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Dan Murphy's and Alcohol Reform Review

Mr HIGGINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE

You denied knowing about a \$50 000 pre-election donation from a figure closely associated with the AHA prior to drafting your Dan ban regulation. You now know about the donation, yet you are introducing legislation before the results of your apparently all-encompassing and comprehensive alcohol inquiry. Why not wait until your expensive inquiry looks into the issues of a floor space cap before rushing legislation into this parliament? Are you afraid the results might spoil your secret Dan ban deal?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting that before the election the CLP had the exact same policy as the government. It is funny; they backflip out of it quicker than an Olympic gymnast. It is so secretive. The CLP had the same policy.

We do not base decisions on political donations. The CLP scrapped the inquiry into political donations as soon as they could. We had a motion passed in this House—Madam Speaker, you would remember it well in the previous Assembly. We were going to have an inquiry into political donations but the CLP scrapped that. As a government we will be bringing forward an inquiry into political donations.

Every Territorian has the right to feel safe and enjoy our vibrant communities. Right now, alcohol is the biggest single social harm issue in the Northern Territory. The latest figures show that alcohol costs our community \$640m per year. We know the impacts of alcohol. It is not isolated to one area or demographic of the Northern Territory, sadly. We have issues that we face—just a few metres from this Parliament House—with people who participate in drinking and antisocial behaviour. It is also a huge issue behind closed doors in the Northern Territory.

Our government remains focused on combatting alcohol-fuelled crime and tackling alcohol harm and abuse in our community. Dan Murphy's is not banned but they need to play by the rules. Our policy has not changed. The member opposite has referred to a specific question, and I gave notice of a bill just before. I do not want to pre-empt debate. It is a legal matter right now so I need to be careful in what I say.

The Northern Territory Government welcomes new businesses. The introduction of this bill is to reaffirm our position that we believe the Northern Territory needs to tackle the issue of alcohol and alcohol-related harm in our community. We are doing that through our independent expert inquiry. We will provide that full report to the community when it is handed down later this year, as well as the government's response to it.

We are reaffirming our position, something we did by regulation late last year, and we are reaffirming that through legislation.

It is time, as a parliament, to tackle this issue of alcohol harm and the huge cost it has on our community. I look forward to the members opposite working with the expert review panel so we can have a pathway for Territorians who drink responsibly going forward.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, your time has expired.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Dan Murphy's and Alcohol Reform Review

Mr HIGGINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE

Attorney-General, are you attempting to ban Dan Murphy's from the Northern Territory because you believe you will lose the case in the federal court?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I outlined it when I responded to the first question. Dan Murphy's is not banned in the Northern Territory. They are welcome to come but they need to play by our rules. We have a unique context in the Territory. We have a huge issue with alcohol and the harm it causes in our community. As a government we will tackle that issue. We are leading the way with an expert independent review into alcohol and the associated policies in the Northern Territory.

As a government we need to stand up for our communities so they are safe. We need to stand up for all the frontline emergency service workers and ED doctors. I refer to the letter in the *NT News* on 17 March this year from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons supporting the Northern Territory Government's cautious approach. We need to work together on every aspect: licencing; health; police and industry. And we are doing that.

Budget 2017–18 – Jobs

Mr SIEVERS to TREASURER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Treasurer and her team for a great budget.

Treasurer, how are Territorians responding to the government's job-creating budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Brennan for his question. We have been talking to a lot of people across the Northern Territory since last Tuesday. We have spoken to the Chamber of Commerce, the Property Council and the Master Builders. I have been to Alice Springs to speak to the Chamber of Commerce and to Katherine to speak to the community. I spoke to the Palmerston Regional Business Association this morning. We will also go to Nhulunbuy to speak to people in the community.

Mr Wood: Go and talk to the Litchfield Council. It is looking for money.

Ms MANISON: We will be in Tennant Creek with the Chief Minister on Friday, speaking to the community about the Territory budget. I am happy to go to Litchfield as well. Not a problem, Member for Nelson.

The consistent feedback we have heard from everybody is that they share our concerns. Their number one priority is jobs—supporting and creating jobs—and making sure we further grow the Northern Territory economy.

We have had some great feedback on the infrastructure investments of \$1.75bn across the Northern Territory, which will impact in the urban centres, regional centres and remote communities. It is about making sure we support jobs now and into the future but, most importantly, that we are investing in quality infrastructure that will open more opportunities for Territorians. That is what this is all about.

We have the \$297m repairs and maintenance budget that will hit the ground fast, going straight to local business. We have \$733m for roads and transport infrastructure, a very important investment. We are looking at \$640m for housing-related works and infrastructure. We have our fast-tracked major projects, such as Warren Park and the netball centre. We have the Buy Local advocate to make sure we pursue enforcement, making sure when businesses tender for work saying they will use local and be supplied by local, and then win contracts, that they do it. Nobody wants to see that investment heading over the border, down south, when it could be in the Territory supporting local Territorians in jobs.

We have had a huge response to the Defence advocate, as well as our major projects program across the Territory, to further grow the economy, create jobs for the Northern Territory and open opportunities from the top to the bottom of the Northern Territory.

This budget is about investing for the future of the Northern Territory. It will take the challenges ahead in the next 12 to 18 months head on. It is all about creating and supporting jobs.

Alcohol Reform Review

Mrs FINOCCHIARO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE

You are changing the legislation on your 400 square metre floor space Dan ban despite admitting you have no evidence for the effectiveness of such a ban on reducing alcohol-related harm. On 15 March you told parliament you would not pre-empt the *Liquor Act* review. Despite this, you have stood in the Chamber and categorically ruled out alcohol mandatory treatment, floor prices and lockout laws, while ruling in the BDR and floor space caps.

Despite your Chief Minister saying you would not go into an inquiry with a pre-determined outcome, why have you reduced the review to a sham, and why are you wasting Territorians' time and money on a farcical review when you have already pre-determined the outcomes?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, let us be clear: this government is undertaking a review into alcohol and the associated policies and legislation in the Northern Territory. We have said that everything is on the table and we will look at things thoroughly. We need to make sure ...

Members interjecting.

Ms FYLES: Perhaps if those opposite had not been as ignorant when they were in government as they are being right now they would not have scrapped the BDR overnight simply because they did not like it. They thought it was a little inconvenient to show their driver's licence to purchase alcohol. Territorians do not mind the slight inconvenience of showing identification when they purchase alcohol. The CLP scrapped that policy overnight, a policy which police said was one of the best tools they had for tackling alcohol-related harm and crime in the community.

They left a huge policy gap in 2012. They scrapped that overnight and left it. They then put in place a patchwork policy across the Northern Territory with some supply measures in some communities and nothing in others, leaving us vulnerable.

We have committed to not creating a policy vacuum of alcohol harm reduction measures, and we are working on that. I gave notice a few moments ago that we will be reintroducing the Banned Drinker Register and associated clinical care for those people who suffer from alcohol harm in our community.

They made mention of the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment program, a hugely expensive program that was reviewed and found that it failed Territorians and cost three to four times the cost of a community-based alcohol treatment program.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: May I remind you that yelling across the Chamber to each other is unacceptable. Minister, have you concluded your answer?

Ms FYLES: I ask that the member opposite withdraws the comment. It was not acceptable in the parliament.

Madam SPEAKER: Which member are you talking about?

Ms FYLES: The Member for Nelson made a comment when I was talking about the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment program.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, withdraw your comment. The minister is offended.

Mr WOOD: Am I allowed to speak to the point of order?

Madam SPEAKER: No, you are not; just withdraw the statement.

Mr WOOD: I withdraw it.

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

Ms FYLES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is disappointing to see those opposite—we are talking about tackling this issue of alcohol-related harm in the Northern Territory. The last calculated figure was a \$640m cost to our community every year ...

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. It is one thing to waste Territorians' time and money on a sham of a review when you have predetermined the outcome. The least you can do is answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER: No, that is not a point of order. Minister, you have the call.

Ms FYLES: It is extremely disappointing because I was speaking to the Leader of the Opposition only last week about my hopes that this alcohol review could be something that could be taken in a bipartisan approach to have a guiding document going forward.

This alcohol review will look at policies and legislation. It will make sure that we have the silos of government—licensing, health and police—all working together so we can tackle this huge issue that costs our community so much.

This review is being led by an independent expert panel and we will be open with their recommendations. We will provide a response. I am hoping this will take us forward in the Northern Territory, beyond political cycles, so that we can start to tackle this issue that causes so much harm.

Budget 2017–18 – Investing in Bush Communities

Mr PAECH to TREASURER

How is Budget 2017–18 supporting our bush communities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Namatjira for his question because it is important. When our regions and bush communities are strong, the Territory is strong. Budget 2017–18 invests in our regions, jobs, growing the economy and better services to people living in the bush.

You just have to look at the investment into remote housing—over \$380m. If you look at the start of that rolling out, the really intense work on the \$1.1bn 10-year remote housing investment from this government alone—\$106m is going into 2017–18 with the HomeBuild NT program and the Room to Breathe program, looking at important repairs and maintenance, making sure we are supporting people with land servicing, which is very important. If we do not have that land we cannot build that housing. We need to get land serviced so we can roll out housing and improvements as quickly as possible.

There is \$733m to upgrade roads and transport infrastructure across the Northern Territory, with some significant projects across the bush, to ensure people have better quality roads to travel on. There is \$78m to continue upgrading the Arnhem Highway, \$40m towards the Buntine Highway, \$31m to the Plenty Highway, \$25m for the Tablelands Highway, \$12.5m for the Barkly Stock Route, \$10m for the Docker River Road, \$5m at the Sandover Highway and \$3.5m for the pavement and seal widening of the Lasseter Highway. That is just to name a few. We have a significant repairs and maintenance budget too. That will also benefit roads.

We are investing in jobs, with \$7.9m to continue the Indigenous jobs development fund for regional councils to support core local service delivery. There is \$4.1m over two years to support Indigenous ranger groups and the purchase of equipment. There is \$3.6m for Aboriginal employment programs and \$2m in additional funding for the Remote Aboriginal Economic Development Fund.

There will be nearly \$26m going to local councils for the Northern Territory Operational Subsidy grants pool. There is \$5m to establish and operate the Strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund.

There is \$1.3m for the local decision-making agenda, because it is important that decisions for people out bush are made by people in the bush. It is important to get that local decision-making model right.

I am delighted to say we will put \$1.5m into Drive Safe NT Remote to continue that important program out bush, especially since it is Road Safety Week.

There is a great amount of work going into Budget 2017–18 to support people in the bush across the Northern Territory.

NAPLAN – Indigenous Students

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for EDUCATION

NAPLAN testing is today. This test is in English and uses English speakers' world view as the means of assessment. This clearly puts Indigenous students at a disadvantage, many of whom do not speak English

as a first language and have an Indigenous cultural world view. Will the Northern Territory Government continue to submit Indigenous students to this exam forever?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is a pertinent question because this is NAPLAN week for schools across Australia. It is a federal initiative, not something the Northern Territory Government controls. It is also tied to Commonwealth funding.

If we do not do NAPLAN testing we probably will not receive funding from the federal government, which is also pertinent today as the federal government introduces its budget. There has been a lot of talk about the amount of money going into education across Australia. The story in the Northern Territory is not that good.

I think we all agree that NAPLAN is a point-in-time test and is not the fairest measure for kids whose English is a second, third or fourth language. But it provides data for a heap of purposes.

That said, by Year 5, 7 and 9—the older years—we hope all Territory students can close the gap and achieve better results. It is a measure of how well our students are doing in English. Over the years it has had a greater emphasis than it should have. To me, it is just another test. We should not put so much stress on our students in regard to that test. Children are tested regularly in school, and NAPLAN is just another test.

Member for Nhulunbuy, I hear your concerns regarding Indigenous children. The same goes for children who are refugees and migrants as well.

I visited Yuendumu recently and they were looking at testing children in phonics using their own language of Warlpiri. I think over time things may change with NAPLAN, but it is a federal initiative, and our principals and schools should take the pressure off children and encourage them to simply do as well as they can.

Darwin and Alice Springs CBD Investments

Mr KIRBY to CHIEF MINISTER

How will the government's investment in revitalising the Alice Springs and Darwin CBDs help create jobs, and are you aware of any alternative policy approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Port Darwin, who has been a strong champion for how we can invest in a vibrant Darwin CBD. We see Darwin as the capital of northern Australia, and Alice Springs as the capital of Central Australia. It is part of our agenda to restore trust in government and provide certainty and confidence to the private sector, and we have made our intentions clear to invest in both Darwin and Alice Springs. It is a strong message that we have full confidence in, and will be investing in, these CBDs.

They will be vibrant, special places. This is about creating jobs in Alice Springs and Darwin. We recognise the tough times at the moment, and we are prepared to do the heavy lifting for the solution to the problem we have now with confidence and certainty. We will make these places safe and vibrant. They will be places we can be proud of. They will be destinations in their own right.

This is the policy direction of government. We have done this through consultation, partnership with the private sector and community, economic summits and discussions up and down the track about what people see as challenges and what they need to see from government. What they are seeing from us is a definite investment in these CBDs. We will be putting money in them because they are the heart of our Territory; they are our identity and need to be invested in.

Darwin is the capital of northern Australia. We will be putting a focus on the capital and looking to our harbour. Too often, as a city, we have our back to the harbour. We will be cooling the city to make it more liveable, connecting the Waterfront to Cullen Bay, and enlivening and reinvigorating the CBD.

We have put \$100m into this, and we are working on a Smart Cities Deal with the Australian Government. We are investing in a range of projects such as redeveloping State Square, including the underground car park and art gallery. We are talking to the Australian Government about the US Naval site and the need to unlock that land for future development.

For Alice Springs, the inland capital, we have made the exciting announcement about the dinosaurs in the mall. They have a crocodile story: they did not walk with crocodiles, they ate them. It was on the front page of *National Geographic*. It is a very exciting story. Investment in the CBD, as well as the \$20m we put there, saying we think this place matters—we will be investing in this place. It will be vibrant.

We are working in partnership with the local community. We will conduct consultation on where that \$20m goes to make sure we are doing this with people. We also have the art gallery for Alice Springs. It is a serious investment in the heart of Alice. These are the things we are doing because these places are special.

Unfortunately the CLP has a plan to cut jobs. In response to almost everything I have spoken about they have said, 'Don't do it. Stop.' We have a plan for jobs; the CLP has a plan to cut jobs.

Alice Springs Sport Master Plan

Mrs LAMBLEY to MINISTER for TOURISM and CULTURE

The Alice Springs sport master plan was talked about a lot by the former shadow minister for sport, the Member for Johnston, leading up to the election. He went on radio in Alice Springs many times to talk about how your government would be committed to an Alice Springs sports master plan. You put on the table last week about \$6.2m to upgrade sporting facilities.

Where are you up to with the sports master plan for Alice Springs? How are you using that sports master plan to inform the decisions you will make about which initiatives to fund and which not to in terms of sport in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the \$6.2m going into sporting infrastructure in Alice Springs is a fantastic injection of funds for the community. We want to make sure every dollar is spent on sporting infrastructure upgrades that get the most benefit for the most people in Alice Springs.

I recognise, Member for Araluen, your long-term interest in this. You tabled a document in parliament last year that has the Alice Springs sporting master plan on it. I have been talking to the Alice Springs town council. It fed into the sporting master plan of the former government, and Alice Springs sporting priorities were part of that. I have asked them, as part of this \$6.2m, to refresh that plan and work with us on the Alice Springs sporting master plan. You will have it. They have agreed to come on board to work with us through that.

I was pleased to see Damien Ryan at the budget lunch in Alice Springs on Friday when we talked about this. There was positive feedback. We will talk with the community about what its priorities are. I hope you will join us, the council and other local members in talking to the community about what the priorities are. We want to make sure our investment is not used for hastily-made decisions. We want to make sure we are putting money into the sporting infrastructure needs that exist in Alice Springs and Central Australia.

We have a range of commitments for urban and regional lights, upgrading remote ovals and larger infrastructure projects. We are looking forward to embarking on that master planning process with the Alice Springs Town Council. I am happy to talk more about that and how you can get involved in talking to your community and making sure the projects in Alice Springs truly reflect the needs of local sporting groups.

There is a range of competing priorities; we understand that. It is important that those groups have the opportunity to make their case, and the community has an opportunity to speak to us and the town council about what they want to see in the future for Alice Springs. It is a significant commitment. We are proud of it. Budget 2017–18 is delivering for sporting communities across the Territory, and Alice Springs is no exception.

There is a big game of footy coming up and we are looking forward to it. I hope to see you there, Member for Araluen. It is a great initiative. I am proud Budget 2017–18 contains this amount of money which we can use to benefit the Alice Springs sporting community.

Budget 2017–18 – Rural and Remote Housing

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

My electorate of Arnhem is a largely remote electorate. How is the government delivering for remote housing and supporting infrastructure across the Territory? Are you aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Arnhem, a strong bush member who supports Budget 2017–18 in terms of its infrastructure investment and creating jobs across the Northern Territory.

In the bush we are focused on new jobs. Last week I was proud to announce \$44.5m from Budget 2017–18 for lands servicing. That means it will be developing land to accept and build new housing. We know good housing underpins good education, health outcomes and social justice. This was an area consulted on by the communities. Government has acted. I thank the Treasurer for \$44.5m over two years to start a land servicing program that will address things like electricity, sewerage and storm water to set up land to accept new houses in a record program.

In terms of alternative approaches we have a good example from the previous CLP administration in the Northern Territory, which cut the housing budget across the Territory. It dropped the ball on remote housing. In 2014–15 there were a handful of houses delivered across the whole of the Northern Territory. They slashed jobs. That is what we will not do.

We are hearing it again. We have a CLP opposition, the remnants of what was the previous administration, which is continuing to say we should slash the budget, not invest in infrastructure and cut jobs. There was also an incredible attack on our cultural institutions last week. That came as a real shock.

For Territorians it is clear and simple. Nobody trusts the CLP. You have inherited the legacy from the previous administration you both sat in and supported. You have a trust deficit, as the Chief Minister used to advise you. Territorians do not trust the CLP; that is why they will not trust your advice to cut infrastructure programs, slash jobs and reduce investment in the Northern Territory in these critical years.

We will be building the Territory, creating jobs and delivering outcomes. That means housing in regional and remote areas, servicing land to set up houses, jobs and engaging local people in this sector. We are proud of this policy, and this government will deliver.

Youth Workers

Mr MILLS to MINISTER for TERRITORY FAMILIES

How many of the 50 youth workers have already been recruited? Are these entirely new positions? Where are they based and who do they report to?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I am attending the graduation on Friday of 25 new workers, here and in Alice Springs.

We have a mix of existing positions—for instance, the family responsibility unit was rolled over into this announcement, so there were some positions there. There were some positions in Community Corrections, and we are also creating new positions.

I am proud to attend the graduation of 25 people. There is a great range of people. There will be 15 workers based in Alice Springs. We are more than happy to get you the exact breakdown of who will start when, but I know the workers in Alice Springs will start next Monday, based out of Centrepoin. We are still signing leases for new places where they can be co-located with police and teachers.

I am very proud to do that because we know we have an immense amount of work to do in this area. The testimony from the Royal Commission over the last couple of weeks from—we need to acknowledge that the people getting up and talking about the Territory are long-term people who have worked here. They say that what we are doing is not working.

This is an opportunity for us to reset the process. We are the only jurisdiction that does not provide any bail support for young people. This is what the outreach workers will be doing. They will also provide wraparound support to make sure we are giving kids, in their first appearance at court, the opportunity to turn their life around.

This is true outreach support. It will not be a nine to five position; we have made that clear from the start through the training. They trained through May Day, and we set the expectation that this will not be a nine to five job.

We are confident that we have a good, skilled, well-rounded group of workers, much like our youth justice officers at Don Dale and Owen Springs. I will be proud to meet these people. It is a big commitment to put your hand up to work in this area, with such scrutiny going on. There is always the opportunity for cheap shots in this area, so I thank those workers for putting their hand up to do this difficult work. They have our full support.

Budget 2017–18 – Roads Infrastructure

Ms NELSON to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and RESOURCES

How is this government's investment in roads across the Territory helping to create jobs in primary industries?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Katherine for the question and for all the work she is doing in making Katherine the agribusiness hub of the Territory, which is a key priority for the Gunner government.

I listened with interest to the Opposition Leader's interview last week on ABC, in which he said, 'Infrastructure needs to be directed into those areas that will create wealth for the Territory, and jobs in the area of agriculture.'

Congratulations, Opposition Leader. I thought you would have read the budget papers more thoroughly. I thank you for your glowing public endorsement of our budget commitment to Primary Industry and Resources.

We have a plan. The Opposition Leader will be happy to hear that, for the first time, our government's infrastructure spending has a specific focus on cattle, agriculture, mining and fishing industries. These industries have been identified as key drivers for Territory jobs.

I will focus on the building of beef roads. This not only gives a great boost to the cattle industry but also provides much safer and more reliable road access for agribusiness and the mining and fishing industries. Our government will continue to invest in primary industries through two key commitments: strengthening and widening existing roads and extending the seal on key priority roads.

I will tell the Leader of the Opposition some of the figures demonstrating this government's strong commitment to investing in roads, for his edification.

In Budget 2017–18, \$289m has been allocated towards upgrading priority cattle roads. That includes \$120m of new projects, including \$31.25m to extend the seal on the Plenty Highway, \$25m to strengthen and widen the Tablelands Highway, \$12.5m to the Barkly Stock Route, \$40m for strengthening and widening the Buntine Highway and \$2m for pavement strengthening and widening.

The list goes on: \$5m for pavement strengthening on rural arterial roads; \$2.5m to continue to seal selected sections of Lajamanu Road; and \$1.5m for safe truckie parking at South Alligator Roadhouse on the Arnhem Highway.

Better roads help industry, and healthy industry means jobs for Territorians. That is what this government is doing. We are investing in the future by investing in jobs for Territorians.

Hidden Valley and Newcrest Development

Mr WOOD to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS

It is my understanding that when the Territory Quad Association was seeking approval for leased land. It operates its events from land next to the mud racing at Hidden Valley. They were told they had to start their races facing away from Berrimah Farm, which is now the Northcrest residential subdivision.

Hidden Valley was built where it is so it would not interfere with residential development. Surely the effect of motor sports noise was taken into consideration before approval was given for Northcrest; I raised those concerns. If the viability of Hidden Valley race complex is now at risk because of noise will the government take back the Berrimah Farm land closest to Hidden Valley and use it for the sentinel cattle? I am sure they will not complain about the noise, and the future of Hidden Valley will not be risk.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, noise restrictions on quad bikes was news to me and to the department when we asked those questions. One would think that when it comes to motor sport and those types of facilities that noise is a factor. The way to get the best out of those vehicles is to be loud. I would not want to see restrictions that would constrain people being able to race, have fun, enjoy their sport and participate in their sport to the best of their abilities.

The advice I have received is that we cannot find information about noise constraints there. Berrimah Farm is quite a distance from Hidden Valley, which is a very special place. Mud racing is a great family and community event; they absolutely love it. I would hate to see noise restrictions there when that has historically been the site that has hosted those sports for a very long time. There is a supportive community there.

I am not aware of noise restrictions and would be very concerned if they had been put there as a result of the Berrimah Farm development. It is a great facility. We love motorsport. We want to see that continue to grow. I have just been informed that the Chief Minister is the patron of MotorSports NT.

I cannot find information saying that has happened. If we need more clarification I will chase it up for you. I have not seen, from the questions I have asked, that there has been anything implemented.

Budget 2017–18 – Frontline Services

Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In one of your unhinged rants in the parliament last week you misled Territorians when you said there would be no cuts to frontline jobs and services. Your government's own budget paper stated:

Other savings measures include:

... agencies not filling vacant positions ...

... a reduction in the efficiency dividend discount for frontline agencies ...

Further, Chief Minister, in a letter you wrote to Territory public servants on 30 March this year, you stated that you asked top bureaucrats to cut \$55m from the budgets; however, come budget day that figure ballooned to \$65m. When will you finally come clean and tell Territorians which frontline services are going? Who will lose their job because of your budget decision?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I repeat my answer from last week: we are not sacking public servants. The Labor government will not behave the same way the CLP government did last term. Despite every attempt of the Leader of the Opposition to make that accusation, we will not operate in government like the CLP did.

I repeat my promise to Territorians: we are not sacking them. We said before the election that we can make savings through attrition. We are not attacking the front line in any way, shape or form. We are honouring our promise of 120 extra police, the promise the CLP broke.

We are putting money into schools to deliver extra teachers and resources for frontline services that were attacked by the CLP. They had their trust broken by the CLP. We saw the CLP break their promises to them and Territorians. They did not deliver on the 120 extra police last term, so we will do it this term. The CLP made significant reductions to teacher numbers in classrooms. At one stage up to 500 staff and support staff were taken out of the education system.

We will not be sacking staff or attacking the front line. We have been public about our savings measures. We said how we would be saving before the budget was delivered. We have constrained recurrent services. We have provided historic levels of constraint to the recurrent side of the budget while investing in job-creating infrastructure.

We know what the CLP plan is; they told us last week and we saw them do it last term. The CLP's plan, when it comes to the budget, is to cut services for Territorians and cut spending on infrastructure. They have one plan, which is to hurt Territorians and cut jobs. Labor has a plan to grow and invest in the Territory.

We have a significant infrastructure budget that will grow and support the Territory. That is what we are doing. Despite the CLP's attempt to run a scare campaign, I make the promise to Territorians that we will not be the CLP government. We are a Labor government. We value the public service and the front line. We will look after Territorians, unlike the CLP.

Budget 2017–18 – Renal Dialysis Treatment

Mr COSTA to MINISTER for HEALTH

How is this government creating jobs by developing essential, high-quality health services for children, families and Territorians who need lifesaving renal dialysis treatment in town and in the bush?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. He is someone who is passionate about health, with a background in health before he joined us in the parliament. He represents a strong and proud area of the Northern Territory.

We are focused on delivering health for Territorians. Unlike those opposite, who failed to plan for the health future of the Northern Territory, we are not ignoring the immediate health needs of Territorians. We have a fair plan for health and the economy through sensible investment in jobs.

I am proud that Budget 2017–18 delivers \$11.1m for new renal dialysis facilities in urban and bush settings. This includes \$9.7m for a new renal unit in Darwin and \$1.4m for two renal ready rooms for remote communities. These projects will create jobs in Darwin and in the bush during construction, delivering on this government's commitment to invest in job creation. Hundreds of Territorians who rely on lifesaving dialysis treatment each year will receive benefit from these upgraded facilities.

Many of these Territorians access treatment at the Nightcliff renal centre. I was there a couple weeks ago and have visited before that as well. That facility is well out of date. It was not designed as a renal facility and, despite the staff doing a fabulous job in that facility, it needs updating. It has become overcrowded and is operating beyond its capacity after years of patch-ups. It simply needs to be replaced. We will deliver that through \$9.7m. It will be expanded with additional renal chairs, including the home therapies unit.

Sadly, the NT has the highest rate of end-stage kidney disease in Australia. We are delivering services for Territorians. One of the benefits of the Nightcliff renal centre is a home therapies unit where people can access their dialysis at a time that is suitable to them. Having to access this service three to four times a week for many hours has an impact on people's lives. People can be trained to provide themselves with their own care using that facility.

Budget 2017–18 provides additional funding with the acquisition of additional dialysis chairs and extended hours across the Territory, including \$5m for the expansion of dialysis treatment across the Top End and \$3.4m for the expansion of dialysis treatment across Central Australia. These initiatives will help address immediate needs and help with planning into the future.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, your time has expired.

Alcohol Mandatory Treatment

Mrs LAMBLEY to CHIEF MINISTER

Can you please clarify, because I do not understand, what the difference is between your government dropping alcohol mandatory treatment before receiving the review into AMT and changing the legislation on the size of takeaway liquor outlets before receiving the review into alcohol in the Northern Territory—how are those two decisions that are not evidence-based, which has been your mantra going into government, different to the CLP's decision to scrap the BDR?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I think this is quite straightforward. The CLP scrapped the BDR within the first week of coming into government and created a policy vacuum in the NT for a significant period of time, while they worked on what their policy could be. That was a patchy response; it was not a policy for all Territorians.

We made it clear before the election that we would bring back the BDR to be operational before 1 September, and we would not scrap the AMT despite the fact that we saw it as a failed policy before the election. The conversations, research and feedback before the election said it was not working. We have now seen that review come in and confirm, essentially, a zero success rate from the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment program. We said we would not create a policy vacuum. We will leave that policy in place until the Banned Drinker Register commences on 1 September.

AMT remains in place until the BDR commences, so there is a transition period. We have not created a policy vacuum, which is really important when dealing with the significant harm caused by alcohol in the NT. We know alcohol is far-and-away the greatest contributor to harm in the NT when looking at health and crime impacts.

We have a distinctly different approach. We said we would not make this decision on day one and scrap the program for purely political reasons; we will let it keep going while we do the work parallel to that to get our program up and running. The Banned Drinker Register is more than just a register and more than just a point of sale intervention. It has a significant clinical response wrapped around it, which the Attorney-General has spoken about in the past.

Mrs LAMBLEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker. The Chief Minister is misleading parliament. That decision to scrap alcohol mandatory treatment was made years ago.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Araluen, please withdraw those comments, unless you want to do it by substantive motion.

Mrs LAMBLEY: I withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you. Chief Minister, you have the call.

Mr GUNNER: The Attorney-General and Health minister released the PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting report in January 2017, which showed that AMT was not working. People were returning to the same environment they came from and returning to drinking, at quite a significant cost to Territorians.

We want to work on things that matter. We will have a very public and strategic evaluation framework for the Banned Drinker Register so we can publicly measure its effectiveness, allowing us to make tweaks if needed. I want to make sure this is across government. It is a distinctly different approach to the one the CLP took.

This week the Attorney-General introduced a bill that provides certainty for our current policy position on floor space. There is an inquiry under way, which we will take seriously. We will be responding seriously to that inquiry when its report comes out. Sorry, the AMT report was released a month ago, not in January.

Budget 2017–18 – Remote Schools

Mr McCONNELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

How is this government investing in remote schools and supporting jobs throughout the Territory? Is the minister aware of another alternative?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know how important the schools are in the Member for Stuart's electorate. They are some of the largest, most remote community schools—Kintore, Kalkaringi, Hermannsburg and Lajamanu.

Budget 2017–18 reflects this government's commitment to investing in children and, particularly, in education and schools. We know that investing in children is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do. The previous CLP government pulled millions of dollars out of schools and slashed more than 500 staff from the education workforce; that is 500 Territorians. The staff in schools are great citizens of the Territory. Those 500 staff pulled from education lost their jobs, and we lost some of the best young teachers in our system.

This government is providing \$1.1bn to be invested in education, including \$141.7m for improving school infrastructure across the Territory. This is about improving school infrastructure, but it is also about the economic stimulus across the Territory.

There will be 18 remote government schools in round one that will get the \$300 000 Building Better Schools grants. These benefits are about school communities having a say in what upgrades they would like, whether that is new toilet blocks, upgrades to libraries, front office areas or irrigation. I was at Gray Primary School on Friday for its school assembly, and the principal announced they were getting new toilets. There was a huge cheer from the kids. They were very excited to be getting their toilets upgraded. It is lovely to see.

Eighteen of our remote schools will benefit from that. It will create jobs for the construction industry. With the Buy Local policy there will be locals in remote communities who will be able to benefit from it as well.

It is more than that. There are some big builds happening. We have talked previously about \$6.5m for Tennant Creek's integrated early learning centre. That is about upgrades to the preschool and putting in new areas for the early childhood kids in Tennant Creek. That will be a great boost to the economy in Tennant Creek.

The other one that is nice, that I have talked about with the Member for Nhulunbuy, is \$1m for repairs and maintenance to Yirrkala homelands. The week after next I am heading to the Laynhapuy homelands to have a look at infrastructure and where the \$1m will be spent.

Alcohol Control Measures

Mrs FINOCCHIARO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE

You stand in this Chamber spouting that you will consult with Territorians and take an evidence-based approach, yet in the same breath you have ruled on alcohol harm reduction measures to suit you. With an alcohol inquiry on foot, why are you now legislating your 400 square metre Dan ban, and why are you continuing to be disingenuous with Territorians by having an alcohol review with a long list of pre-determined outcomes?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory has the highest proportion of alcohol-related deaths and the highest rates of alcohol-related hospitalisations in the country. As a born and bred Territorian that statistic appals me. As the Minister for Health it is my responsibility ...

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

Ms FYLES: It is interesting to hear the passion from those opposite, squawking about this. Do they want to work together to attack these appalling statistics? It is unacceptable that we see Territorians die from alcohol abuse at the highest rate in the country.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, cease interjecting please. I want to hear the answer.

Ms FYLES: As the Minister for Health I am determined to turn these statistics around. We want to provide for Territorians who drink responsibly to access alcohol and get their beverage of choice. But when we have these figures—alcohol harm costs our community \$640m a year—we need to do something different. We have put in place an independent expert panel to review alcohol policies and health, and work with police and industry ...

Mrs Finocchiaro interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call. There is no need to sit down.

Ms FYLES: We are determined to work through this in a cohesive approach. As the Minister for Health and the Attorney-General responsible for licensing, upon being privileged to hold these portfolios I could start to see we were operating in a silo effect.

We need to have a conversation as a community. We need all the evidence on the table and to work together. We need to make sure our licensing systems are supporting our frontline police, unlike the CLP, which turns its back on police and does not provide them with the resources to do their job.

As a government we are determined. Those hard-working police in our community, dealing with alcohol-related harm, antisocial behaviour and alcohol-fuelled crime every day—when you talk to them, and we all do ...

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. The minister has not answered the question. With 40 seconds to go, why are you being disingenuous with Territorians ...

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. The minister has time to answer.

Ms FYLES: I do not understand. The opposition is not listening. We have not predetermined the outcome of this review. We very much welcome this review so we can have an open conversation. I was speaking to the Opposition Leader on Friday about this review. We have Trevor Riley, the esteemed former Chief Magistrate ...

Members interjecting.

Mrs WORDEN: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; some of us are trying to listen to the answer being provided by the minister, and the members asking the question do not seem to want to listen. For the benefit of the rest of us, can they cease interjecting?

Madam SPEAKER: I concur. Please cease interjecting.

Ms FYLES: We have answered the question before us. We are looking forward to this expert panel leading this inquiry into alcohol in the Territory so we can start to turn the figures around and change the culture surrounding alcohol. We are doing that by working with community and those involved in the sector ...

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, your time has expired.

Written Questions

Mr HIGGINS to MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker, my question is a procedural one. Pursuant to Standing Order 114(2), I ask the following: on Friday 31 March this year, in preparation for this year's estimates process, I submitted eight sets of Written Questions entitled '2017 Questions for All Agencies'. These questions, numbered 57 to 64, were asking for a range of statistics, expenditure and resource allocations from ministers up until 31 March 2017.

On Friday 5 May I received an interim response from a number of ministers to Written Questions 58 to 64. The response, which was identical from each minister stated:

Given the NT budget has only just been handed down in the Legislative Assembly, it has not been possible to respond to these Budget-related questions at this point in time. However, the early notice of these questions in the lead up to the June 2017 Estimates hearings is acknowledged and appreciated.

Following the introduction of the Budget legislation on 2 May 2017, it is now possible to prepare responses to these Written Questions. It is intended to provide a response by 9 June 2017, well in advance of the June 2017 Estimates hearings.

Standing Order 114, 'Replies to Questions', reads as follows:

- (1) A reply to a written question must be delivered to the Clerk. A copy of the reply will be provided to the Member who asked the question; the question and reply will be printed in the Parliamentary Record.*
- (2) A Minister should respond to a written question within 30 days of receipt. If a Minister does not answer the question within 30 days the Member who asked the question may at the conclusion of Question Time ask the Speaker to write to the Minister seeking reasons for the delay.*

I would like to point out the short interim response provided by some government ministers took longer than the 30 days provided for by Standing Order 114. Furthermore, I submit that the information the opposition is seeking in these Written Questions does not require information which is provided through the 2017–18 budget. We are only seeking information as at 31 March 2017. Therefore the reasoning provided by those members of the Cabinet who have bothered to respond is insufficient.

The opposition provided these questions to ministers one month earlier than required so the information could be received by my office well before estimates. According to the interim responses provided the opposition will not receive answers to the Written Questions until 9 June, just days before estimates and well outside the 30 days provided by Standing Order 114.

Given the points I have raised, I ask you to rule if the interim responses I previously read out qualify as answers within 30 days, as required by Standing Order 114, despite the fact the opposition did not receive them within this timeframe. If your ruling indicates these interim responses are not answers and therefore insufficient given the requirements of Standing Order 114, I ask you write to the relevant ministers seeking reasons for the delay.

I refer to Written Questions 57, 60 and 61 submitted by me on 31 March to the Chief Minister, Minister for Housing and Community Development, and Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order 114(2) I advise that I have not received responses from these ministers within 30 days. As required by the Standing Orders, I ask you to write to the relevant ministers, again seeking reasons for delay.

ANSWER

Opposition Leader, your Standing Order is in order. When a Written Question goes to a minister and a minister replies, what is in the reply is entirely up to the minister. Whether the receiver of the information likes it or not is not for me to comment on. That is what the minister has sent in reply to the question on notice.

If you have questions on notice that are outside the 30 days, I can write to the relevant ministers asking why there is a delay and if they could answer the question. I will do that as a matter of priority after today.

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