minister deletes the word 'government' and replaces it with 'government's poor track record'.

Mr WOOD: Thank you. While I have the chance I want to welcome my sister, who is in the gallery. I do have family—for those people who think I am a lonely soul.

VISITORS

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, please extend a warm welcome to the Member for Nelson's sister in the gallery.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr WOOD: I am fully aware that the government is relatively new, but if I were to stand here and say you are doing a great job I would be pulling your leg. I am not saying people are not trying hard, but from the number of phone calls I have received recently, I know that small, medium and large businesses are struggling.

There is a gentleman in my electorate who I see leave home at about 6.30 am every day, and he is a block layer. That is a pretty hard job if you have been doing it for 25 years, as he has. It is not an easy job. At times he employs up to 20 people. He is now employing two. He said to me he has never seen the economy as bad as it is.

We can gild the lily a bit and say everything is fine, but the reality is, it is not fine. I am not saying it is easy to fix, because governments cannot fix everything just by pouring money into it. At some point you have to pay for that. There are companies that are close to folding—some already have—and that is killing our economy because those people leave. The people being put off have to look for a job, and if they cannot find one in the Northern Territory they have to move interstate. One of our big architecture firms is down to just a couple of people.

I am told one housing company has folded and the owners have moved to Queensland. I have heard that time and time again over the last month or so. When governments respond to some of the concerns raised in this House, they do not need to give us the glossy reply. They need to give us the reply that lets us know they are aware of the problems and are trying to do something. I have heard many promises about jobs, stimulus et cetera, but it does not seem to make any difference to that block layer. He does not have much work. There is something really wrong here at the moment.

I need to respond to the Minister for Education's statement. I know money is being put into schools, which is good, and I have always congratulated the federal Labor government for putting money into schools some years ago—Building the Education Revolution, I think it was called. I think that was a good move. The schools in my electorate not only benefited from some great facilities that made living, working and playing at the school great, but also gave work to local contractors.

There are some things which will certainly help, but if I said things were going well I would be telling lies. It is not going well, and the government needs to at least acknowledge that and work as hard as it can to try to turn it around. In relation to promises, I put out a press release some time ago titled 'I'm so dizzy'. I called it that because I was hearing government say one thing and the next minute it was changing its mind.

The Attorney-General has given me a response to this, but I sat with her on the week that was and asked whether lockout laws would be on the agenda. She said, 'Everything is on the agenda, more or less'. When the Chief Minister came back from holidays he made an announcement that it would not happen. You get one message and then the message is different.

I supported the tradies scheme for community groups. The government debated very firmly against the opposition's move to bring that tradies scheme back to help individual people and then changed its mind. You have this topsy-turvy process which on one hand is saying one thing and a little later is saying another thing.

Dan Murphy's is a classic example; you have made the statement that it cannot be over 400 square metres, and we are still trying to work out who decided that would be the maximum. Was it the AHA, the government or the Labor Party? The Chief Minister said that Dan Murphy's is up for negotiation and is not dead. That gives the impression that the 400 square metres is not a hard and fast rule, but, again, you get the feeling the government says one thing and a bit later says another thing.

The government also said it supports electoral reform, especially regarding political donations, yet Labor accepted donations from Mick Burns—that was in the paper and the ABC had an article on it—who is part of the alcohol industry. If you are to review political donations, which include donations from the alcohol industry, it might be better to say you will not accept anything until you have conducted that review.

I think the government is sending out messages that people find hard to understand. The other thing that we brought up today is the response to the Australian Hotels Association's questions—and I have problems with where the government is going. It said it would review liquor, but if the liquor review says that supermarkets should be allowed to sell alcohol on Sundays, and you have promised the AHA it will not happen, who wins? If you then say, 'Our review says that we should allow supermarkets to trade on Sundays', you have broken your promise with the AHA.

If the review comes back and says there should not be a limit on the size of bottle shops, and you have promised the AHA a maximum of 400 square metres, who wins? Will you go along with the review and accept its recommendations? If you do you are breaking a promise with the AHA.

I do not know how you can avoid looking at lockout laws if you are serious about reducing the effects of alcohol in our community. If the review recommends that we trial them—you have told the AHA that you will maintain existing hours. You have the review, and you have already set your policies in place. How will the review's recommendations go if they are against what you have promised the AHA?

This debate started off saying that the Assembly calls on the Territory government to start making decisions and deliver on its promises to Territorians. Then it moved on to say that the government is doing a wonderful job, and then it changed to saying the government is not doing a wonderful job.

I will not vote on this, to be fair. The government is eight months into its first term, and it should be noted that things are not good out there. I sometimes sit here thinking it must be good to be in a team; everyone pats themselves on the back and they all have a bit of a laugh. That is nice and I understand it, but it can sound like you are looking inwards instead of outwards. There are serious issues out there.

We had a population growth of—was it 200 or 800 last year? That is very low growth for the Northern Territory. A fair bit of that was natural growth, especially in Aboriginal communities. We are not a growing economy or population. There are things the Chief Minister said are on the horizon; one would be the mining plant planned for Middle Arm peninsula. That is not till 2018; it is a while before that comes into play, and not everything has been signed off. There are still environmental and financial matters that have to be signed off. It is not guaranteed.

The other project is gas. That could come up for debate in the next GBD. No doubt people have differing opinions on that, but we cannot always stick our heads in the sand. We rely so much on the GST. We can get comfortable with it—and discussions are coming up.

I listened to part of the debate around the Western Australian election. They expect the WA government to take a higher slice of the GST. Where will that higher GST payment come from? From the Northern Territory? We are always at risk because we are a small area. If enough states gang up we could be in financial difficulties in relation to financing many of the projects in the Northern Territory. That could include projects on Aboriginal land that rely solely on federal funding.

We heard the Member for Nhulunbuy talk about the Central Arnhem Road, which is not a wholly public road. The agreement on that road has never been finalised. That raises the issue of funding a road that is not technically a road. If you want to seal roads such as that—it is a very expensive project. The government has spent a lot of money on building bridges on various river crossings on that road. If federal government funds are reduced it is less likely those roads will be upgraded.

Looking at the issue of gas, we have to balance all the concerns—environmentalists, pastoralists and Aboriginal people—against the economic benefits to the Territory. Will those economic advancements benefit the boarder Northern Territory and the people living in the area?

The government has not come out with much. It is relying on saying, 'Well, we have not waited for the report to come out'. That does not stop it talking about gas. Just because there is an inquiry into it that does not mean you cannot give an opinion on it. If it can be done properly it would help the economy of the Northern Territory. That is what we need.

I will not vote on this, not because I do not want to vote but I simply think we are at a stage in this debate where the government is somewhere between its L plates and its P plates. But I would not give you much more time, because I think you will find businesses will get cranky if some of the things you have in place do not actually have an effect. If that is the case we will lose families and businesses from the Territory, and we will not see them come back.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, I, like the Member for Nelson, will not vote on this either. I do not feel a need to give the government my personal report card at this point in time.

There are a few issues I want to contribute to this debate—looking at decision-making and delivering on promises. One of those was raised in Question Time today. I asked the Minister for Territory Families about the time frame for the implementation of establishing night-time youth services in Alice Springs. That was an election commitment made by Labor, months before the election. It was spoken about in most of the media outlets—how Labor would deliver on replacing night-time youth services.

The minister was right in what she said earlier today that there were generous night-time youth services in Alice Springs for a number of years, and they were wound back by the former CLP government. One incorrect thing she stated was that they were wound down in the mini-budget. That is incorrect; the mini-budget came out in December 2012 and some cuts were made but not to the overall programs of night-time youth services in Alice Springs.

The cuts in the mini-budget—I was the Treasurer at the time, so I remember it very well. We provided non-government with CPI increases. That was the main area of reduction—anticipated revenue they did not get through the mini-budget. As the current Treasurer speaks about now, in 2012 we inherited a difficult financial situation as well. It is funny to listen to the Treasurer speak about the restrictions and difficulties of the financial situation in the Northern Territory, which Labor has inherited from the former CLP government. It is a repeat of what we said four years ago.

You could say that new governments usually do not inherit particularly good financial situations. Nothing the Treasurer has said today in regard to making difficult decisions, priorities and cutting certain services in order to prioritise others—that is just part and parcel of being in government. I am sure the new Cabinet is finding that out very quickly as it deliberates over the upcoming budget, and I am sure negotiations are well under way.

Going back to the promise of night-time youth services in Alice Springs—I find it very disappointing. I know the government will hark back to the terrible years of the CLP and how we—I was a part of that government for two-and-a-half years—did not deliver as they expected and how we made all sorts of mistakes. Blah, blah, blah. Let us talk about now; this government has promised to deliver night-time youth services. I received no clarification from the minister about what her exact plans are in this space and when they anticipate putting night-time youth services on the ground.

This government came in without a clear policy for law and order in Alice Springs. This was one of the few strategies that were identified—'This is what we will do when we come into power.' It has been six months since the government came in and I would have thought, given we are towards the end of summer, some effort would have been made to deliver on this key election commitment.

I feel very disappointed that it has not happened given the high spike in crime in Alice Springs. There is no dispute about that. Crime rates are higher than we have seen for a number of years; my guess is five or six years. I do not remember things being this bad for a long time.

As I said in Question Time, we need to wait and see what the statistics are in relation to crime in Alice Springs over the last four months to be confident in making predictions. Things seem to be particularly bad this summer.

I put part of that down to the fact we have a new government. I have said this on the public record a number of times, but I do not think this government properly planned for summer in Alice Springs. It has to be a conscious plan. It is not just about the police being organised; it is about a whole-of-government response. I do not think the new government members knew that was a part of what is expected of them.

When we came to government in 2012 I think we, and I, planned reasonably well. We put our minds to summer in Alice Springs immediately, thus we did not see the spike in crime that we have seen this year.

You learn through experience. This should be put down as a very bad experience for this government. During this summer in Alice Springs, attention was not given to all the bits and pieces that make up fighting crime in Alice Springs, including night-time youth services. Thus we have all experienced the wrath of lawlessness in the town. I feel that the government has not performed as well as it should.

I think that things have moved very slowly over the last six months. The Treasurer was talking about the first six months of the CLP government—we went like a bat out of hell. We went so quickly and we felt a great sense of urgency after 11 years of Labor. We felt that we had to act decisively and make some changes, and we did. We will forever be reminded of some of the bad decisions we made, but that is how we decided to function.

I remind the government that when Clare Martin won government in 2001, she introduced a mini-budget. She decided after many years of a CLP government that it was very important that she introduce a mini-budget—December 2001, I think it was. She paid people to advise her on how to do that. That is precisely what the CLP government did in 2012.

We employed a group of former Northern Territory Treasury officials to do a forensic analysis of where the money was within the Northern Territory coffers and to give us expert advice on how to move forward. One thing uncovered in that process was the appalling state of the Power and Water Corporation. We had to make some radical decisions to ask consumers to pay the real price of the production of electricity, water and sewerage. As a part of that process we decided to increase the tariffs significantly.

We all make mistakes. When you come into government you come in with the best of intentions. The CLP went like a bat out of hell and, in contrast—and this is what I am hearing all over the place—this government seems to be moving very slowly and sluggishly, at a snail's pace in some respects. It may not feel like that for the members of government who work night and day to move things along, but that is how it appears from the outside.

What is right is probably somewhere in the middle, not going like a bat out of hell and making crazy decisions, and not going at a snail's pace without making any decisions. But who am I to provide that advice? I made my fair share of mistakes in the two-and-a-half years I was part of the CLP Cabinet, and I am in a very lucky position now; I can sit back, reflect and use my experience to make judgments of other people. That is probably not an honourable thing to do, but when you are part of this parliament you make judgments about how others are performing, and hopefully you keep in mind that your own performance was not great at times.

This government needs to find its feet and its momentum in regard to delivering. It has delivered some things quickly, like the reprioritisation of infrastructure projects across the Northern Territory and taking almost \$27m out of infrastructure funding for Central Australia. That was done in November, just a couple of months after the government came to power. It was a quick decision that came from left field. A lot of projects have been canned through that process. A few new ones were put in place, such as the Alice Springs Women's Shelter, with \$6m, and the Alice Springs youth facility, with \$7m, but many others have been scrapped or taken off the forward plan for infrastructure projects in the Northern Territory.

As I mentioned yesterday, Maryvale Road had \$11.5m; regional town development of Ti Tree had \$4m; road upgrades to support open speed limits to Tennant Creek—obviously we do not need those anymore—had \$11m taken out of the budget; Larapinta headworks, almost \$4.5m; and the storm rectification works for the Alice Springs Hospital, another \$11m. We need that sort of investment in Alice Springs. With around 800 people losing their jobs in Darwin today, that type of spending and commitment to infrastructure across the Northern Territory is crucial.

I was pleased to hear the Treasurer talk about her commitment to ensuring the infrastructure spending by government is maintained at a high level. We have to continue to stimulate the economy for the survival of our residents and our lifestyle.

The government has placed itself between a rock and a hard place on a few issues. One of them is the issue of access to alcohol. I think the Dan Murphy's decision is plain dumb; you are talking about a shopping complex which is estimated to be around \$40m at the airport precinct. That precinct was contingent upon Dan Murphy's moving in there.

Now, more than ever, given what has happened with INPEX, those developments need to be actively encouraged by government. The government needs to think about its policy on floor space for alcohol outlets. If the BDR is as effective as you intend it to be, you have nothing to worry about. It has nothing to do with how big your shop is. If people with alcohol problems are on the BDR and cannot access alcohol then it is not a problem; they cannot buy it anyway. That argument is null and void in my mind, but for some reason you have focused on that. It could be to do with your affiliation with the AHA, as other members have alluded to over the last 24 hours.

You have sold yourselves out on the fact you have allowed yourself to succumb to pressure by the AHA, and therefore Dan Murphy's is a no-go. We need that precinct at the Alice Springs airport; we need to stimulate growth right across the board. Saying no to any type of development at this point is plain silly.

I will leave it there, and I look forward to the rest of the debate.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Araluen for her openness in reflection. She is in a unique position.

It is important to acknowledge that just a couple days ago marks four years since the previous government rolled its Chief Minister while he was in Japan. This damaged relationships and was the beginning of the chaos and dysfunction that saw 18 Cabinet reshuffles and two-and-a-half Chief Ministers, one of whom proclaimed himself to be a Chief Minister.

We are very different from the government that led the Territory for the last four years. We want a strong, evidence-based approach. My colleague outlined the difference between us and the previous government. We have detailed plans, which we have spoken about many times in this House. We are accused of not providing enough plans, but when we take the time to talk about things such as our education statement we are accused for spending too much time talking about our plans.

We do not support the amendment put forward by the opposition members. We have been working hard. My colleagues, assistant ministers and ministers, have been working very hard on their portfolios and representing their electorates. That is the wonderful thing about our team; we have such diversity from Central Australia, the beautiful heart of Australia, right up through the amazing outback and Arnhem Land, and into the Top End. I love the opportunity to get out and about in the Northern Territory, and I am looking forward to the weather becoming more bearable and the water subsiding. We have had so much rain.

The Member for Daly is flicking lure signs at me across the Chamber. Yes, we will make it down to the Daly.

This government has started strong. We are a strong government, governing for all Territorians. In regard to what we are doing for the Territory—330 first home buyers have now accessed the benefits and grants for buying existing property. That scheme is keeping Territorians here and getting them into their own homes. I congratulate the Treasurer on her work on that scheme. It is great to have schemes that help people get into new houses and to drive the economy through that, but it is equally as important to have programs in place that support first home buyers to go into existing properties.

The opposition spoke about funding—I remind the Deputy Opposition Leader that we were left with a fair bit of mess. We saw the CLP government spend federal dollars that were allocated. The CLP spent big and left programs unfunded. The Deputy Opposition Leader asked me about Correctional Services, which provides support to seniors and pensioners in our community with lawn mowing and yard maintenance—a program that was not funded by the CLP government. It is interesting that they come in here and raise these points.

We are a government for all Territorians. Not only is that represented through our members, who are from all over the Territory, making sure they listen to people's views, but we also have a Chief Minister who is governing for all. The previous Treasurer said there were lots of people to meet and that money opens his door. That is not a hallmark of this government.

It was interesting to hear the Deputy Opposition Leader outline the CLP's support for fracking. I found that interesting. We are going through a consultation process, listening to the evidence and listening to industry regarding that process. It is an issue that comes up time and time again across the community. We need to make sure we protect our assets and the jobs that currently rely on our most precious assets, including water.

We are in this current economic position because the CLP failed to plan for the post-INPEX construction phase. The CLP government simply said, 'There is nothing to see here', for a good 18 months. Then, all of a sudden, 'Oh my God, it is the biggest black hole'. They then pulled out one scheme—too little, too late. The previous government members were too busy worrying about themselves. They were not worrying about Territorians or planning for our future.

We need to make sure we stimulate the economy. We have rolled out a number of programs to stimulate the economy and get it back on track. We heard those businesses saying 2016 was the toughest they have ever had it. We see the decline in our communities.

Four years ago, this week, Terry Mills was rolled as Chief Minister by Adam Giles, when he was on a delegation to Japan. The opposition asked today, 'Why invest in the Territory?' The CLP knifed a Chief Minister while he was overseas; it will be a long journey to rebuild that trust. I acknowledge the Chief Minister taking the largest business delegation to Japan and China at the end of last year to repair some of that work.

Dan Murphy's is welcome in the Territory, but they need to abide by our licensing rules. We have a unique problem with alcohol. It is the biggest social issue facing the Northern Territory. We need to tackle the social and economic costs. It is interesting that the CLP has written that off before it has begun.

Going into the election the CLP had the same policy as the Labor Party on those things. The CLP members will not release their letter; they have backflipped out of that commitment as quickly as a gymnast. We will push on and have an evidence-based review. We clearly outlined that. There are draft terms of reference closing Monday 27 March. We will announce the terms of reference from the panel and they will go out to community consultation. This is designed to be an efficient and important review. I have outlined why we need to do this.

We have been working on this issue since we came to government. We will be tough on alcohol and tackle alcohol-related crime in our community. We are working efficiently across agencies to bring back the Banned Drinker Register. I look forward to bringing that legislation to the House. We have imposed a moratorium on new takeaway liquor licenses. With 530-odd liquor licences across the Northern Territory, that is a starting point. Licensing is one aspect this review should look at in detail and provide us with guidance.

We have strengthened legislation to ensure Sunday trading remains limited. I received support in the House when I introduced that amendment. I know it was an inadvertent error, but we had to strengthen Sunday trading. We have limited the floor space for takeaway alcohol stores. Evidence shows if you have more alcohol in the community there will be more harm.

We have introduced new guidelines for liquor licensing to allow for public hearings. We were critical of the previous government when it changed from the tribunal to the Director-General approach of licensing. We are putting policies in place that are backed by evidence. I look forward to the review; it is an important chance for community to have their say and determine the key facets of alcohol policy that complement our determination to make the Territory safer.

I question the CLP's ideas. It is great to come in here and talk, but I did not see a lot of plans regarding what they would do and where they are at. The Member for Spillett raised issues in relation to moving Health House, saying it would stay in the Darwin CBD. She questioned whether I had done an impact statement on keeping it in Palmerston. Where was in the impact statement about moving Health House? Hundreds of employees out of the Darwin CBD—we acknowledge Palmerston as a vibrant and beautiful city, a beautiful place, home to many people, but Darwin is the capital of the Northern Territory.

The CLP really dropped the ball on potentially hundreds of workers moving out of the CBD. My colleague, the Member for Port Darwin, is focused on working with the local community, traders and businesses, on making sure we have a vibrant CBD. We have had some events lately—hopefully, as the weather turns, we can support the CBD community. I am very critical of the attack on us regarding where the impact statement is. What was the rationale in the first place?

I pick up a point made by the Member for Araluen regarding alcohol policy. We need to make sure we have strong economic plans in the Territory and that we do not look at a project that is based purely on alcohol. It has a huge impact on our community and we really need to separate it out. Dan Murphy's is welcome—business is welcome in the Territory—but they need to abide by the rules that we have in play.

It is important to acknowledge the criticism that is being leveraged. We do not support the amendment to the motion from the opposition.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the first thing I want to say is in regard to the 400 square metre deal between AHA and the Labor Party. Neither I nor the Deputy Opposition Leader supports an arbitrary floor limit. I have already stated categorically that a 400 square metre floor space was never a decision of Cabinet. It has never been taken to the parliamentary wing and it is clearly not a policy published by the party. I do not have a copy of the letter you allude to. If you have one, give it to me.

In response to the amendment—I want to raise a few issues that the Treasurer had in her response. She lives in a different world to the Deputy Opposition Leader and me. I live rural, so that is an obvious difference. I listened to how the government thinks everyone outside of parliament is doing so well and how the government is doing so well; however, I live in a world where crime is so rampant that tourists overseas are being warned not to visit Alice Springs—not the world that the Chief Minister refers to as having a spike in crime in December and January.

I live in the world where 800 people have been laid off this morning and put on a plane; where 91% of small and medium businesses in the Territory believe the economy has either stalled or is going backwards; where unemployment has jumped from 3.5% to 4% in the last six months of this government; where housing finance commitments and new building approvals have both dropped 25% since the election.

I live in a world where in the three months following the Gunner Labor government coming to power, commercial break-ins are already up 70% in Darwin and 47% in Alice Springs; where home break-ins Territory-wide in the same period increased by 32%; where in the three months since the election, home break-ins have increased 81% in Darwin; where, in the same period, house break-ins are up 31% in Alice Springs; where home break-ins are up 127% in Palmerston.

I live in a world where the *NT News* published a map indicating the specific locations of dozens of break-ins in the Darwin area over the preceding weekend to help police deal with the crisis; where youths break into people's homes while they are at home; where businesses are broken into multiple times in one week; where churches are broken into; where an elderly lady was bashed in her own home; where stolen cars are used to ram raid service stations; where vigilante groups are forming; and where businesses are selling razor wire for security.

I wish the whole Territory could live in the Treasurer's world. It sounds like a lovely place, but, unfortunately, we cannot. We live in the real world, and we need a government which is not deluding itself that it is on the right track. We need a real government.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is now that the Deputy Opposition Leader's amendment to the Deputy Chief Minister's amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 3

Noes 18

Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Guyula
Mr Higgins

Ms Ah Kit
Mr Collins
Mr Costa
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mr Kirby
Ms Lawler
Mr McCarthy
Mr McConnell
Ms Manison
Ms Moss
Ms Nelson
Mr Paech
Mr Sievers
Ms Uibo
Mr Vowles
Ms Wakefield
Mrs Worden

Amendment not agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is now that the Deputy Chief Minister's amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 18

Noes 3

Ms Ah Kit
Mr Collins
Mr Costa
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mr Kirby
Ms Lawler
Mr McCarthy
Mr McConnell
Ms Manison
Ms Moss
Ms Nelson
Mr Paech
Mr Sievers
Ms Uibo
Mr Vowles
Ms Wakefield
Mrs Worden

Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Guyula
Mr Higgins

Amendment agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 18

Noes 3

Ms Ah Kit
Mr Collins
Mr Costa
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mr Kirby
Ms Lawler
Mr McCarthy
Mr McConnell
Ms Manison
Ms Moss
Ms Nelson
Mr Paech
Mr Sievers
Ms Uibo
Mr Vowles
Ms Wakefield
Mrs Worden

Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Guyula
Mr Higgins

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Crime and Drug Use across the Northern Territory

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, it is very important that this evening we have an honest and robust debate about drug use and crime across the Territory. I move that this Assembly condemns the government's lack of urgency in tackling the recent dramatic increase in crime and associated drug use,

and calls on the government to urgently implement strategies to reduce the prevalence of crime and drug use in communities across the Northern Territory.

It is clear that crime, particularly youth crime, has reached crisis levels in the Territory. The crime statistics for December have been recently released and, as expected, they are truly shocking. Year on year, commercial break-ins were up by 27% in Palmerston, 34% in Alice Springs and a staggering 71% in Darwin.

Unsurprisingly, house break-ins and property damage increased a respective 24% and 14% in Palmerston. These numbers do not accurately highlight the impact crime is having in these areas. This morning the *NT News* reported that crime is so bad in the Red Centre, tourists are being advised by their respective countries to avoid visiting Alice Springs:

Germany tells its residents that caution is needed in Alice Springs, 'especially in the dark' because of repeated armed robberies and rapes of foreign tourists.

The UK also advises its citizens to take care in the town centre of Alice Springs at night, due to harassment, robberies and attacks including sexual assault.

You know things are bad when governments are discouraging foreign nationals from visiting your country for fear of assaults like robbery, rape and harassment.

I have been contacted by more than a few people in my electorate and across the Northern Territory who are utterly fed up with crime. They have either been victims themselves, witnesses to crime or know someone who has been a victim. Many of these people are seriously contemplating moving interstate.

That sentiment is understandable when you consider the story of people like Sue Newsom, who told me she was really excited to move to the Territory and take up an exciting new job in a new business, until her home was broken into in the early hours of the morning. She is now unable to sleep and is seriously rethinking her decision to remain in the Territory. It is unfortunate that her story is not unique.

We all share the same primary goals, including securing the safety of our community, reducing crime to the minimum and ensuring all our young people have the opportunity, skills and respect necessary to guarantee the Territory is a wonderful place to live for decades to come. The decisions we make today will shape the next generation of Territorians, for better or worse, so the responsibility falls not only on the government of the day but all of us to come up with practical solutions to send a strong message to Territorians about acceptable behaviours in our society.

When we see an increase in crime, police tend to be the initial target for frustration because they are the first line of defence against criminal behaviour. Police in the Territory do an exceptional job with the resources they are provided. At the end of the day, police are limited in their ability to deal with the short- and long-term causes of crime. They can implement strategies such as hotspot policing and increasing patrols, but ultimately it falls to the government of the day to deal with the root causes of crime.

The causes of crime are systematic and episodic, short and long term, individual and collective. For anyone to view any solution to crime as a silver bullet or a fix-all is both naive and reckless. We are dealing with a complex problem that requires a certain degree of open-mindedness and willingness to adopt innovative solutions and research-based approaches. A broad-based plan with a short- and long-term focus is bound to have elements that will fail. If the overall structure of the initiative is sound, it will not rise or fall on any specific element.

In recent months the Gunner Labor government has announced some interesting and innovative initiatives aimed at reducing crime in the long term. Increasing the number of case managers for those on bail and in gaol, offender conferencing and greater spending on diversion programs administered by NGOs are all worthwhile endeavours as long as they are backed by scientifically verifiable results and monitored for waste.

These programs could be improved. Diversion and detention programs could be supplemented by additional spending on VET training, work experience and an extension of the successful Sentenced to a Job program to the youth offender sphere. Just a few weeks ago the Territory's Sentenced to a Job program was described as a model program for the rest of the world, resulting in 80% of prisoners engaging in various types of employment. The *NT News* admitted the program is well ahead of the nation

and making a real difference. There is no compelling reason why we could not or should not extend this very successful program to youth offenders.

There are details that would need to be ironed out. In a visit to Don Dale a few weeks ago I learned that the average stay of detainees is fairly short, making the planning of education and skills training a challenge. One way to solve this could be to work with the judiciary to craft creative sentences that require youth offenders to complete a specific training course of their program.

The basic framework of such a program already exists. Division 6 of the *Youth Justice Act* allows judges to sentence offenders to complete an approved project so long as the youth is suitable for participation. Once the judge determines that the youth is eligible for participation on such a project, the judge and the young person each sign a community work order, which typically requires that the youth completes the project in order to discharge his or her responsibility. Instead of purely recreational programs or traditional detention, we should be sentencing youths to a job and a future through Division 6 of the *Youth Justice Act*.

In addition to providing youths with marketable skills, we will be building in a mechanism for offenders to compensate their victims, pay fines and literally pay back their debts to society. The bonus of this is that once they have finished such a program they will be over 40% less likely to reoffend and far more likely to find long-term employment; that is according to research conducted by Dr Lois Davis.

Despite its promise, this government premised all the aspirational programs on the long term. Territorians expect action right now to elevate the sense of helplessness, vulnerability, fear and anger felt by residents of Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and other places right across the Northern Territory in regard to crime on their doorsteps.

It is vital that, like any reasonable steward, we explore whatever short-term solutions we can to break the cycle of offending immediately while we wait for long-term initiatives to pay dividends. To be clear, there are things we could do today to short-circuit the epidemic of crime that we are experiencing. The government has made some positive decisions with regard to reducing crime in the long term, but these initiatives will not have the desired effect unless the *Bail Act* is amended to end the revolving door of bail, offending and further bail.

Any person, whether youth or adult, should forfeit their right to a presumption in favour of bail once they have breached a bail order—full stop. There should be no second chances with bail because bail in itself is the second chance. Essentially, when police or a court grants an alleged offender bail they are saying, 'We recognise you are innocent until proven guilty, so we will give you the benefit of the doubt and let you go free based on certain conditions'.

Those conditions may include being required to wear an electronic monitoring bracelet, abide by a curfew and abstain from drugs or alcohol. Once a person has breached his or her bail they have forfeited the right to have the benefit of the doubt and should be required to face the consequences. They should be required to spend the rest of the time, prior to trial, on remand, or at least be required to prove to the court that further bail is warranted under extraordinary circumstances.

At the end of the day, we must ask ourselves one question: how can we expect offenders to follow the rules when we do not take those rules seriously ourselves? Continuing to grant bail to those who have breached bail or failed to appear in court sends a clear message to offenders that bail need not be taken seriously and that court orders are not considered worthy of respect.

Similarly, the presumption of bail should either be nullified or reversed for recidivist offenders seeking bail. Approximately 90% of the property offenders arrested by Strike Force Trident in 2016, both youth and adults, had either been previously arrested or convicted of property crime. Where a person has two or more convictions for a serious property crime or violent crime in the previous two years, they have proven that they have no respect for the justice system. They are not availing themselves of the opportunity they have been given to change their behaviour and, quite simply, there is no longer any basis for presumption in favour of the notion that they will comply with bail conditions or otherwise heed court orders.

The *Bail Act* currently prescribes a number of circumstances where we as a society have decided that individuals should be presumed ineligible to be at liberty of impending trial. These include where a person is charged with:

1. violating a domestic violence order under the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* after having been charged with a similar previous offence

2. threatening a person involved with a criminal investigation
3. committing a serious offence, as an adult, punishable for five years or more in prison while on bail for another serious offence
4. committing a serious offence after having been convicted of a serious violent offence within the foregoing 10 years
5. committing certain offences under the *Misuse of Drugs Act*.

Given the toll that property crime is having on our community, adding a presumption against bail for repeat property offenders seems logical. Upwards of 90% of property crimes are being committed by habitual offenders who have exhibited an utter lack of respect for the law, their community or their neighbourhood. They have terrified mothers, grandchildren, parents, teachers and even nuns. No target is sacred.

Victims and their neighbours are unable to sleep through the night or walk down the street without looking over their shoulders due to the actions of this minority of dedicated criminals. The very least we can do is show them we are serious about putting an end to repeat offending by making it harder for these repeat offenders to be granted bail.

Particularly with youth, alternatives to detention need to be established so if bail is not granted they are not necessarily sent to traditional detention. The funding of Bush Mob-type programs in the Darwin or Palmerston area may be something worth looking into so that non-serious, non-repeat offenders have a safe, secure and productive place to spend their one to three weeks on remand. This could serve a dual purpose of handling longer-term, low-risk youth offenders.

Parents need to be made to take responsibility for their children. Increasing parental responsibility is a vital part of ending youth offending in the long term. Research has shown that inadequate parenting is a strong predictor of youth crime and a significant contributing factor to property crime. Requiring parents or guardians to front court when a youth is charged with an offence would send an important signal to the community and the child that we are serious about dealing with the root causes of crime.

More closely engaging parents in the actions of their children can be extremely effective, particularly as part of a broader justice strategy that takes into account the diverse cultural, social and economic circumstances across the Territory. We must involve parents in this process in order to reach a positive outcome.

Finally, if we fail to address the core reasons for youth offending there is little hope that any solutions, long or short term, will have any real effect on offending, crime rates or youth incarceration. Chief amongst these is the epidemic of ice use among youth, which has overtaken the Territory in the past year.

At this very moment the Territory is facing a crisis in ice use, abuse and addiction. This is not an opinion; it is a fact. Treatment facilities are at capacity, with NGOs such as the Salvation Army's Sunrise Centre and Banyan House reporting that they can no longer take core referrals due to lack of space. Banyan House alone has seen a 150% increase in ice admissions in the last year. Similarly, doctors and medical practitioners have seen an extreme rise in the number of presentations relating to ice in emergency rooms and doctors' offices.

Ice does not discriminate based on age, sex or socioeconomic standing. It is hooking doctors, lawyers, pilots, tradies, and students, rich and poor. Moreover, greedy dealers, often with the support of criminal organisations, are targeting youth as young as 10 or 11 years old. In fact, corrections staff, justice workers and police are reporting that most, if not all, youth offenders are using and/or addicted to ice. Recent reports demonstrate that more ice is making its way into the Territory than ever before.

The increase in supply is a direct result of record high prices of the drug in the Territory and increasing demand. To illustrate the point, in March of last year it was reported that the street price of ice in the Territory had dropped dramatically, from around \$2000 per gram when it first hit the market to the current price of about \$1000 per gram. Lower prices have made the drug more accessible to a wider group of people than ever before, unfortunately including our kids.

Ice is highly addictive. Within seconds of use the drug significantly increases the release of dopamine, which signals the pleasure centres of the brain and leads to euphoria. However, when the drug wears off

the crash can last several days and be excruciating. This, along with increased tolerance, leads to a cycle that often leads to all-out addiction.

Ice users are physically and emotionally unstable, often becoming violent, aggressive and even psychotic. In addition, ice is closely linked to criminal behaviour. The National Ice Taskforce concluded in 2015 that criminal involvement is higher among regular ice users. Its report states:

... around half the users had committed an offence in the past month, one quarter had been arrested in the past year and one-third had been to a correctional facility at one point in their lives.

According to the report, one study found that:

... around 50 per cent of weekly methamphetamine users had committed a violent crime in the past year.

We must take decisive action now if we have any hope of minimising the impact of ice on the Territory. Drug-related crime is unique in its characteristics and manifestations, and responses need to be similarly distinctive and targeted. Treating ice-affected criminals in the same manner as other offenders is simply not practical.

In 2015 the Territory's Ice Select Committee looked at the issue of ice in the Territory and made 13 recommendations ranging from increased funding for detoxification services to an analysis of wastewater in order to accurately assess the prevalence and geographic distribution of ice across the Territory. Some of the recommendations have been adopted and others have not. In 2015 the select committee report on ice was issued. The situation has deteriorated at an alarming rate. We did not have an epidemic on our hands in 2015 or 2016, but we certainly do now.

Accordingly, a review of the recommendations made by the Ice Select Committee should be launched and any outstanding recommendations revaluated and implemented. For instance, Recommendation 8 should immediately be put into practice. As that recommendation stated:

The Committee recommends that the Government introduce mandatory drug and alcohol testing of individuals arrested ...

Not testing individuals arrested for ice and other drugs is tantamount to having our heads in the sand when it comes to understanding the scope of the problem we are facing.

Without knowing the true scope of the problem, it is unlikely that we will ever be able to come up with comprehensive solutions. Drug testing, specifically ice testing, should therefore be compulsory for all youth and adults taken into custody within the Territory, so that the causes of crime—the foremost of which seems to be ice addiction—can be appropriately dealt with by the criminal justice system.

The testing is neither complicated nor expensive. Police in various jurisdictions, including the Territory, have the capacity to test drivers on the roadside for the presence of ice in their systems with nearly instantaneous results. As the report notes:

It is a very quick system and gives you a result in approximately one minute if a drug is active in the system. That is particularly useful for when someone initially comes into custody, either juvenile or adult.

The results of drug testing of offenders should be published by the police as a part of the crime statistics and made available to all government agencies, including Health and Territory Families, in order to educate the public on the horrible impact of ice and other drugs on the community and provide public and private service providers with additional information to inform the crafting of policies that address this primary trigger of crime in the Territory.

We have some idea of the impact ice is having on crime, particularly youth and property crime. As the Ice Select Committee report stated:

While there is no drug testing regime upon admission to youth detention centres in the Northern Territory, the Department of Correctional Services noted that 90-100% of young people are self-reporting using 'ice' or exhibiting behaviours associated with 'ice' addiction.

That figure was an informal estimate back in 2015. I have met with a number of youth justice workers in recent months who agree that the 90% to 100% estimate is entirely accurate, and that is disconcerting. Despite these appalling numbers, we are not providing kids detained in Don Dale with any sort of drug addiction counselling or treatment. Essentially the nurse at Don Dale will treat the acute symptoms of withdrawal if they present, and a mental health counsellor will evaluate for impairment, but that is the end of the road as far as treatment goes.

Referral may be made for post-release treatment, but referrals are not followed up. We are missing a key opportunity to start the treatment process while youth are in detention. If the health department does not have the capacity to provide treatment to youth in detention, then NGOs such as Banyan House and the Salvation Army should be engaged to provide those services.

Youth at Don Dale may not be taking ice on a regular basis while on detention, but they are still ice users and addicts. The minute they leave custody they are back on the streets using ice and committing crime. There is no through-care model for after custody treatment counselling or assistance, and this must change. Without ongoing counselling and assistance post detention it is unlikely that any positive changes that are made in detention or a diversion-type program will be maintained after offenders are discharged from the system.

The select committee report, as well as the recent experience of police, victims, drug treatment facilities and the courts, reveals that youth offenders are not merely criminals; they are users and addicts. Appropriate responses need to be crafted in order to first treat their drug addiction and then deal with other underlying causes of offending. Without tackling the addiction issues at the outset through effective treatment, no other programs instituted by the government, whether it be additional electronic monitoring, additional detectives in selected areas or the 52 youth diversion officers, will have any meaningful impact on crime or reoffending amongst youth offenders.

The treatment of drug addiction needs to be a primary facet of our criminal justice system. The time may have come to re-introduce dedicated drug courts that are vested with primary responsibilities for dealing with drug-affected crimes and criminals. Dedicated drug courts currently operate in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. The main object of these courts is to divert illicit drug users from incarceration and into treatment programs for their addiction.

A good example is New South Wales, where referral to the drug court results in a custodial remand for detoxification and assessment, which takes up to two weeks. After the assessment the person receives a suspended sentence and is then entered into a three-phase treatment program, which can take up to 12 months. If the program is not completed successfully the participant returns to court and may be resentenced. The Youth Drug and Alcohol Court in New South Wales operates in a similar fashion but also provides integrated case management in order to tailor services to the needs of youth, such as treatment and assistance with health and education needs.

Plans for a similar tailored court solution for drug-affected youth and adults should be evaluated for adoption in the Territory. Simply allowing offenders to re-enter the community with the same addiction that compelled them to criminal behaviour in the first instance and expecting them not to reoffend within a short period of time is wishful thinking.

Additional resources also need to be made available to Police, Health, Education, Correctional Services and Territory Families, amongst others, to train staff on the effects of ice and its impact on addictive persons, and to form policy in each department specifically designed to deal with ice addiction in order to prevent crime. This includes everything from de-escalation techniques to deal with often violent ice-affected patients and offenders to developing treatment and family support approaches to prevent and break patterns of drug use, including intergeneration patterns.

Because the Ice Select Committee report is now reasonably dated, a new working group should be formed, including representatives from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission; Territory and local government, including the departments of Health, Justice, Territory Families and Police; our NGOs, including Mission Australia, Salvation Army, Banyan House and others, to evaluate the increasing prevalence of ice in our community. We must update strategies to combat the evolving pattern of ice-related crime, dependence and violence over the past few years. The goal should be a whole-of-community approach to ice and drug addiction, aimed at decreasing crime and making the Territory a safer place now and in the future.

The Territory is a wonderful place to live. We care deeply about our children and their futures. The blame for the crime crisis we have seen over the past few months does not fall on anyone individually but all of us collectively. We must work together to implement solutions that will work in the short and long term. We must provide our children, even those who act out and break the law, with the structure, guidance and help to improve their futures. Just because a child goes through a bad period, that does not mean he or she is lost forever.

With a whole-of-community approach we can change behaviours, show offenders a better path and help all Territorians feel safe and protected.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for presenting this motion to the House today. We will not support the motion before us.

As a government, we are focusing on implementing smart, focused and achievable solutions to keep Territorians safe. The chaos and dysfunction of the last four years did not help Territorians or the processes that were there to keep us safe. The recruitment of 120 extra police, which the government at the time promised, did not happen. They removed the Banned Drinker Register against the advice of experts and police, and against the on-the-ground results, allowing grog to fall back into the hands of people who do the wrong thing whilst drinking. They smash up shopfronts and abuse their families. It is unacceptable.

We have a big task ahead of us, coming into government and picking up where the previous government failed. It is something the minister for Police, my colleagues and I have been working hard on, making sure the views of our communities are represented and we are putting policies in place.

I look forward to bringing forward the Banned Drinker Register legislation in May. It is a fair policy. It is a privilege to go into a shop to buy a bottle of wine or beer. It is simple: you show your licence and get out your credit card. It is not a big burden. This makes it a fair system across the Northern Territory.

Tackling crime requires short- and long-term policies, and that is where there is stark contrast between this government and the previous government. We are investing in services for young people before they get into trouble. We will invest in them when they first get into trouble so we can then keep them out of trouble.

When you cut youth services, support services and education, you are cutting services to the most disadvantaged. We saw huge cuts to education, and that affected the wraparound support services, the assistants who would help get kids to school and staying at school. Those programs provided support to some of our most vulnerable students. When you cut services like that you do not feel the impact immediately, but over time you do.

We have a strong plan for generational change. Not only are we acting swiftly now, but we are also putting processes for the future in place. We are starting by engaging with women when they are 20 weeks pregnant, providing them with support and healthcare. Even just lifting the birth rate sets children onto a better path for their life. Working intensively with children from zero to two years of age through the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, we will provide support to parents.

It is hard work being a parent; it is hard to raise children. So many Territorians are raising young children when they are faced with other challenges, such as issues with housing. In his huge commitment to roll out programs across the NT, the minister for Housing is working very hard. Not only does proper housing have an impact, but it provides safety and a good night's sleep so you can get an education, and if you have an education you are less likely to get caught up in the justice system.

Every spear of government needs to work together. Under the umbrella of the Minister for Children we are looking at a plan to support families, rolling into Families as First Teachers, engaging families with school and the education system. That way, children will see it as the norm to go to school. They need to go to school and be engaged.

We have support through the middle and high school years, and pathways for our young people, whether they choose to do further study or VET training. We need to provide those pathways, and I am very proud of this government for having long-term plans to engage the community.

We have health issues in the Northern Territory which we will not tackle until we tackle the issue of housing. Everything is so intertwined, and I am so proud to be part of a team that has a long-term vision.

Dealing with community safety. It requires listening to and working with police, working with the community and NGOs.

We all acknowledge the cuts to NGOs under the previous government, and our plan is to invest in them, provide them with certainty and grow their sector. Every Territorian has the right to feel safe in their home and on the street. This government hears those concerns and shares them. I was born and bred here. I am part of my community and I want to come up with long-term solutions.

The Deputy Opposition Leader wants to talk about urgency. This morning we moved to pass the Bail Amendment Act on urgency to make the Territory safer now and to give police that resource. This comes from listening to the members of the community who have had a gutful of bailed offenders committing more crimes. It comes from listening to police and it comes with giving them those resources.

I think it is important to note that we acknowledge the spike in crime recently, but Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw recently noted that there has been a 20% increase in breach of bail offences by young people over the past two years. This has been increasing and the previous government did not act. We have acted.

Police have told us that expanding the use of electronic monitoring bracelets would help combat this trend. They told us expanding the use of electronic monitoring bracelets would help better protect businesses and homes. We have listened and acted. Expanding the use of electronic monitoring bracelets will deliver practical results on several levels. At a policing level our officers will be able to monitor more young offenders on bail more efficiently. I went into detail this morning about how that will help police. Police will be alerted if the bracelet strap is tampered with, if the strap is absent from a designated zone at the start of a curfew, if the strap leaves a designated zone during a curfew and if the strap enters an exclusion zone.

These alerts can be actioned and used in court if necessary. There is a whole process behind it. Instead of doorknocking to find out if curfew and bail conditions are being met, police will be notified electronically, freeing up resources to be out on the beat. At an individual level the bracelets will ease peer group pressure by giving people on bail an out. They know they are being tracked. Individuals will know they cannot get away with reoffending, and this will encourage compliance with bail conditions.

We need to see a decrease in crime. What is happening in our community now is not acceptable. We acknowledge that our youth justice system is broken and that government needs to fix it. We are on that task. The Minister for Territory Families has the portfolios that are often seen as orphans of government—child protection and youth justice. Children who have been in contact with the child protection system are far more likely to come into contact with the youth justice system. We know the data and we need to put the programs in place. We are doing that through the \$18.2m targeting youth justice.

Fifty-two youth officers are working on a strong, evidence-based approach. It is the most comprehensive overall plan for youth justice in the Territory's history. That \$18.2m will deliver 52 youth diversion workers in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs to case manage young people. These workers will provide early intervention and support, and will coordinate after-hours activities, which is exactly what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has spoken about. They will provide information to courts and police on improved sentencing and diversions decisions.

For the first time in the Territory's history young offenders on bail will have individualised support and a comprehensive range of programs to stop them reoffending and help them meet their bail conditions. These young people need to understand they have done the wrong thing, but they need to be supported in order to understand the consequences of their behaviour so we can set them on a path to success and not into a repeating cycle of crime and antisocial behaviour.

We believe that victims of crime deserve a stronger voice in the justice system. We are expanding victim conferencing so young offenders will see and feel the impacts of their crime. They have to understand that they senseless acts have a huge impact on a community or an individual; whether it is breaking into a business or someone's home, they have to understand the impacts of their behaviour.

Part of this package will also expand diversion programs, including wilderness and boot camps, focusing on drug and alcohol rehabilitation and road safety, which is important. This morning the Minister for Territory Families welcomed 25 new recruits who are undergoing their six weeks of specialised training as youth justice officers in Don Dale and Alice Springs Youth Detention Centres. These officers will provide life skills training, education and personal development, because youth detention must be about rehabilitation,

guidance and supervision, not about violence and restraint chairs. We should never see the images we saw last year on *Four Corners*. I think as an Assembly we acknowledge that.

It must be about turning kids' lives around, not promoting them into further descent and into unemployment, crime and behaviour that is not accepted by our community. I note that this intake includes 11 female recruits and 12 Indigenous recruits. It is important to have diversity amongst these recruits so they can work with these young people. We are honouring the previous government's broken commitment of 120 extra police officers on the front line. Throughout 2017 the police college will be working to capacity, recruiting constables, auxiliaries and Aboriginal Community Police Officers.

The government's commitment to give police more certainty will enable them to assign 18 experienced officers to focus on youth crime. There will be a new squad of constables starting in May. Eighteen specialised officers, including six detectives, will form Task Force Sonoma, which will work to prevent crime through diversion and early intervention programs and strategies.

Many of our 120 extra police will be based at the new Palmerston police station, which we will build, and which will cater for up to 200 police for the next 30 years. The Members for Brennan and Drysdale and the Minister for Education have been lobbying hard on this. We fast-tracked \$15m for stage one and a public tender date is planned for the middle of the year.

The current crime statistics are not good enough. In 2015 there were 2846 victims of assault per 100 000 residents in the Territory, compared to a national average of 811. That is a huge difference between other states and the Territory. Sixty per cent of those assaults were attributed to family violence. The Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Video and Domestic Violence Evidence) Bill, which we have debated and passed this week, will enable police to use body-worn video to record police observations in domestic violence cases and other situations that are admissible in court. That is another significant piece of legislation aimed at putting victims first and protecting them. It is about discouraging offending, collecting good evidence when offending occurs and prosecuting successfully.

Yesterday the government announced the Indigenous Family Violence Policing Conference, which is the first of its kind, to be hosted in Alice Springs in June. This two-day conference will draw on the expertise of nationally and internationally renowned speakers, including the 2017 NT Australian of the Year, Andrea Mason; Senator Michaelia Cash; Chief Justice Michael Grant; Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw; Charlie King, the founder of the No More campaign; and Kevin Sheedy. I think we all need to acknowledge Charlie's ongoing efforts. A huge cohort of people is coming together so we can identify what we can do to stop family violence in our community.

While I am talking about Alice Springs, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that we need to get behind the Central Australian tourism community. My colleague, the Minister for Tourism and Culture, is working hard to make sure we drive tourism in Central Australia and the Northern Territory. Alice Springs is a vibrant, beautiful, must-see destination. It varies year round; in the cooler months it has gorgeous weather, and in the Wet Season it is amazing—the greenery and the colours. You can watch the ranges at sunset; it is simply spectacular.

People need to be aware of their personal safety and local conditions, but we really need to get behind Central Australia. I note the comments by Mayor Damien Ryan in the paper this morning. He believes the town remains a very safe place to visit. Every country and area has travel warnings. If you look at some of the travel advice for overseas at the moment—people still travel. It is important that we, as a parliament, get behind our Central Australian tourism operators, who took out two gold awards recently in the Australian Tourism Awards.

Alcohol is a factor in much of the Territory's crime and antisocial behaviour. Sadly, it is a factor in most of the Territory's domestic violence incidents reported to police. That is why we are introducing measures to keep alcohol away from those who abuse it.

We have already capped takeaway liquor licences because one takeaway liquor outlet for every 353 adult Territorians is enough; we have enough takeaway alcohol. We need to put in place measures that protect our community. We will introduce legislation—by September the Banned Drinker Register will be back in all takeaway outlets across the Northern Territory. Last week I was pleased to release the draft terms of reference, and I look forward to progressing those and having an evidence-based review.

The opposition poked fun at us, but this is an opportunity for us to hear from industry and health experts. When you speak to doctors and health professionals who deal with the issue of alcohol—whether it is at

the acute end in ED because people are in car accidents, or because of alcohol-related violence or the health effects of alcohol consumption. We need to have this conversation.

We have made our policies clear, but we are happy to have the discussion because we want to do the right thing. We will have a broad discussion, look at different measures and come up with a strong framework for the Northern Territory's future. I know this line of questioning will continue from those opposite, but I am proud to be part of a team that supports me and lets us have this conversation.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the important issue of drug use in the Northern Territory and the role it plays in crime. These life-destroying, community-destroying, soul-destroying drugs, particularly ice, are a serious challenge across Australia. The Northern Territory is not immune, and that is why we will continue the work that was begun under the previous government by implementing the Northern Territory ice action plan to ensure rehabilitation services are provided across the Territory.

The government is investing in a range of treatment for withdrawal and support for users of a range of substances, including ice. There is a mix of residential rehabilitation outpatient and outreach services. It is important we have services tailored for individuals. Withdrawal and community care guidelines have been established to assist community and private practitioners in managing dependencies.

In schools, education resources are being developed to assist school staff and parents to talk about these issues and how to deal with them, increasing community understanding about the effects of drug use, targeting those most at risk and improving access to services. The Department of Education is working on a whole system approach to positive behaviour and wellbeing.

Additional funding has been allocated nationally by the Australian Government in response to the National Ice Taskforce report. The NT Primary Health Network has been provided with the funding to commission alcohol and other drugs services to build capacity for community treatment services for ice and other drugs. For the Territory the funding is close to \$10m over three years. Allocations to various service providers will be announced soon.

The Territory government is making sure there is \$240 000 under the alcohol and other drugs grants program. The grants are available for programs to help vulnerable young people avoid getting into a life cycle of drug abuse. We know this often leads to a lifestyle of poverty and crime. Applications close on 31 March for that program.

The opposition likes to stand in here and pretend the last four years of chaos, broken promises and misguided policies never happened, but it did. We are trying to get on with the job of rebuilding the Territory. We want to build up non-government organisations and put certainty back into those services. You cannot cut what you cut out of NGOs and education and not see the effects on young people. We are committed to that.

We are putting in place urgent, long-term solutions for the Northern Territory. The government will not support the motion tonight.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to say a few things on a more positive note. Even though we argue about different things, GBD is an opportunity to put forward some ideas that you hope the government will consider. I intend to do that tonight.

We need other ways of dealing with people in relation to reducing crime—young and old. Things like Loves Creek boot camp and BushMob are good examples, but we need more than that. One of the bodies our government should be looking at is a group called Choice. It is based in Cairns and has been going since 1997. I will read out a bit about it so you have an understanding of what the government should be looking at when developing programs for young people, especially those who have been offending.

This body covers more than just one aspect of rehabilitation. It covers a range of issues that makes it a very successful program. It says on the website:

Since inception in 1997, various strategies have been trialled to increase the exposure of Choice, our aims and constitutional objectives.

It is obviously good at promoting itself, and that is being done through various Cairns-based media. It is trying to promote what it actually does. The website also says:

Choice develops practical activities (from funded programs and projects) that enrich the lives of the people that participate on them, whilst building strength within the communities we serve.

The activities are created to primarily support the following:

- 1. Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are receptive to anti-social behaviours, crime and criminal activity*
- 2. Early school leavers and young people disengaged from mainstream education with emphasis on re-engaging in education or pursuing training and employment*
- 3. Prime age people, parents and carers, people with physical and hidden disabilities and mature age citizens to achieve goals in education, learning, training, employment, health and wellbeing*
- 4. Unemployed, long term unemployed and under employed people and support them to enter or re-enter the employment marketplace.*

The activities are designed to increase self-esteem, confidence, respect for self/others and overall life skills. Through strategies proven successful since 1997, we encourage the concept of healthy choice making, positive thinking and responsible behaviour, as such increasing the enjoyment from life for the individual.

We create user friendly, non-threatening learning environments that encourage and support individuals to step beyond their comfort zones and strive to achieve their goals and dreams. This includes positive progression in health, education, learning, training, employment, sport, recreation, adventure, travel, and relationships, spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing.

What I like about this group is its objectives. If we are to develop something different, perhaps for our young people, these might be the objectives we should be looking at.

The website also states:

- Provide a range of quality services for disadvantaged people in Australia aimed at improving self-esteem, self-awareness, community integration and self- sustainability in life*
- Establish a variety of small businesses and other employment options that will enable employees and disadvantaged people to reach their maximum skill level in an open workplace environment*
- Plan, co-ordinate and execute various social justice programs targeted at disadvantaged people and their ability to assimilate and achieve healthy participation in society*

I think that is a wonderful set of objectives. It is not just a one-dimensional approach; it is a holistic approach. I know that word is used often in this place, but these objectives are what we should be aiming at with disadvantaged people, especially young people, but not necessarily just young people.

What attracted me to this group is that it does not only talk about helping kids; it is actually helping them to get away from problems they have with themselves and keeping them away from crime by getting them into employment.

I have seen documentaries where young people who have gotten in trouble have then gotten a job, and that job has given them some self-esteem. From then on they never got into trouble again. Employment is a really big key in reducing crime. It would be good if we could have more people employed so people do not get into crime in the first place—also, having social justice programs so people know how to live in society. They are not just workers; they participate in their community. I presume the government is looking at options for its strategy to help juveniles. Even though I do not have all the information here—I would not want to read it all tonight—that is one of the options the government should be looking at.

The Choice group sounds good—it has been operating since 1997—and I understand, from reading this, it has had a lot of success throughout Queensland. There are an enormous number of programs which have had a lot of success in Queensland, especially with Aboriginal people. Sometimes you have to adapt these things to suit the issue you are talking about, but I think that is one area we could look at.

This has been mentioned a number of times over the years. Labor was looking at this—I am not sure what happened when they were defeated in the election and they never followed this up. The Family Responsibilities Commission operates in five communities in Queensland, mainly in North Queensland. It has been operating for a number of years and was set up by the Anna Bligh government. I will quote from what she said in parliament:

This is a groundbreaking trial, unique in the world. It will be a significant departure from the policies that have been tried in the past. The bill establishes the Family Responsibilities Commission as the driving force in changing local social norms and behaviour. It will directly link improved care for children to welfare and other government payments.

I will read from the FRC's website. The FRC is:

... a statutory body in partnership with the State and Australian Governments and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, as part of Welfare Reform. The FRC has been conceived by Aboriginal Australians and is driven by community members.

So what does the FRC do in a community? According to the website, the FRC wants to:

... ensure that all welfare members are behaving responsibly in community, and are supportive of their families, neighbours and the general community. We are in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge to assist them in restoring their culture and Indigenous authority.

To do this, we assist the community to achieve the following:

- *children attend school every day so they can receive a good education to ensure a good future for them and the community;*
- *kids are healthy, thriving and cared for;*
- *drug, alcohol and violence is not affecting you, your family, or the community;*
- *homes are being cared for.*

That is the aim. What makes this special is that it is run by the community. The community, with the help of the commissioner, sets any restrictions on welfare that someone who goes outside those achievements—if their children are absent for three days or more, if they are convicted of a domestic violence offence or if they are wrecking their house, they will have to go before one of the commission's conferences with community members.

According to the website:

Conferences are held to encourage clients, individuals and families to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour whilst promoting the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in the community..

The community is supportive of all these things. There is a requirement to do certain things. I left one out—child safety and welfare. If there are allegations of harm or risk to a child, the person is brought before the commission. The Aboriginal people in that community, plus a commissioner, are able to determine whether there have been breaches and can, through an agreement with Centrelink, put restrictions on the payment of welfare and how it is spent. The person involved comes before the commission, and because it is run by the community it has a lot more chance of being successful.

It has been operating for a number of years. I think the government should look at it. It is another way of trying to reduce criminal behaviour by giving power to the people in that community. It is a Queensland model; if you applied it to the Northern Territory you would have to make some changes to it.

I have a feeling that Malarndirri McCarthy, when she was the minister, looked at the Family Responsibilities Commission, but either the government had not made up its mind to go ahead with it or the election came up and it did not come up for debate after that.

This issue touches on a lot of other issues, like drugs and crime, and there are many issues with drugs. Honestly, the biggest drug is alcohol. You might talk about ice, which is pretty bad—some of us were on the ice committee and visited various places—but alcohol is still number one.

Whilst I welcome the minister's review of alcohol, I have a problem with hearing promises made—and a review, in practice, should be open. I think the AHA should be told that those promises were simply promises of the time, and that what comes out of this review might change the government's mind. I do not have a problem with that, but I am not hearing that discussion yet.

Another thing that needs more money, which was raised today by the Member for Araluen—I have been to the Gap many times. I used to go to Alice Springs and look at the three main youth facilities. The Gap was the poorest, if I can call it that. The issue of funding was raised, and it is sad that it still gets raised. Governments should put more money into youth centres.

If kids are wandering the street and know there is a place where they can get some tucker and play some table tennis—I am not saying it should be open until all hours of the night, but those places will attract them and they will be safe. There is a fair chance someone will be able to find out who those kids belong to. We need to put more effort into that.

I came from a background of independent schools, which put so much emphasis into helping youth through the sorts of facilities the YMCA has. They had trampolines, table tennis, indoor soccer and a range of other things. They also had a bus. It shut at 8 pm—it had music and a cafe. We have not expanded those facilities in years.

The one at Casuarina, the SHAK, is tiny. You would hardly know it was there. It does not really encourage you to go there. The YMCA has been on the second floor in Palmerston for donkey's ages, but it cannot expand from that position.

If we are looking at ways to help young people, sport and recreation—not necessarily organised sport, but facilities that enable kids to come in with their friends, organise their own games and have some control over what they do, under supervision—is where we should be spending money. Kids in Palmerston are running amok. I am not sure what time the YMCA closes, but maybe it is in the wrong place. Palmerston is spread out a lot more than the CBD. Whether there needs to be a focus on the suburbs, I am not sure.

Ms Lawler: There was one in Gray, but it shut down after the cuts by the CLP.

Mr WOOD: Yes. You need a bus run, but you need it where there are people rather than away from where people are.

I am happy for this issue to be discussed tonight. I will not necessarily vote on it, but it is an opportunity to raise issues that we hope the government will look at.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, like all members, I was concerned about the safety and sense of security amongst the people in my electorate of Drysdale, as well as the broader community of the Northern Territory.

No doubt many Territorians are worried about crime and drug use, particularly youth crime. I share those concerns. It is something I hear about as I move around my electorate and when people come to see me. I recently attended two community meetings in Driver, where I heard about the ways in which crime is making life difficult for many people in Palmerston. My colleagues, the Minister for Territory Families and the Member for Brennan, attended those meetings and heard from Palmerston residents who spoke passionately about concerns for their property, which they have worked so hard for and which is their sense of security.

We heard people express genuine frustration about cars being stolen, along with houses and business premises being broken into. My colleagues and I heard that loudly and clearly, and we empathise with the victims of crime and those who are concerned for their safety and the safety of their property.

People told us they want something done quickly. As Education minister I have also seen the pointless vandalism which has been inflicted upon a number of Territory schools. I was speaking to the Principal of Moulden Park Primary School, Wendy, the morning after they had experienced an overnight break-in. We have no intention of hiding from this problem. We will face it, and we are dealing with it. Everyone agrees that Territorians have a right to feel safe and confident that their homes and businesses are secure.

The government understands the situation. We have heard clearly what the people of Palmerston, Darwin and Alice Springs are saying. We have family and friends who have experienced these things and we are responding.

Two clear messages we heard at the community meetings were that victims should always be put first, and that there is a real need to toughen up on bail. I totally agree, as does the whole Gunner Labor government. The Member for Brennan and the Minister for Territory Families were at those meetings and heard loud and clear—and we know that victims need to be put first, and bail conditions need to be looked at.

This is why last month the government unveiled an \$18m anti-crime package that will put victims first and has a strong focus on bail and accountability. Funding in the package will provide for 52 qualified youth diversion officers, 25 of whom will be based in Darwin and Palmerston.

Those officers are already in training. We have seen the photos on Facebook and heard the announcements this morning. They will soon be working to better enforce bail conditions, support the courts to improve sentencing and diversion decisions, and provide early intervention and case management.

The package also provides an expansion of victim-offender conferencing. This gives a voice to victims and forces the perpetrators to hear firsthand about the full impact of their crimes. That is voluntary; they do not have to do that, but people have said—the Member for Brennan and I have heard this—sometimes the victims want the offenders to understand the impacts of what they have done.

There is also money for evidence-based diversion initiatives, including boot camps and wilderness programs. This is something a number of people in the community have called for. In a further effort to stop young criminals, this government is about to pass a law to give police the power to order the fitting of electronic tracking devices, which previously only courts could do. Police have asked for this power because they say the expanded use of electronic monitoring will be a powerful tool in their fight against crime and reoffending.

At the most recent public meeting in Driver, Police Commander Brent Warren—and I thank the police for attending those meetings—spoke about the effectiveness of electronic monitoring. He said having around-the-clock electronic monitoring will enable any breach of bail, such as leaving the area they are restricted to or going to places they are not supposed to be, to be detected at the monitoring centre. This will allow police to act immediately.

He also said that police would be alerted if someone tampered with the ankle bracelet. Commander Warren said police would use the evidence from electronic bracelets to support prosecutions, and they are what he described as a 'powerful tool for police'. That is a pretty good endorsement for the expansion of electronic monitoring.

The bill will give police the power to fit or remove electronic monitoring devices to those awaiting court appearances. This power was previously vested only in corrections officers. Police advise that these devices will reduce the prospect of reoffending between the time someone is arrested and the time they appear in court. Before being fitted with electronic monitoring devices, people will be assessed for suitability to enter into an agreement to have a device fitted. This is likely to include young offenders, the very group that we, as a community, need to prevent from going off the rails and finding their way into a criminal environment.

This is important because we need to ensure young people do not slip between the cracks and get lost in the juvenile justice system. As the Member for Spillett said, just because they have offended once—we need to ensure there is not a second or third time, or a long-term commitment to the judicial system. We need to get them out of there.

I was pleased to hear that police intend to prioritise phasing in the use of electronic bracelets in Palmerston and Alice Springs as part of that process. They are the areas of greatest concern to the community.

These initiatives are in addition to the Labor government's investment into 120 extra police. The first of those new officers are currently being trained at the police college in Berrimah, which will be working flat out over the next three years to turn out squads of new police officers.

Police have shown their confidence in our announcement by allocating 18 experienced officers to immediately focus their efforts on youth crime. Police can do that because they know the first squad of new recruits will hit the streets in May. The police college will continue to regularly train squads of new officers over the next three-and-a-half years to achieve our commitment.

There will be a new police station in Palmerston. Work on the design of the new station is expected to start soon. We have also brought forward our election commitment for a new police station in Katherine, which is good news for the people there.

Territorians have had to put up with a lot of rhetoric from the CLP about being tough on crime, but the fact remains that the Territory is the only jurisdiction in Australia without a proper form of bail accountability. Our commitment to 52 youth diversion officers will address this long-standing weakness within the system. A key part of that strategy has to relate to prevention. The police say it is the preferred approach, and we heard about it at the meetings in Palmerston.

Everyone in this House appreciates the significant role alcohol plays in all forms of crime. That is why we are bringing back the Banned Drinker Register, which previously proved so successful in getting problem drunks off our streets. The Northern Territory Police Association has long endorsed the BDR as a highly-effective weapon when it comes to tackling problem drunks who have had a big impact on the lives of Territorians.

Support for the BDR from an organisation like the Police Association speaks volumes about its effectiveness at cutting off access to grog for problem drinkers. Police are important to the prevention of crime through building positive relationships with the community. As someone who has been working in education and in schools for many years, I know that police are working with our community by providing proactive policing in our primary and secondary schools, urban and regional centres, and remote communities across the Territory.

In many communities officers are focused on establishing positive relationships with students, parents and school staff to promote supportive learning environments and safer school communities. Because of their close relationships with schools and students, they are able to identify youth at risk and work with schools and families to ensure appropriate programs and services are in place to assist these students.

Prevention is always the best action. This is especially so for young people and drug use. We know the statistics and we are concerned about the use of ice in younger kids. We cannot tackle crime without addressing the prevalence of drug use by young people and the long-term impact it has on their ability to participate in society.

Chronic drug use, particularly methamphetamine, leads to reduced physical abilities and impaired verbal learning. Studies in chronic methamphetamine abuse reveal severe structural and functional changes in the brain associated with emotion and memory, with clear consequences on learning capacity. We do not want our young people on ice. It has long-term consequences on their ability to get a job or go on to further study and vocational education.

This government knows the values of ensuring services are available to allow people to take back control of their lives and end the cycle of drug and alcohol abuse and the lasting impact it has on the individual, their family and the wider community.

We have a real plan for tackling crime. In addition to the short- and medium-term actions outlined, we are looking at addressing these issues in the long-term. How do we break the cycle of disadvantage and drug and alcohol abuse? Addressing community safety is more than law and order and having more police. It is about working with young people and their families in our society, particularly those who are most vulnerable, to prevent them from entering a life of crime.

The education system has an obvious role to play and it must start at the beginning of a child's life. We have to provide the framework to allow a child the best possible start in life. International studies have consistently shown that this is one way to steer an individual away from crime as they get older. For education to make a real difference in the lives of Territorians, children and young people need to regularly attend school. We need to see them attending school 90% of the time, or at least over 60%. That message needs to get to all parents. We need families to engage in that.

School staff, teachers, assistant teachers and principals across the Territory are doing everything in their power to maximise school attendance. There are many factors impacting on student attendance every day,

which is why we need a community approach. A great thing about this government is the subcommittee of Cabinet for young people, because things like housing, mental health and long-term unemployment all impact on attendance. We need to all be at the table to address the issue of attendance, which then has a long-term impact on the social and economic benefits to the Territory.

We need quality programs that engage students in schooling. There are services aimed at supporting young people who are vulnerable to disengagement from schooling or have disengaged over a period of time. We will not repeat the CLP's mistakes and axe programs because they were created by our political opponents. If programs work we will retain them.

In 2016 there were more than 1600 students involved in target engagement programs in 14 urban, regional and remote schools across the Territory. The Clontarf Foundation for boys, which is coming up to 10 years old, and the Stars Foundation and Role Models and Leaders Australia program for girls provide important mentoring and support to attract and maintain engagement for students until Year 12.

Serena Dalton, who organises community events, works very closely with the Stars and Clontarf programs at Palmerston Senior College, and at night she often goes around the streets, picking up kids and encouraging them to get off the streets and go home. She says you do not see the kids who wear Clontarf or Stars T-shirts on the street at night, which is a ringing endorsement of those programs.

Last year I visited the Malak Re-engagement Centre. The question is, how do we then expand those services to Palmerston and further? That is something that is happening now. There are 80 students enrolled at the Malak Re-engagement Centre, with the centre receiving, on average, five referrals a week. The centre provides a realistic, flexible schooling option that sets up young people with complex needs to succeed.

The centre aims to build the confidence of students, enhance their skills and provide them with positive experiences and relationships with the broader community. The centre offers courses in middle years with a focus on literacy and numeracy, and social and emotional learning. The senior years offer work-related courses—the Member for Nelson spoke about that—including certificate courses and the prospect of students gaining a Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training. Additionally, there are life skill programs and opportunities to interact with positive adult role models.

Like all our planned improvements to broaden the education system, the new Palmerston flexible learning service will be part of this government's coordinated investment in early intervention, which engages young people in education and pathways to employment.

We all need to continue working to prevent children from becoming disengaged from the education system. We need the whole community to understand the importance of attending school every day. Strong patterns of attendance and positive experiences at school need to start right from the early years of a child's life. Research shows that a strong focus on early childhood education has long-term benefits for the individual and our society.

Good outcomes in early childhood help reduce mental health problems in later life, poor social and emotional outcomes and welfare dependency. This government understands the importance of investing in the early development of children and has demonstrated this by appointing a Minister for Children. I will continue to work with the Minister for Children and my colleagues at the children's subcommittee of Cabinet to develop a holistic early childhood development strategic plan that will focus on improving the outcomes of young children. That is a long-term plan, and it will be 10, 12 or 15 years before we see the impacts of those policies.

Education plays an important role in our response to developing a better and safer Territory. However, as with so many sectors in the Territory, education requires long-term generational changes, which means supporting families and their children from birth. Many families need a range of supports to provide the best possible start in life for their children. This requires initiatives that are evidence based and well coordinated, and which provide the support that children and their families need.

Studies have consistently confirmed the value of supporting families and improving early childhood outcomes as a way to address social disadvantage and associated crime. As Minister for Education I am focused on driving improvements in educational outcomes for all Territorians. I really mean that; it is about all Territorians, not just the low-hanging fruit, the schools we know can do well.

It is about working with families and communities to achieve our goals, because when you are well educated you have greater choices in your future and you are better-equipped to positively engage in the community. To do this, government needs to invest, and that is why I am pleased an additional \$124m will be invested in education to directly support students and schools over the next four years.

When I hear about Rosebery Middle School putting funding into an English as a Second Language teacher, I know that the kids who have come in from the bush with little English, where English is a second or third language for them, will be supported in their schooling there. If you are an English as a Second Language learner and you come to Rosebery, you now have additional support—support which was cut by the CLP.

You hear about them also investing in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program, a great program that produces leaders and gets kids involved in community service activities. Last year I was at the graduation of the Duke of Edinburgh program, and there were about 120 kids who had participated. That is what you want to see, kids doing community service activities so they grow up to be great citizens.

Putting additional money into a school has an impact on kids. When you talk about improving outcomes and say that more money does not get better outcomes—we know that it does if you target the money to where it is needed most. Those schools have the decision-making power to target it to programs that will benefit their students.

Hopefully Rosebery can continue to support disengaged kids in Palmerston. While there are no silver bullets in education, we will work to have outstanding teachers in every classroom, quality education leaders in every one of our schools and strong relationships with families and communities.

This government is committed to providing solutions not only for right now, but into the future. A long-term commitment to youth engagement programs will provide community safety and better outcomes for young people.

This government has listened to people and will work hard to address the complex issues related to crime and the cycle of recidivism. We have announced plans to reform the youth justice and corrections system to ensure we break the cycle of reoffending with new rehabilitation and diversion programs.

We are implementing strategies such as the Banned Drinker Register to address the prevalence of alcohol and drug use. We can talk about the Banned Drinker Register, but the impact on families and children is this: if your parents are spending money on grog and not using that money to buy food for kids, support kids playing sport, buy clothes and food—they are the impacts of alcohol. It is not just seeing drunks on the streets or having itinerants sleeping outside shop windows.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I request an extension of time for the member, pursuant to Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.

Ms LAWLER: The Banned Drinker Register is about addressing the prevalence of alcohol, but we need to look at the flow-on impacts to families. We are delivering a much-needed police station in Palmerston, increasing police numbers, engaging students in the school system and keeping them in school by offering more flexible schooling options and pathways.

We are supporting children, families and communities to give NT children the best possible start to life and break the cycle of disadvantage. We are delivering a range of evidence-based long-, medium- and short-term strategies to reduce the prevalence of crime, and drug and alcohol abuse. We are investing in children and families to break the cycle, and that is why I support the amended motion.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister for her acknowledgement of something I did. I am not too sure what it was, but I take her thanks as a credit.

I support this motion. I feel disappointed, though. Earlier tonight I pointed out the lack of input we get from some of the backbenchers during this process. I think it is a perfect time for them to stand up and say what they think. They are elected into this parliament to represent your constituents. That is what they need to do. I am disappointed they are not allowed to speak during these debates. It is good to represent your constituents.

When the government talks about people who want to listen and evaluate things—on this side of the House, yes, there are only two CLP members, but I often stood up for my constituents in General Business, on the streets, wherever I could. I will continue to do so into the future. I think your constituents must be feeling very disappointed at this point in time.

I will reiterate some of the comments I made earlier. Commercial break-ins have increased by 70% in Darwin. They are up 40% in Alice Springs for businesses, and general break-ins are up 32%. They are up 127% in Palmerston. If someone asks the question, 'Where is the Northern Territory at in terms of crime?'—those are the statistics. Over the past few months it has gone from being a personal issue to a community issue, and to a Territory-wide issue. Because of the segment on Channel Nine's *A Current Affair* program last night, it is now a national issue.

It does not stop there. Thanks to the incredible reach of the World Wide Web it has gone global. That is what it has come to. That is what happens when governments sit on their hands and do nothing.

Yesterday in Question Time the Chief Minister dismissed the crime wave as:

... a spate of crime in December and January.

I present the Chief Minister with a challenge. To the many Territorians who were affected by crime in February and March, I challenge you to dismiss the situation as 'a spate of crime in December and January'; to the businesses that have been broken into, robbed or trashed over the past few months, I challenge you to dismiss it as 'a spate of crime in December and January'.

These are the issues the Chief Minister wants to push under the carpet. Our parliamentary colleagues in here today who have not been willing to speak up—I think that is an absolute disgrace.

Last night's *A Current Affair* shone a light for the entire nation on the problems Territorians have been living with for months now. This was the Gunner Labor government's *Four Corners*—the moment the enormous issue the Chief Minister has tried to dismiss as 'a spate of crime in December and January', which he has tried to sweep under the carpet, was broadcast to the entire nation. And I was not happy about it.

People need to realise that this is a problem now; it is not a problem that can only be addressed in the future. We have been transparent in offering our assistance and support to the government in reducing crime. We have supported your initiatives and congratulated you, and we have said, 'Look, you are doing something'.

Here again today, how disappointed was I—there must be many Territorians thinking the second motion today was urgency for a bill that should have been brought in last sittings or yesterday, but the urgency was today. We did not get into it. We are not discussing it, yet it was brought in on urgency.

During the first session of this parliament we moved a motion seeking support from the government to get bipartisan, whole-of-government support for alcohol policy, to work together to implement measures that we believed would help to bring down crime. We did not get that support. That was a show of our solidarity which should have been supported by all the elected members representing Territorians. How disappointed I was!

The first olive branch was offered out to try to improve this parliament, how it works and how it represents the people, and it was thrown out. We were then the ones accused of not supporting Territorians and not worrying about their health. How wrong are you people. How hypocritical! That is not the way to tackle alcohol-related crime.

The government already said it will scrap the temporary beat locations. I have supported the Banned Drinker Register for some period, but I also said there are a lot of other measures that are really good. Why would you scrap something that clearly works? I have said that mandatory rehabilitation needs to stay—let us get some statistics.

When the BDR was scrapped the then opposition criticised the fact it was not there long enough. They did not get statistics. Where are the statistics around all these other measures? What are the statistics that say you should be getting rid of the temporary beat locations? What are your statistics that say you should be getting rid of rehabilitation? By all means, let us get the information and be honest and transparent.

Statistics prove how good the TBLs are. The Member for Araluen had already spoken about them. They have directly contributed to a 13% reduction in alcohol-related violence. You say you want to implement policies that reduce violence? There is one—13%. I am not criticising any of your policies and I am not going back to previous governments. I am simply saying there is something that worked. That is the lowest figure we have had in domestic violence since 2010, when you were in government.

John Boffa, a long-time campaigner against the harm caused by alcohol had this to say about the TBLs:

... when TBLs were in place 'all day, every day, we see about a 50 per cent reduction in assaults ... which is just massive'.

That is just massive. We have seen others offer to help out, but it has not been discussed tonight. The CEO of the AHA, Des Crowe, said, 'Why don't we extend it to private security, the bouncers? Why don't we give them some powers?'

Someone who very clearly understands all the legislation around private security, or the bouncers, is the second chairperson of the private security licensing authority. He sits in this Chamber and is currently standing—I have an understanding of it. The other side of the Chamber has some expertise—the Member for Sanderson, who was there at a similar time.

These options could have been discussed in here with a bipartisan approach, but you wanted to throw it out the window and gag your backbenchers. The other causes of crime are drugs and ice. I can remember, after being in this parliament for 12 months, speaking to my colleagues in the parliamentary wing, saying, 'Alcohol is not the only problem we have. Drugs are a major problem that we need to address.' The previous Member for Namatjira spoke about that in this parliament, saying that drugs are a major problem.

Ninety per cent of robberies and 50% of homicides are ice related. I can remember going to Somerville in Palmerston about three years ago and having a discussion with the people there. They said, 'You would think drugs have had an impact on blue collar workers but not necessarily on the more professional fields'. I know the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has listed all the professional fields that could be impacted, but these people were being impacted well over two years ago, and one of the non-profit organisations identified it.

This parliament has not helped those people. I recently went to Banyan House and spoke to those people about these problems. Looking back to 10 years ago, not all of their beds were occupied. At the moment all 24 are fully occupied. The only times beds are empty there are when people who have been rehabilitated leave, or they have broken the rules and gone.

There is a waiting list about 70 to 100 long. At the moment there is about \$1.3m being spent on that; that is all. Banyan House has \$1.3m to run its whole facility. That is a small amount of money being paid out to try to address things like the ice epidemic. The problem with ice is that within the last couple of weeks two of the staff members there have succumbed to the pressures placed upon them.

Ice addicts are completely different to everyone else. Ice is a drug that gives you a lift. It makes you feel invincible. All the other drugs, such as heroin, are more calming. You do not necessarily become calm, but they are more of a depressant. These are the issues people have to deal with.

It is further complicated when prisoners are being moved from gaol to places like Banyan House for treatment. I am not saying it has anything to do with it being 10% of the cost to keep them at Banyan House than prison—Corrections would not do that. This is another problem. You have prisoners taking the place of people on the streets. We need to look at that.

Contrary to what the Health minister said, the Commonwealth Government has not cut a single cent from its funding to Banyan House. She needs to chat with them. Undoubtedly there is additional need. While there is not a silver bullet for the ice problem, which relates to crime, treating the drug problem needs to be added to the whole armoury of how we address the crime and drug problems.

The Member for Nelson mentioned diversion. What struck me when I went to look at the new Don Dale Centre was the sorts of activities they do. I asked, 'What is the most common thing that residents demand? What do they like to do?' There were two things they seemed to like doing the most. One was learning music and how to play an instrument, and the other was the home theatre. It would be simple to ask, 'Are those facilities available for the kids on the streets, the ones committing crime?' That is what they are attracted to inside these facilities.

The Deputy Opposition Leader wants to sum up and get this motion agreed to before we get to 7 pm, so that is all I have to say at this stage.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everyone who contributed to our motion on crime and associated drug use this evening in General Business.

It is a very important topic and I am pleased my colleague, the Opposition Leader, mentioned that we did something important today—passing the urgency component on the bail bill, fully expecting the bail bill to follow so we could pass the legislation to be usable by police. We have waited all day and that has not been forthcoming. At 7 pm when General Business finishes we return to Government Business. We hope that during Government Business the bail bill is brought before the House, considering the hurdle of urgency was overcome this morning.

I thank everyone who spoke on the bill. I echo the concerns of the Opposition Leader, that is, we continue to witness a lack of contribution from the backbenchers, who are yearning to speak. There are obviously structural reasons in the Labor Party that we do not understand—not allowing them to speak on behalf of their electorates in the parliament. What a bizarre concept.

Thank you to the Attorney-General, the Minister for Education, the Member for Nelson and the Leader of the Opposition for contributing.

There are lots of things we can do to address crime. We, as an opposition, have put forward a number of measures that we think will help address crime immediately. The government has put forward many longer-term measures which we hope will have an impact in the longer term. Electronic monitoring is one of those components, and that is a matter for the bail bill when it comes back before the House.

We are eager to see an end to this crime crisis. The statistics speak for themselves. The feeling in the community speaks for itself. Not one person who spoke tonight said they have constituents asking what the big deal is. All of us have said we have constituents who are deeply concerned. All of us are hearing it on a daily basis. Immediate, sensible, evidence-based action needs to be taken to stop the spike in break-ins and set offenders, particularly young offenders, on a different path to the one they seem to be treading down.

Crime and drug use will continue to be a major problem across the Northern Territory if we do not address it. The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned ice. The Member for Nelson mentioned all drugs, and that is something we need to consider and work through.

We need to look at how we are supporting our NGOs to address the very large increases in presentations they are receiving. Organisations such as Banyan House, which the Leader of the Opposition visited recently, have waiting lists of between 70 and 100 people, which is truly astonishing. It shows we have a long way to go to address drug addiction and support people well into the future.

I thank everyone for contributing. It would have been good to hear some personal stories from the government backbench, but it appears another GBD has gone by and that opportunity is gone.

We are back on government business in two minutes. We would love to see the bail bill debated and passed tonight. That is in your hands, not in ours. Our business is at its conclusion now.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 3

Noes 17

Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Guyula
Mr Higgins

Ms Ah Kit
Mr Collins
Mr Costa
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mr Kirby
Ms Lawler
Mr McCarthy
Ms Manison
Ms Moss
Ms Nelson

Mr Paech
Mr Sievers
Ms Uibo
Mr Vowles
Ms Wakefield
Mrs Worden

Motion not agreed to.

PAPERS TABLED

Travel Reports – Members for Spillett, Fong Lim, Arnhem, Blain and Namatjira

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table travel reports from the Members for Spillett, Fong Lim, Arnhem, Blain and Namatjira.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about our fantastic tourism industry. Last month I had the privilege of attending the prestigious Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, which was hosted at the Darwin Convention Centre. What an amazing night it was. It was fantastic to be joined by a number of people. Along with the Darwin Convention Centre, the Department of Tourism and Culture put on an amazing show.

It is the first time the national awards have come to Darwin, but it has been held in the Territory once before, in Alice Springs. We were joined by Tourism ministers from all the other jurisdictions, including federal minister Steve Ciobo, who was in Darwin for our Tourism ministerial council which was held earlier that day. What an exciting opportunity for the Territory tourism industry to shine on the national stage from our back yard. It was an incredible milestone for these awards to return to the Northern Territory for the second time, and it shows just how important this industry is not only to us, but nationally.

Territory tourism businesses were in the running for 23 categories at the awards, and I was really proud when our home-grown tourism operators dazzled in front of their home crowd, winning seven awards and taking home two gold medals, two silver and three bronze. Everyone will agree that is a fantastic achievement.

I congratulate all the winners. Voyages Ayers Rock Resort was inducted into the Australian Tourism Awards Hall of Fame—an amazing achievement—and won gold for its commitment to excellence in Indigenous cultural tourism, playing a leading role as one of Australia's iconic tourism destinations. The resort provides employment, training and business development opportunities for local Anangu and Indigenous people Australia-wide, with Indigenous culture in every element of its offering. We were really pleased to attend the Indigenous Tourism Advisory Council meeting at Ayers Rock Resort.

Congratulations to Stephen Schwer and chairperson Dale McIver on the Tourism NT board for taking out gold for the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre, located in the heart of Alice Springs. The visitor information centre houses a wealth of free information on tours, attractions, accommodation, events, transport options, travel tips and maps, and the friendly and professional staff members are available to assist travellers with their holiday queries. I was pleased to visit the centre last time I was in Alice Springs. I saw their award, which had pride of place on the front counter. It was very heavy, but it was great to see it amongst the centre's numerous travel awards from over the years.

Silver went to Kakadu National Park, under the category of Major Tourist Attraction. Kakadu attracted 180 000 visitors last year and is recognised as offering world-class tourism experiences through its natural and cultural attractions. As we know, it covers nearly 20 000 square kilometres of exceptional natural beauty and unique biodiversity, and it is one of Australia's world heritage attractions. We are very lucky to have this all in our back yard.

I made it clear to the federal minister in our meeting that we would be seeking further discussions and input from the federal government in regard to future investment and access in Kakadu, especially regarding the future of Jabiru township.

Another silver went to Darwin Convention Centre, which was our host for the evening. It was a beautiful venue for this great event. It won the business tourism silver award. Located in spectacular Darwin Harbour, our world-class convention centre is the Territory's premier conference venue. I offer my congratulations to Janet Hamilton, General Manager of the convention centre. The venue was spectacular on the night, and it is well-deserving of this award.

Uluru Camel Tours won two bronze awards for adventure tourism and tour operations. It is an owner-operated tour business based in the heart of Australia, the Red Centre. People would be very familiar with the Camel Cup. It is a very unique offering in Central Australia. The ranch is home to more than 60 beautiful camels and offers camel rides with stunning views of the world heritage listed Uluru, with Kata Tjuta as a backdrop.

Another bronze went to Venture North Australia for cultural tourism, which offers cultural and nature-based tours throughout the Top End. It operates the Cobourg Coastal Camp, an eco-tourism and fishing camp on the Cobourg peninsula in northern Arnhem Land. It specialises in taking guests off the beaten track and into some of the more remote and hard to access regions. Receiving national recognition with these awards showcases the quality of our tourism services in the Territory and the organisations in Central Australia which took out two gold awards on the national stage.

Congratulations to all of them for achieving national recognition for their excellent tourism products and hard work. It was a great turnout from operators from across the country and locally, who work 365 days a year to provide wonderful experiences to visitors.

There were 737 guests at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, of whom an estimated 547 came from outside the Territory, which is a huge proportion. Many interstate guests stayed for the weekend to experience our tourism products, so it was a great opportunity to plug the final weekend of the second season of the Million Dollar Fish competition. It equates to an estimated \$762 000 in overnight visitor spend in the Territory from the non-NT participants, which is fantastic, and more benefits for local suppliers who helped to support that brilliant event, including the venue hire, technical production, printing and a range of other areas.

Our government invested \$60 000 in the event. For every dollar invested by government, \$16 in spend was generated in the Territory, which is another great benefit. Our government greatly values the tourism industry in the Territory, which delivers significant financial and social benefits to Territorians. As we all know, it is a major economic driver which contributes \$1.8bn to our economy and more than 15 000 jobs for Territorians, directly and indirectly.

We are proud, and we love to show off our back yard and celebrate our incredible natural beauty with the rest of the world. Why would we not? We have some amazing things on our doorstep, including Kakadu, Uluru, Kata Tjuta and some amazing fishing spots—for those of you who are keen fishermen and women, which many are in this Chamber, such as the Leader of the Opposition.

Visitors to the Territory often visit for something more spiritual and to observe our link to the world's oldest living culture. That is why we are investing \$100m into the arts trail which will run the length of the Territory, with the centrepiece being the iconic national Indigenous art gallery in Alice Springs. I was pleased to have the Member for Namatjira with me in Alice Springs to announce the two co-chairs for the steering committee that will do the scoping work over the next six months—prominent Central Australians, Hetti Perkins and Philip Watkins from Desart. We have received great feedback about that and are very excited to announce the full board over coming weeks because people will be really excited about it.

What we consider to be the beating heart of the Indigenous art movement is on the doorstep of Namatjira country in Alice Springs. I gave notice to my state and federal counterparts that I will be calling on them in coming months and years to seek their support for this important national project and to get them thinking about the benefits for those around our Central Australia borders. It is really good for everyone.

A special thank you goes to cricket legend, Matthew Hayden. He was an emcee at the tourism awards. He is an ambassador for the Million Dollar Fish competition and is involved in a self-drive campaign for tourism in the Territory. He is a lover of the Territory. We were really pleased to have him and Shane Jacobson, another amazing friend and lover of the Territory, emceeing those awards and speaking about their connection to this place. It really resonated with all of us. Both of them did a great job.

I commend all the winners again, and I look forward to us continuing to punch above our weight on the national stage when it comes to tourism product.

Mr HIGGINS (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that speech on the tourism awards. I am disappointed I could not get there this year. I have been to a lot of the Brolga Awards in the past and I went this year.

I had a big involvement in tourism, as many people know, and this was the first time in 30 years that those awards have been held here, which is terrific. I, too, have sent some letters of congratulations to some of the winners, some of whom I know personally, as they work very hard.

I want to speak about Ralph Meyering, who is a constituent of the Daly electorate. He is a long-term Northern Territory resident and he recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Anyone who has done any light aircraft flying in or around Darwin would know the airstrip near Jenkins Rd, which is referred to as MKT. This is where Ralph and his lovely wife, Kath, hang out, and most people know them there.

Ralph's wife, Kath, provided me with some important information on another important event in Ralph's life. This was in Holland when he was just 18 years old. I would like to share the story and have it placed on the record.

Ralph and his father were part of the Dutch resistance and were considered criminals by the Germans because of the role they played in helping allied airmen shot down in World War II. If they were caught they would be executed. Ralph's family hid the airmen and helped them get to safety, risking their own lives to do so. Ralph tells me his sister would transport messages hidden in the handlebars of her bicycle. The family were separated and lived underground and in attics, hiding from the Germans as they did what they could to help liberate their country and the allies to win the war.

One terrible day Ralph, his father and 12 others were captured by the Germans and taken to Assen, Drenthe in Holland for their interrogation after another prisoner told the Gestapo they were part of the resistance. They denied any involvement, which cost them a hard slap in the face with the promise of death if they did not confess.

Ralph's father was interrogated but continued to deny he was involved in the resistance. They spent their days in constant fear of what lay ahead. It was around Ralph's 18th birthday when they heard the door open and they thought their time had come. Instead of death, Ralph and his father were among 31 people safely smuggled away from Assen by the Dutch freedom fighters.

In an incredible show of strength, the DFF had managed to overpower the Germans to get Ralph and the others to safety. It is still considered the most successful of many acts of bravery by the Dutch resistance, as no Dutch or Germans were killed during the escape. Last year the streets where the escape took place were renamed to mark this momentous event.

After the war, Ralph and his father received letters from Generals Montgomery and Eisenhower, thanking them for their courage in aiding so many allied airmen to freedom. It would be many months after he was liberated before Ralph was reunited with his mother and siblings. Ralph joined the Dutch battalion and headed to the Far East, or, as we in the Territory call it, the 'near north'.

After the atomic bombs ended the Pacific war, Ralph and his battalion headed to Indonesia, where they rounded up the Japanese occupiers, who became prisoners of war. With Europe liberated, Ralph headed to Australia looking for his next adventure. He came to the Territory in 1955 and worked in the construction industry until the 1960s when he became a dairy farmer with Kath for more than 20 years.

Ralph and Kath are happily retired and still live on their property in my electorate. I thank Ralph for letting me share his story, for the courage he and his family showed in the face of terrible adversity and for being a proud Territorian.

Happy 90th birthday.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to tell a positive story about visitors to Alice Springs who are attending the big event we are holding. We can hopefully get as many people as possible to go along to the mega event, geocaching, which is happening in Alice Springs over Easter.

We are expecting 1500 people to come to town to participate in this event. For those of you who do not know what geocaching is—it is a new sport—it is a modern version of the treasure hunt or, as I come from an old scouting family, orienteering.

Geocaching involves using a GPS, usually through an app on your phone—I have the app on my phone—to find containers which have a logbook or some sort of treasure in it. I cannot believe that six million people across the world are involved in this as a growing sport. There are 62 000 people involved in this in Australia. This is a big sport. We first became aware of it when a family friend visited who is obsessed with geocaching. My five-year-old son became obsessed with it and now we are all involved, which is wonderful. It is a great sport.

There are a lot of active people in the Northern Territory; we have a very active community. People act in teams setting up the points. We have three active teams in Alice Springs. There are 240 geocaches around Alice Springs. I am looking forward to finding them. They are on the way to Uluru and all the main tourist strips. This is adding value to visiting the Territory. In many ways it is the perfect thing for the Northern Territory because it fits in with the Territory lifestyle of getting out and about in nature, enjoying our beautiful countryside, enjoying a safe place to camp and travel, and getting some good exercise.

We are really looking forward to this event over Easter. I am representing the minister for Tourism at the opening event, which I am excited about. One of the great things about this event is that it is the two millionth geocache in the world, placed in Alice Springs. We are looking forward to this event. I encourage anyone who is interested in the sport to come. It is the perfect time, over Easter. I also encourage the residents of Alice Springs to take up the sport because it is a great way to explore your own town, as I have discovered while trailing after my six-year-old.

It is a great thing to do and an important step forward for tourism and activity in the wonderful area of Central Australia, which is a fantastic place to visit. We encourage everyone to come along.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Mr Deputy Speaker, Ms Thelma Nicholson is a wonderful person and a hard-working local volunteer, and a member of the Brennan community. Today I put on record the exemplary work she has done for this country and the community over the past 50 years.

In July 1960 Thelma was a passenger on a bus which was involved in a serious collision with a truck in Sydney. It caused serious injuries to more than 20 passengers. At the time, Thelma was in serious shock, having been on the bus and witnessed the incident; however, with no thought for her own injuries, Thelma immediately organised and applied first aid to the injured passengers. She swung into action and grabbed a supply of first aid material from a nearby chemist, treated the serious cases first, prepared them for the ambulance and then worked through the other injured passengers until more help arrived.

There is no doubt Thelma's actions that day saved many Australian lives. I am proud to say Her Majesty the Queen felt the same way. Thelma, through her selfless actions that day, saving the lives of many, was awarded a meritorious award from Her Majesty the Queen.

In the 1990s Thelma's grandchildren attended Karama Primary School. As any good grandparent would do, she attended and supported her grandchildren and the other children in school by reading to them. She had such a positive effect on so many children in the school, which was well noted by the principal, Mr Bob Hale, that every child wanted Thelma as their grandmother.

Thelma's significant work at the Karama school, and in the local community, continued throughout the years, and she received further awards, including the Arthritis Foundation NT grandparent of the year in 1995, the Macquarie reading program certificate of appreciation award 1995–96 and the Northern Territory Arthritis and Osteoporosis Palmerston proud award in 2003, and she was the runner-up for the Palmerston Citizen of the Year in 2005.

While Thelma was conducting community volunteer work she also had a full-time job in a concrete company. Unfortunately the exposure to concrete dust during those years had a severe impact on Thelma's health. In 2003 Thelma was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Thelma and her husband, Phillip Nicholson, then decided to advocate to government and hospitals for a local support group that would support sufferers of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Thelma and her husband were successful and the NT Breatheasy chronic obstructive pulmonary disease support group was established in 2005. The first ever session of NT Breatheasy was conducted in Dr Chris Burns' office, who, as we all know, is one of our very successful parliamentary Labor colleagues and a former Member for Johnston.

The NT Breatheasy support group has grown since this time, and Thelma and her husband dedicated 12 years of their life together to ensure its ongoing success. I would like our parliament to join me and

acknowledge Thelma's outstanding and tireless contributions to the Australian and Northern Territory community.

We thank you, Thelma.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to share with the House my recent travels to the US as a participant of the International Visitor Leadership Program, or IVLP, which is sponsored by the US state department. Before I travelled to the US I was fortunate enough to attend the Australia Day breakfast and morning celebrations in my electorate, in the town of Mataranka. It was a great morning; however, due to my pending overseas travel, I regretfully had to leave the Mataranka celebrations before the town cricket match. I am sure the Deputy Mayor of Roper Gulf Regional Council, Ms Judy MacFarlane, will hold me to a cricket game in the future when the town celebrates again.

I must take this moment to congratulate Judy, as I had the pleasure of presenting her with the Citizen of the Year award in Mataranka. I also presented the Student Citizen Award to Yerrin Heaslip, who is a former Numbulwar student and now lives not far from Mataranka, in the Arnhem electorate.

I take this moment to congratulate the winners of Roper Gulf Regional Council's 2017 Australia Day Local Government Awards. In the community of Barunga: Jeffrey McDonald and Peter Wordsworth. The Community Event of the Year was a joint event with Manyallauk—the CDP Katherine Christmas street party parade entry.

In Beswick: Harrietta Forbes and Leon George. The community event was the Walking with Spirits Festival.

In Bulman and Weemol: Cordell Scrubby and Richard Forbes. The community event was the NAIDOC Week Festival.

In Mataranka: Yerrin Heaslip and Judy MacFarlane. The community event was the Mataranka Fishing, Sporting and Recreation Club barra competition.

In Manyallauk: Alison Andrews. The community event was a joint effort with Barunga—the Katherine Christmas street party.

In the Ngukurr community: Alexis Rogers and Kathy Huddleston. The community event was the Tugul Mangi Festival.

In Numbulwar: Declan Murrungun, also a regular Numbulwar school student; and my cousin, Dale Murrungun. The community event was the Numburindi Festival.

I congratulate all the Roper Gulf Regional Council winners for their awards on Australia Day.

Before I share my experience about the IVLP, I acknowledge that two of my parliamentary colleagues, the Members for Karama and Namatjira, have also participated in the IVLP in previous years. In the near future I will be tabling a report in this Assembly about my final travels to the US, in which I accessed the RTD, under clause 6, in order to cover the cost of my return travel to the USA from the Northern Territory.

For a better understanding of the program objectives I will quote directly from the website from the US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs:

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience this country firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts. Professional meetings reflect the participants' professional interests and support the foreign policy goals of the United States.

The IVLP that I participated in was held from 30 January to 18 February this year. I was one of 22 participants, each from a different country, in this program entitled Education and Activism for Young Women. The countries represented in this program were: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Barbados; Botswana; Cyprus; Egypt; Ethiopia; India; Israel; Kenya; Morocco; Nepal; Nicaragua; Nigeria; Palestinian Territories, or the Gaza strip; Russia; Rwanda; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; Switzerland; and Uganda.

Of these 22 participants we had 21 women and one man—a very brave man, as you can imagine. With such a diverse group of participants, each day was filled with rich conversations, sharing dialogue about

our own country contexts, respectful debating of issues, and sharing our interesting observations and interactions in response to the daily program.

The three-week IVLP was jam-packed with a carefully considered extensive program. Our program started in Washington DC, which was a fitting start as it is the capital of the US and the heart of the political pulse. The pulse was beating fast as the new US President had recently been inaugurated, and the change in US administration and leadership had sparked a worldwide movement, being the international women's march.

There was not much spare time during the program so one evening, despite being tired and still slightly jet-lagged, I went out shopping with my fellow participant and new friend from Afghanistan. We had dinner together and shared stories about our countries and laughed, then enjoyed a late meal after our long day. The next day was our last day in the Washington DC program, and our final session was a drumming circle, run by a lady who has developed a drumming program to empower young girls and women.

The session was fun and engaging, and every participant had a go and enjoyed their time. At the end of the session my friend from Afghanistan shared openly that she was interested in getting the drumming program, or something similar, to her country and in her community as, tragically, last year the university she works at was bombed and over 100 students and staff were killed in the bombing. The idea that my friend, who I had just shared a meal with and laughed with the night before, was going through this truly disturbed me.

The experience of opening up and sharing brought me to believe that women around the world are clearly resilient in every part of their life. It is hard to express grief, pain and anger in a healthy, safe and structured way sometimes. It is that type of resilience that people around the world, particularly women and girls, face in their everyday lives. It makes you feel a little stronger every day in representing people in situations like the NT parliament.

The three weeks was packed full of programs and we visited four cities. The first was Washington DC; the second was progressive Seattle, in the state of Washington. Then our team of 22 split into three small groups. One team went to San Antonio, in Texas; the other went to Louisville, in Kentucky; and my team visited Pensacola, Florida.

The final gathering was in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was actually quite warm for us there. It was only minus-three and it got to a top of six degrees, not the minus-13 it was when we were supposed to travel to Minnesota, so we were lucky they turned on the warm weather for us. We saw snow in most of the states, except the one that was supposed to have the most. The IVLP was an enriching learning and shaping experience. I feel extremely honoured and privileged to have been able to travel to the US to represent Australia and the Northern Territory as part of the Labor team, my community and my electorate.

I thank the Chief Minister for allowing me to travel, as I missed the February sittings, and I also thank my Labor team for supporting me to be able to do this. It was an interesting experience in terms of the current political state in the US. I had many nights of staying up late, watching the news, and getting up early to watch the news. I am not someone who watches much TV anymore, but I was addicted to the TV while I was in the states, watching the US administration changes and the possible global impacts.

One of the things I picked up whilst in the States was the huge movement in the US in regard to organisations and institutes encouraging and supporting women to get into political office. I was proud, in all the cities we visited, to be able to give people the Northern Territory statistics of our five Cabinet ministers who are female, out of the eight, and 12 out of 25 Northern Territory Legislative Assembly parliamentarians being women. I joke about being 0.5 off being 50-50, and I am not sure who wants to become that 0.5 to even out the stats. We had a bit of a laugh about that.

It just goes to show that even though we have such a small territory here in Australia, we are still ahead of our interstate colleagues and, in some cases, our international colleagues. I was very proud to be a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly representing women from the Territory and Australia in such a diverse and exciting program.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to speak about law and order, and address the Territory government's commitment to maintaining law and order.

While our approaches will be vastly different to those taken by the previous government, our focus is no less. I will start by speaking about what we are doing to support law enforcement, crime prevention and community safety, all of which will require sustained and coordinated investment across the government.

Throughout our campaign we committed to increasing police resources; we have delivered on that, as is evidenced by the fact our police trainee centre is at capacity. We are developing collaborative working models that bring together police and community stakeholders, which will encourage and support a holistic approach to problem resolution. I have been championing this approach in Katherine by establishing bimonthly community round table discussions with various stakeholders and police.

Over the last four years we have seen that a strictly punitive, unilateral approach to law and order is not successful over the long term. It might address the issue here and now, but without any long-term strategies and plans we run around in circles. This government is taking the 'it takes a village' philosophy to address youth crime, property crime, antisocial behaviours and alcohol reform.

We know from lessons of the past that a whole-of-government and community collaboration is needed to develop broader alcohol reform strategy to curb antisocial behaviour, reduce alcohol-related offences and break the generational cycle of alcohol abuse that affects so many of us in our communities.

When we work our way through the issues we each face in rural, regional and remote communities in regard to crime and antisocial behaviour, we soon realise that at the start of all this are social inequities that all governments have yet to successfully address. The severe shortage of housing in our most disadvantaged communities is one of those issues.

It is no secret that I support a significant bulk of our funding being utilised to establish and implement restorative justice programs with a shared focus on justice reinvestment programs. This does not mean I am a softy; this means I believe that before we can fix a problem we need to understand the problem. We need to make justice work, not by introducing longer, harsher gaol terms but by supporting young people, diverting them from the criminal justice system and addressing the underlying causes of offending.

We have seen, time and time again, that sending people to gaol does not prevent crime. It is not the most cost saving solution. It costs over \$100 000 per adult prisoner per year, and \$216 000 per young person per year. We need initiatives, like community courts, that engage Aboriginal and community elders in the justice process. We recognise there are, and always will be, cases where gaol is the only just sentence.

When young people are exposed to the criminal justice system they are more likely to become adult offenders. This is particularly true if young people are sent into detention. Evidence shows that diverting young people from courts reduces reoffending.

During my campaign I spent a significant amount of time addressing the BDR versus the point of sale intervention argument. Katherine is not unique to the Territory in regard to alcohol-fuelled violence. This is a Territory-wide issue and it must be addressed as such. We need to keep in mind simple basic points about alcohol management. Alcohol management programs are most effective when the program is rolled out universally and simultaneously. Intervention is a short-term solution, and it is ineffective when it is not supported by strategies to deal with the consequences of intervention.

The situation we are in across the Northern Territory is a prime example of that. The Banned Drinker Register was disbanded by the previous government in 2012. No other point of sale intervention program was implemented until 2014, essentially leaving Katherine vulnerable for 14 months to alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviours. I want less crime and violence from alcohol, but I also want to support my neighbours, friends, acquaintances and the residents of my electorate who need additional resources to help address addiction issues, and family and domestic violence related to alcoholism.

I am sympathetic and empathetic to all people who have been affected by alcohol abuse, and the social and health issues relating to alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is the primary cause for domestic violence in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. Domestic and family violence is endemic in our communities. It is affecting all levels of class, from the most disadvantaged to the most privileged.

I have been one of those women, a victim of domestic and family violence who, for many years, dreaded beer o'clock. I counted each beer so I could be prepared to exit when that magic beer was drunk, the beer I called the 'turning point'. These memories are incredibly traumatic and painful for me. Tonight is one of a small handful of occasions where I have spoken publicly about my experience.

Alcohol control is something I follow intently because of my personal experiences. As an educated woman, I acknowledge and understand that alcohol abuse was not the only cause of the anger and violence. I understood then and understand now that alcohol restriction alone was not enough. It is my opinion that intervention programs are not sustainable in the long term unless there are strategies to address the

consequences of intervention. It is my belief that prohibition does not work. It addresses the supply and not the cause.

With that in mind, I support measures that are about limiting supply. Limiting alcohol supply by itself is not enough. It needs to be used in conjunction with measures to address risk factors and causes. I support my government's approach in addressing this issue. It cannot be a kneejerk reaction or reactionary. It needs to be measured and considered.

I support the return of the Banned Drinker Register. It is a point-of-sale intervention program. I support a transitional period, during which the current program will continue until the new program is re-established.

I sat in the Chamber when the Chief Minister read the law and order statement in November. I listened to the opposition and the Independent MLAs speak. I listened to the Opposition Leader throw across the room the notion that somehow this current government is arrogant enough to proclaim that Labor has the perfect answers that will be the resolution to this infinitely.

I take umbrage at the Opposition Leader, every single day, saying that because the backbenchers do not stand up and speak, somehow they are not standing up for their electorate. I do not need to stand up in this Chamber and argue and yell across the room to fight for my electorate. I do not know about anyone else in this Chamber, but I am able to communicate, lobby and advocate effectively by talking to the government, my colleagues and supporting agencies—face to face, one on one. I attend community meetings and listen to my constituents. I put things in place and develop initiatives. It is about collaboration.

The current state of law and order in the Northern Territory is not a problem with a simple solution, and it will not be resolved by yelling across the Chamber. I take umbrage at the insinuation that somehow I am not working or speaking up enough.

For that reason I have been working with and listening to various stakeholders in my electorate. I regularly speak with the Katherine police and meet with the NGOs in Katherine who work with our youth. I have regular conversations with principals and teachers at the local schools, all in an effort to work together as a community to identify youth at risk and hotspots, and to develop strategies that we, as a community, can assist our police and government to develop effective and efficient strategies and protocols to address crime.

This is how we, the backbenchers, stand up for our electorates and constituents, by working with them. I am also working with a local group in Katherine that is made up of members from NGOs, government agencies, schools, health and the community. This group has been working together for quite a while. The Katherine youth justice reinvestment working group has worked fervently to develop a framework that we believe has real potential to contain our own escalating rates of imprisonment, specifically Indigenous imprisonment.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I acknowledge some of the outstanding Territory women who ensure that International Women's Day celebrations in Darwin include a formal gala dinner. For many years in the Territory there has been a march for International Women's Day, which I have been extremely proud to attend with many of my colleagues. It was mentioned in the House yesterday that the Chief Minister, a number of our Labor colleagues and I had the pleasure of marching with Charlie King, supporting his No More campaign, along with hundreds of other Territory men and women.

I am extremely lucky to have these events in my electorate of Port Darwin and am very proud to be a part of them. In late 2014 a few visionary women realised there had not been an International Women's Day dinner for some time, and they decided to reinvigorate this dinner to make it bigger and better than it had ever been before. They wanted to add to the amazing range of events that celebrate International Women's Day across the Darwin area.

The committee decided that each year a different organisation that supports, celebrates and furthers women's progress would be chosen to be the recipient of the fundraising. Each year they sit down and decide which organisation will receive however much they can fundraise for that year, and that is the intent and the idea of the dinner.

A number of organisations each year are shortlisted and one is chosen at random; it is literally drawn out of a hat. This year it was My Sister's Kitchen, which is one of those fantastic programs run in the Malak area, which the Member for Karama spoke of last night.

They run fantastic and fun programs of storytelling and food with women from all over the globe. They meet every Monday in Chambers Crescent Theatre, in the Malak Shopping Centre, from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm. We heard yesterday from the Member for Karama about the great work happening in that centre. People are welcome to come along and share their stories about food and their culture, as well as sharing a delicious meal together. It is fantastic to see that the fundraising efforts of the International Women's Day gala dinner will go towards ensuring those people can reinvigorate some of the programs they currently cannot run.

The motto states that there is no need to bring anything other than a sense of humour and a desire to meet new friends, so you can see how it would be a very warm and welcoming environment. Good luck and well done to them for invigorating that space.

The first ever IWD gala dinner was an overwhelming success, with 300 people attending the pavilion at Skycity. Over \$10 000 was raised on that occasion and donated to Dawn House, which does some fantastic work for women in the Top End. In 2016 it moved to the DoubleTree Hilton and raised about \$8000 for Ruby Gaea—some amazing efforts from a great bunch of women.

Over three years there have been more than 15 women involved in presenting, speaking and entertaining on the night. There were DJs, bands, federal politicians and a marathon runner from a remote community, so there has been a diverse range of fantastic women presenting there. This year we were lucky enough to have Kristy O'Brien as the keynote speaker. It gave a great insight into her life journey as a female journo in the Top End. Some of those stories were fantastic to be a part of, and a great night was had by all.

In 2017 the event continued at the DoubleTree Hilton on the Esplanade, and it was supported by UN Women Australia. The donations went to My Sister's Kitchen. Women and men, but mostly women, from all walks of life are invited to be a part of the event, which is designed to celebrate the economic, political and social achievements of women, past, present and future.

I am sure there is an admission amongst all of us that there is still much to do before all women are treated equally and feel safe in all walks of life. We still have many battles to fight to achieve that.

The committee is supported by local businesses. It has been very fortunate over the few years it has been running that many local women have donated art, business services, jewellery and more to help raise funds for these deserving organisations. There have been some fantastic prizes. I was fortunate enough to win the Paspaley prize in a raffle—which I happily donated back. This pained me slightly, as the necklace was a beautiful pearl that my fiancé would have loved, but I am sure the Teakle family will give that necklace a very loving home. The money raised went to My Sister's Kitchen.

I congratulate Bianca Fidock, Bek Garrett and Seranna Shutt for their tireless efforts in getting the IWD gala dinner up and running. As all of us would know, any events or functions in the Territory that require contributions are hard work. Anybody who gets something off the ground from nothing deserves commendation; it is a fantastic effort. All these women contribute great things to this event and to society in general, and all these women work very busy full-time roles as well as fitting in the planning and running of this event in their spare time. I commend them for their boundless efforts.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.