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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

**SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Red Ribbon Day**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, you have a red ribbon on your desk. Today is World AIDS Day. The theme for Australia this year is 'HIV is still here and it is on the move'. World AIDS Day aims to encourage Australians to educate themselves and others about HIV, to take action to reduce the transmission of HIV by promoting prevention strategies and to ensure that people living with HIV can participate fully in the life of their community free from stigma and discrimination.

International Day of People with Disability

Madam SPEAKER: Also on your desk is a ribbon for the International Day of People with Disability, which will be on 3 December. This awareness day unites people around the world in celebrating the achievements and contributions of people with disability. Please wear your ribbons with pride.

Christmas Tree in Main Hall

Madam SPEAKER: I also remind honourable members—I know an email was sent to you—about the Christmas tree in the Main Hall for members, and anyone else, for that matter, to place a gift under the tree for a child. If you could mark 'boy, three to five' or 'boy, seven to eight'. A couple of members have already done it. Thank you, Treasurer and member for—someone else has done it ...

A member: Stuart.

Madam SPEAKER: Stuart, thank you. If you could do that it would be great. They are given to the Salvation Army and distributed to people in need in Palmerston and the rural area. The idea came from the past Member for Brennan, Peter Chandler, and is a great idea. Thank you if you can support that.

Members' Satisfaction Survey

Madam SPEAKER: Each year the Assembly administration surveys members about their satisfaction, which is reported in Budget Paper No 3. Circulated on your desks this morning is the 2016 survey. As in previous years, a non-response is recorded as 100% satisfaction.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: It is called guided democracy. If you want your response recorded, please complete the survey and press the attendant call button for collection. If you have any questions or issues please talk to one of the Clerks at your convenience.

**VISITORS
Humpty Doo Primary School**

Madam SPEAKER: Now to the important part. Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the galleries of two exceptionally bright Year 3/4 classes from Humpty Doo Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Lauren Bird and Shae-Lee Bakker. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

**MEDICAL SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 14)**

Bill presented and read a first time.

Ms FYLES (Health): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the *Medical Services Act* and to repeal the Medical Services (Royal Darwin Hospital) Parking Regulations.

Amendments include inserting provisions to give the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Health the power to create bylaws for, and appoint authorised officers to perform functions relating to, the regulation of traffic, parking and personal conduct within public hospital premises in the Northern Territory.

These amendments are required to address the need to regulate these conduct matters, in order to provide fair and reasonable access to parking, safety of all persons on site and to provide generally for good order and management within hospital premises.

In recent years, with the growth of the population of Darwin and a greater use of medical and ancillary facilities at Royal Darwin Hospital, car parking, the regulation of traffic and general conduct has become an issue.

In early 2016, approval was given by the previous Minister for Health to prepare regulations under the *Medical Services Act* to regulate car parking, traffic and other general conduct at Royal Darwin Hospital. No previous regulations had been made under the act.

During the process of making the regulations, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel identified a shortcoming with the regulation making power contained in section 18 of the *Medical Services Act*, which effectively prohibits the delegation by the Administrator of the day-to-day functions relating to setting of traffic and parking conditions and general management of parking and personal conduct, to provide an appropriate administrative position within the Department of Health or a Health Service.

Due to the impending cessation of the arrangement under which parking was managed by a private contractor, there was insufficient time to prepare comprehensive regulations which also regulated broader traffic management and personal conduct.

As a result, and as an interim measure, the Medical Services (Royal Darwin Hospital Parking) Regulations were made to address an issue with parking controls at that time within the existing provisions of the act.

These regulations set out specific parking conditions and provide for offences for breaches of the regulations; however, there are a number of limitations that the bill introduced today will overcome.

The current regulations have application limited to Royal Darwin Hospital premises only and do not allow for regulation of parking, traffic and other personal conduct on any other Northern Territory public hospital campus.

With construction of the Palmerston Regional Hospital well under way, it is considered highly likely that traffic controls, car parking management and personal conduct controls will also be required at those premises.

The current regulations are limited in scope to car parking management without scope for broader management of other conduct matters within the hospital campus, such as loitering, alcohol consumption, hawking or canvassing.

The regulations set out specific pay and display parking conditions which cannot be amended without amendment to the regulations, by making further regulations.

In sum, they are unusually and inappropriately inflexible as they do not allow for alterations to the current car parking management conditions by those managing the premises. This is problematic for general management purposes and particularly relevant during any redevelopment or construction phase.

Generally speaking, traffic, parking and other conduct matters are regulated under bylaws created by an authority vested with the care, control and management of a certain area, building, road or other asset.

For example, the *Northern Territory Local Government Act* provides that a council may make bylaws for the good governance of its area.

Similarly the *Darwin Waterfront Corporation Act* provides that the corporation may make bylaws for the governance of the Darwin Waterfront Precinct.

The *Northern Territory Traffic Act* and Traffic Regulations operate in a similar way, giving competent authorities the power to set parking conditions, speed limits and other traffic matters by the erection of signs.

Many of the bylaws created by these authorities provide for certain conduct to be limited upon the erection of signs identifying the relevant conduct, and the limitations or restrictions on that conduct.

For example, councils often limit the places where bicycles may be ridden, dogs may be walked or where vehicles may be parked or driven by erecting signs giving specific directions.

Failure to comply with the directions set out on the signs is usually an offence against a bylaw which may be dealt with by payment of a fine or infringement amount, or which may be dealt with by a court if the person elects to be dealt with by a court instead of paying the infringement amount.

The bill I present today will amend the *Medical Services Act* to provide the Chief Executive Officer with suitable powers under a new section 19 of the Act, to make bylaws that are appropriately flexible and permit day-to-day management of parking, traffic and personal conduct at all public hospital premises across the Territory.

It is proposed that bylaws will adopt sections of the *Traffic Act* and Traffic Regulations in the same way the Darwin Waterfront Corporation and Darwin City Council's bylaws do.

Under the proposed amendments and existing provisions in the *Interpretation Act*, bylaws will be able to provide for:

- offences against the bylaws to be regulatory offences
- prescription of penalties
- the ability to issue infringement notices when someone fails to comply with particular traffic and parking conditions set out on signs, such as disobeying parking time limits, parking in disabled bays or areas designated as non-parking areas, and other inappropriate conduct within the boundaries of a declared hospital
- detail on what is to be included in infringement notices
- the ability to issue an infringement notice to the owner of a vehicle if an offence is committed, whether or not the owner of the vehicle has committed the offence, in circumstances where the name of the offender is not ascertained at the time of offending
- bylaws made by the Chief Executive Officer will be capable of general application across public hospitals in the Northern Territory, but operation of them will only commence at specific premises when a declaration is made and published in the *Northern Territory Government Gazette*.

The Amendment Bill includes insertion of a new Part IIIA in the *Medical Services Act*, titled Administrative Matters, with provisions for the appointment of authorised officers by the Chief Executive Officer and giving certain powers to authorised officers to perform their functions under the act, any regulations and bylaws.

An administrative framework is provided in relation to authorised officers, addressing the requirements relating to identity cards that must be worn and returned when a person ceases to be an authorised person.

New Part IIIA also provides for offences of strict liability with penalties for obstruction of an authorised officer acting in an official capacity and provision of misleading information to an authorised officer.

Provisions relating to authorised officers are currently included in the existing regulations which only apply to Royal Darwin Hospital. By inserting Part IIIA into the act, authorised officers appointed by the Chief Executive Officer will have the powers necessary to perform their functions under the act, any future regulations as well as bylaws.

Under existing provisions of the *Medical Services Act*, the person in charge of a hospital, as appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for the maintenance and good conduct by staff and patients of, and visitors to, the hospital.

Further to this, the person in charge has the ability to issue such instructions applicable to staff and patients of, and visitors to, the hospital to secure the maintenance of good order and conduct of staff, patients and visitors.

These provisions are sufficient for the purpose of the person in charge setting parking and other conditions of conduct for the particular premises by arranging for the erection of suitable signs and giving relevant direction to the authorised officers.

Suitable signs include a general sign that bylaws and certain conditions apply within the premises, and signs of a more directional nature for traffic and parking purposes (for example, speed limits, parking angles, direction and/or duration) or about certain personal conduct.

I note that clause 6, section 8, amended of the act provides for a limitation on the power of delegation of the Chief Executive Officer's powers and functions, such that any of the powers may be delegated, except the power of delegation itself and the power to make bylaws.

It is intended that the bylaws will apply initially to Royal Darwin Hospital primarily in order to enable effective management and enforcement of a new time limited parking zone due to commence on 1 January 2017.

Under this arrangement all staff, patient and visitor parking will be free, with time limits on bays in different areas, for example a four-hour time limit.

To maintain traffic flow and convenient access to the main hospital building for patients and visitors, it will be necessary to have the ability as soon as reasonably practicable in 2017, to enforce parking time limits and appropriate parking conduct through the ability to issue infringement notices where necessary. The ability to regulate and manage other matters of personal conduct will also be of great benefit to Royal Darwin Hospital.

A range of stakeholders will benefit from the amended legislation, including patients, visitors, employees and contractors working at hospitals and other organisations located on hospital premises.

Benefits are anticipated to include improved flow of and access to parking in specific areas at hospitals, improved safety, amenity and general experiences on hospital premises.

The proposed amendments to the *Medical Services Act* are designed to future proof the legislation through the power to make bylaws capable of being applied to all Northern Territory public hospitals by suitable declaration in the *Gazette* as and when it becomes appropriate to do so.

I commend the bill to honourable members and table the explanatory statement to accompany the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 13)

Continued from 30 November 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to contribute to the debate on the Liquor Amendment Bill.

Yesterday the government brought a motion into this parliament to see this bill passed on urgency, which means we are debating it and it will be put for passage today, as opposed to sitting on the Notice Paper for the requisite 30 days and put for passage at the next sittings, which are in February.

The opposition did not support the motion on urgency. I made my arguments on behalf of the opposition very clear yesterday. It is a matter of process. The parliament has very particular rules on parliamentary process, and the reason bills need to sit on the Notice Paper and be available for 30 days before debate begins and the bill is put for passage is to ensure fairness to the community and stakeholders, and it affords an opportunity for people to come forward and express their views to their local member, the government, the opposition or the cross bench about whether or not they support the contents of the bill.

Yesterday was the first time people had the opportunity to read the bill and understand its intents and purposes. We were protecting a matter of process and urging the government not to move it on urgency just because they have the numbers, and to afford procedural fairness to those Territorians who want to comment.

I am very disappointed that the Chief Minister and the Attorney-General turned that around in debate yesterday and unfairly and inappropriately decided to attack the opposition, claiming we were not supporting the amendment to the bill and we had thrown away the intention of the bill and our policy position around Sunday trading.

That is not the case and I have restated in the parliament today that yesterday was a debate about urgency. In our view, that was a debate about proper process, procedural fairness and consultation. Today we are speaking specifically on the bill. We are of the view that it is a sensible amendment. The intention in the *Hansard* is very clear that the policy being put forward at the time it was debated and passed was that Sunday trading would not take place. That is clear.

We understand that the government has been made aware of a potential loophole in a section of the act and we accept that. Based on the policy intention, which was clearly articulated in the debate in 2015, we understand today is not a debate on alcohol policy or on whether or not there should be Sunday trading. It is an amendment to a section so as to give clarity to the intention of the act when it was enacted in 2015. To that extent, the opposition supports the amendment.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I have some questions about this bill. I do not know whether to go to the consideration in detail stage, but I tried to read this bill as a layperson does. There are two sections under 32A, with the heading 'Variation of Conditions on Application by Licensee'. The first one is:

... a licensee may apply to the Director-General ...

In the approved form:

... for a variation of the conditions of the licence held by the licensee.

It does not say for a change of the definition of the licence. If you hold a licence as a store, I would read that as 'a licensee may apply to the Director-General in the approved form for a variation of the conditions of the store licence held by the licensee'.

It then says, in 1A:

... an application cannot be made by the holder of a store licence for variation of conditions of the licence, where that variation would have the effect of permitting the sale of liquor for consumption away from the premises on a day on which it is not permitted under the licence as in force immediately before the commencement.

I have problems understanding why there is any 'disjunct', as it said in the second reading, 'between the potential and intended operation of 32A(1A)'.

It seems to me that what we have here is sufficiently clear. If it is not, I would like to hear exactly what the problem is with the existing legislation. The amendments being brought forward today add a 7B, after section 7, where the Director-General cannot vary the conditions of a store licence in a way that would change the licence to a type of licence that would permit the sale of liquor for consumption away from the licensed premises on a day on which that is not permitted under the licence as enforced immediately before the application for the variation was made.

The amendment says the Director-General cannot vary the conditions of a store licence in a way that would permit the sale of liquor for consumption away ...

Ms Fyles: That is what we are putting in.

Mr WOOD: I know you are putting it in. I am just wondering why. That is my argument. What I cannot understand is ...

Ms Fyles: It was the advice we received.

Mr WOOD: I realise you might have received advice, but I do not want to pass something where I cannot see the reason for it.

It is either very technical, or, from a layperson's point of view, it does not seem to make any difference, simply because if the Director-General can only vary the conditions, not the type of licence—I do not see

anything in here that says the Director-General can vary the type of licence. If the Director-General then changed the type of licence, that would be to, I presume, a hotel or a takeaway licence—a tavern licence. Then section 1A would not apply. Section 1A applies to a store licence and it is very clear that we already have a section of the act which does not allow the Director-General to allow a store licence to operate on a day which is not permitted, in this case Sunday or certain public holidays.

I know that is a bit round and round, but my problem is trying to see why we have added two clauses to this Bill. I can understand section 7C to some extent. You are making sure that if there has been an application made that cannot happen. But I am not sure how an application could have stood up in the first place. I think you said yesterday, minister, that there was one application. I am interested to know how that was accepted and the reasoning behind the Director-General accepting it. It seems so clear to me that the Director-General cannot:

An application cannot be made by the holder of a store licence ...

If a store licensee says, 'We want to sell alcohol on Sunday', he cannot. I am not sure the Director-General has the power, under this section, to change the type of licence. I may be wrong. I would not mind the minister explaining where—you obviously have to change the licence if you want to operate on Sunday, but I do not see where that is in the bill and what difference it would make with the changes. I am happy to go to the consideration in detail stage if that makes it easier, because it is a bit hard to ask specific questions.

The issue of supermarket trading on Sundays versus tavern licences being able to have takeaway sales on Sundays was raised with me on ABC radio the other day. I am often asked by the manager of the local IGA in Howard Springs, who is in hot competition with the pub next door, which is about 30 metres from the supermarket—they both compete for business from the FIFO workers at the INPEX village. They try to get as much business as they can, but they want to know why the supermarket cannot sell alcohol on a Sunday.

I would prefer that we did not have any takeaway sales on a Sunday, just for a break. You could still go to the pub for a beer, or buy two cartons if that is what you need for the weekend. People do have fridges. It just takes a bit of planning ahead. But wouldn't it be nice if they were not open on Sundays.

Some takeaway licences are not allowed to operate on a Sunday where they are not attached to a tavern. I might be wrong there. The one at Yarrawonga, Pit Lane, is not open on Sunday. You have to ask why not. Was this agreed to by the Australian Hotels Association and the government?

Whilst I understand alcohol is a commodity it is not a normal commodity. If governments are looking at an even playing field for business you have to ask why a supermarket cannot sell alcohol at the same time as a tavern when it comes to takeaways. We probably would not have this issue. This is about making sure supermarkets do not sell alcohol on a Sunday, but the taverns have the right to.

Except for one group saying, 'We want that right only', one has to ask why we have that limitation on the sale of alcohol. I would prefer we did not sell alcohol on that day. I do not think it would do any harm. Considering the amount of discussion in this parliament about the effects of alcohol in the family situation, it would send out a message that we are serious about some of the social impacts of alcohol; we are not scared to make some decisions that might upset a few people. We might make those decisions because we think it is better for the community as a whole and for people who are subject to violence, domestic and in the street or elsewhere.

This debate lends itself to the debate on whether takeaway alcohol should be available through supermarkets just as it is through taverns and could be available through standalone takeaway alcohol outlets. That is a discussion we need to have. This is an appropriate time to start that discussion because if all those outlets were able to sell alcohol on the same days, we would not be worried about this discussion. This discussion is to protect people with a tavern licence from any chance that a supermarket may be able to compete equally on a Sunday, selling takeaway alcohol.

I wonder whether we should have this debate before we worry about this. I know there is one case there; I understand that and will be very interested to see how it came to be and the reasoning behind the Director-General agreeing to it. We need to broaden this discussion to see where we are going in relation to when takeaway alcohol sales should apply.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, I take a similar position to the one described by the Member for Nelson. Whilst I acknowledge there is a technicality that needs to be addressed on urgency, I have some

discomfort over this matter because there is a sense that there are questions unanswered as to the cause and effect, how this occurred, who it benefits and who is disadvantaged.

Those questions feed into, as the Member for Nelson rightly said, a broader discussion about alcohol. In support of the position adopted by the opposition, focusing explicitly on this as a technicality is one thing; however, I cannot do that easily unless there is an acceptance that this is being played out in a much bigger context and there is much more to be considered.

I am always troubled by this discussion, which we have had so many times in this Chamber. Last week the opposition brought forward a serious motion about the discussion of this topic and it was not properly supported by the government. We have had these discussions and the big issue is not really attended to. We might say words and come to an agreement when we have debates, but so often I go past the park behind Parliament House and alcohol is being decanted in the park from a cask into drink bottles. To me, if we cannot effect some real change right under our noses, all this is a bit academic. Therefore, we have some concerns about the cause, the effect, who benefits, who does not and what the story is behind it. I am hearing stories that cause me concern, but I will narrow it down to being a technicality that needs to be addressed.

This House would be taking the right step if we had consent from government that there now needs to be a bigger discussion as well, particularly when we have this consideration and those questions that need to be resolved.

Last night on the news it said Dan Murphy's is coming to town. That adds another player into this. What is really happening here and what effect does this have on the bigger area? We talk about an amendment but it really triggers a broader discussion on alcohol policy and access to this unusual commodity, which is a difficult issue to deal with in a policy sense. But if we are serious about it we will have to man up and have a serious discussion about it—its availability on a Sunday or otherwise. If we cannot effect change in the park across the road from this parliament where we are making the laws, we are just sounding gongs.

Let us proceed, but I hope we can proceed with an acknowledgement that this triggers a broader discussion about a range of issues that are significantly affecting not just vulnerable Territorians but the way the trade is being conducted in the Territory, the influence of certain decision-makers on this particular requirement for a change right now, how the marketplace is being affected right now and the role a new player, from outside, coming into our marketplace will have on the supply of alcohol and the way in which we respond to this commodity.

From that you can discern there is support for the requirement for a technical fix, but I hope the minister will acknowledge that government should proceed with a broader and respectful discussion regarding alcohol as it operates within the market, effects the vulnerable and whether we can effect social change in the Territory.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I thank members who have contributed to this debate. I will pick up on the points raised by the Members for Blain and Nelson.

In terms of alcohol policy, we acknowledge the abuse of alcohol is one issue, if not the biggest, we are facing in the Northern Territory. It is something this government is committed to addressing.

We have a program we are working on as efficiently as we can. We acknowledge that there is a number of pieces of legislation we need to get right. We will be bringing back the Banned Drinker Register, a simple and effective tool. Police said it was one of the most effective tools they had in dealing with alcohol abuse. As well as the Banned Drinker Register, there will be associated justice pathways, similar to the SMART Court program that was previously in operation. There will also be treatment pathways, and we will resource police so they have the support to do their job on the front line.

This is a whole-of-government approach. I have spoken to the Ministers for Education and Territory Families about what we can do to tackle the issue of alcohol. In the Northern Territory we have some very specific issues, but alcohol and the abuse of it as a drug is an issue across Australia and many countries in the world.

We have a multifaceted approach to deal with the consequences within the justice system as well as prevention, intervention and rehabilitation pathways.

Today we are talking about a simple drafting error that has huge consequences. We spoke yesterday about how this error came about. There is one paragraph being removed, and, Member for Nelson, two paragraphs are being inserted to give clarity around this issue. In terms of your question around conditions, that is the type of licence.

To understand how this came about we need to go back to the debate in 2015. In the second reading debate it was apparent that both the government, the CLP, and the Labor opposition were supportive of not changing the conditions of licences. During the debate, the Minister for Racing, Gaming and Licensing described the proposed effect of the act. I will recap on that:

The amendment to the Liquor Act will enshrine in legislation successive government policy that stores and liquor merchants should not trade takeaway liquor on Sundays.

Section 32A was then amended. In that amendment the word 'commencement' was inserted. By including that word, it was the commencement of the act at that time. Anyone who had a licence before that was covered; there was no way they could vary the conditions or their licence. We have an anomaly, thanks to that one word, where anyone who has applied for a licence and had one issued since 1 July 2015 can potentially change their type of licence to allow them to trade on a Sunday.

The Director-General of Licensing is completely independent of government. Her job is to interpret the legislation this Assembly passes and put it in place. I did not take this matter lightly when bringing it to the House. The questions the Member for Nelson asked were the same questions I asked. I sought advice not only from the Department of Justice, but also from the Solicitor-General for the Northern Territory. The advice I received was that this could be interpreted to allow people to change their licence, which would therefore open up the possibility to trade on Sundays.

It is a technical point we are talking about with the word 'commencement'. To provide clarity we are getting rid of that entire section and inserting those two sections to make it crystal clear that the intention of the change at the time was not to change the conditions of the licence; it was to improve the act. Inadvertently, a drafting error took place, so we are removing one section and replacing it with two for clarity.

The Member for Nelson asked about liquor licences and the conditions of trade. Liquor licences have different types: store; merchant; or tavern. This is a technical point. A type of licence is also included as a condition of that licence, but the provision only talks about changes to the conditions. The bill clarifies that technical point. You cannot vary the type to achieve the same outcome.

This government has not taken this lightly, bringing this in on urgency, but we were advised that it needed to be done because a number of licences have been issued since July 2015, and some of them could apply for this variation, which could provide the possibility of Sunday trading. The mistake is not on the condition or type of licence, but is about the word 'commencement' in section 32A(1A), which we have clarified in the bill to ensure there is no room for error.

The new 7A and 7B provide clarity. The bill is written in plain English to address the concerns that have been raised in the House about the condition and type of licence. We have made it clear. This is an example of a simple drafting error that could have huge consequences.

The reason for the urgency, as we explained yesterday, is that people can apply to the Director-General for a variation in licence, which could then put us in a position where there is Sunday trading taking place. The Director-General needs to have complete confidence in interpreting the act and that is why we are changing it today.

I thank every member who has been involved in the debate. It is a technical issue. It was one simple and genuine mistake that can have a huge, unintended consequence.

This government is committed to tackling the issue of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory. We have a number of plans going forward but we need to make sure we close any loopholes that could have unintended consequences.

If you speak to the Emergency Services workers, our doctors, nurses and police, you will hear that the limit on Sunday trading is something we should be proud of in this Assembly. It has been supported by both Labor and Country Liberal Party governments. We need to ensure that, despite an inadvertent error, it is still upheld.

I hope I have addressed the questions of those opposite. The Member for Nelson was speaking about the two new paragraphs, and we are inserting those to provide clarity. The clarification is in regard to the word 'commencement' and whether the person had their licence before July 2015. It was from July 2015, so people who have applied for licences since then can apply for that variation. We need to clarify that before the next Assembly in February.

I thank everyone for their participation in the debate and I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 5)

Continued from 20 October 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister and the officials from the Department of Correctional Services for providing the opposition with a briefing on these amendments. The opposition supports the intention behind the amendments to the *Youth Justice Act*.

Considering that the previous government made a commitment to reviewing the *Youth Justice Act*, we are happy to see work being done in this space. The government also committed to, and subsequently established, the Youth Detention Provisions Legislative Review Working Group to consider whether the existing provisions are reflective of contemporary detention practices and to address deficiencies in the act.

While it is encouraging to see these steps being taken in the interim, and legislative reform is an important tool in effecting change, it is important to note that the challenges faced by youth detention in the Northern Territory run very deep, and there will be a need for change in the management and operational culture of youth detention centres to ensure the rights of detainees are met, that our staff are safe and community expectations are met.

I thank the minister for bringing this amendment to the House, particularly as it has been a very topical issue this year and was brought to the forefront of Territorians' minds following the ABC *Four Corners* report in July. An own initiative report produced by the Children's Commissioner has helped inform the amendments before us today. Issues surrounding youth justice and youth detention have gone so far as to prompt a Royal Commission into juvenile detention. As an opposition, we welcome the Royal Commission and hope the findings and recommendations will be used to inform government's policy and any amendments to legislation, or new legislation, to that end, going forward.

Regarding the amendments to the *Youth Justice Act*, the minister has stated that the purpose of the amendments before us today is to address issues of immediate public importance with the intention to draft a new *Youth Justice Act*, but waiting on the outcome of the Royal Commission.

The issues addressed by the amendments are twofold. The first is to prohibit the use of restraint chairs on youth detainees in the Northern Territory, and the second is to increase accountability in the use of restraints in youth detention facilities. In order to prohibit the use of restraint chairs, a legislative limit has been placed on which restraints can be used. This is a welcome amendment and it serves to formalise the previous Chief Minister's ban on the use of restraints pending the outcome of the Royal Commission.

According to the Children's Commissioner's report, NTDCS Directive 3.1.6, which allowed for the use of a restraint chair, it was determined it was likely unlawful in the first place, even before these amendments, so it is important they are clearly stated.

Approved restraints under the amendments are handcuffs, ankle cuffs and waist restraining belts. This is a reasonable interim measure; however, I hope the new draft *Youth Justice Act* that the government has committed to will retain some flexibility to accommodate any advancements in restraint technology and standards so the department can remain versatile and responsive and any necessary changes to approved restraints can be expedited should the need arise, rather than bringing it back to the House and going through a lengthy amendment process with the act.

It is important that youth justice in the Northern Territory be able to advance with best practices. Perhaps a schedule of approved restraints could be added to the act, or the minister could have the power to approve restraints as the technology and information comes forward over the passage of time.

The amendments seek increased accountability in the use of restraints by requiring the commissioner to make a determination governing the use of approved restraints. This is done through the expansion of amendments brought in by the previous government which inserted the definition of 'appropriate' in relation to the use of restraints:

... using the restraint in the least restrictive or invasive way reasonable in the circumstances and for the minimum amount of time reasonable in the circumstances.

The amendments before us extend that definition through the addition of section 151AA, clause (c). It states that the appropriate use of restraints must be in accordance with a determination made by the commissioner under the regulations for the use of approved restraints. This is in keeping with the intent of the previous government's amendments.

A close look at youth detention has made it obvious that there needs to be accountability for what occurs inside our facilities.

The further addition to section 158A, inserted by the previous government's amendments to the act, expanded on the register of details pertaining to youth detainees to include details of any assessment during the period the restraint was used on a detainee where assessment means either (a) the restraint can be removed, or (b) the restraint is still necessary. We hope this, too, will bring further accountability to what is happening inside our youth detention facilities.

These amendments have been introduced as an interim measure and the government has committed to a full review into a new *Youth Justice Act*, with a draft to be completed by the end of 2017. We look forward to seeing that in the House next year.

I intend to work cooperatively and constructively with this Labor government to produce an act that is in line with best practices in youth detention, and which will be informed by the Children's Commissioner's investigation, the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians' reports, international human rights standards and the findings of the Royal Commission into juvenile detention.

The Northern Territory Children's Commissioner's own initiative investigation report informed the amendments before us today, to some degree, by identifying issues and recommendations in regard to the way restraints were being used in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre. It is important to note that the report also identified a high number of other issues and recommendations, many of them systematic in nature and indicative of the fundamental changes that are needed in the way we approach youth detention.

Issues the report identified included young people in detention being placed at risk for too long and without sufficient management or observation of them during that time; inadequate levels of service intervention for at-risk youth; at-risk clothing, clothing is required to be rip proof as clothing that is old or worn enough to be ripped has been used for self-harm by detainees; detainees routinely having clothes removed inappropriately by officers using the Hoffman tool, which is intended for cutting items from around the neck of a person attempting self-harm; the inappropriate and unlawful use of restraints; understaffing and insufficient training; unsuitable infrastructure that does not meet the standards outlined in the UN Havana Rules; that the current approach to youth justice is reactive where it should be proactive and therapeutic; and that numerous failures by staff to follow correct processes, even though they are clearly stated in the procedures manual.

It is clear from the recidivism rates of young offenders that the current approach is not working. Strategies will need to be adjusted moving forward, and it is important to keep in mind that an effective youth justice system benefits not only youth, but everyone in the community, particularly the victims of crime.

I have been told by constituents that people in Palmerston are sick of being broken into by the same young people again and again. I think the Member for Blain has echoed those concerns as well, which he has heard from his electorate over the last two weeks. People have told me they find the property loss and damage very frustrating and expensive. Crime is a major concern in Palmerston and across the Territory. Whilst we must keep in mind the rights of young perpetrators, we need to protect the rights of the community and victims of crime.

The Children's Commissioner's report also outlined several recommendations to alleviate the issues discovered. Some of these were to address staff shortages; improve the dialogue between service providers and promote positive outcomes; regular audits of at risk clothing; policy development around the appropriate use of the Hoffman tool; addressing training gaps; and ensuring all cells in detention centres meet minimum standards, as outlined in the Havana Rules.

From the opposition's briefing with the officials from the Department of Correctional Services, we have learned that additional training has already been implemented and clearer directives have been issued by the commissioner regarding the use of restraints to guide staff in youth justice facilities and to keep everyone to account.

That being said, they also identified a need for infrastructure to support youth, and the importance of keeping in mind that the broader issue with youth justice revolves around the family and community life of young people who ultimately end up in detention.

Young people who are released from a youth detention facility end up back in the environment that, more often than not, promoted their offending, and as a result the whole community suffers. I urge the government to take the broader picture into consideration when it comes to the new *Youth Justice Act* due to be drafted by the end of next year. It is clear you are focusing on and addressing the rights of youth in detention, which is important. I ask the minister to keep in mind the community expectations to reduce crime, property loss and damage. By the time a young person is in detention they have, unfortunately, already inflicted some sort of damage or harm to a victim.

These amendments are entirely focused on the rights of the perpetrators and we must remember there are victims involved. The government has taken its first step to react and formalise restrictions to restraints, which were already banned by the previous government, but has made no changes as yet to assist crime reduction and victims of crime.

Victims of crime do not feel they are being heard in the juvenile justice debate. Youth crime in Palmerston is on the rise, and my constituents are very concerned. It sounds like the people of Blain are concerned as well. They want to know that any approach to reviewing the *Youth Justice Act* will be compatible with a broader plan to reduce crime rates. They want to know that changes will not increase the risk of breakouts from facilities and that they will not have to watch the same young people break into their houses, steal their cars, cause trouble and inflict abuse time and time again.

I urge the minister to look beyond the justice system into the other realms that affect offending youth, including health, drug and alcohol misuse, socioeconomic disadvantage and cultural factors, just to name a few.

Another consideration to keep in mind is the safety of staff and other detainees in youth detention facilities. Staff want to know that their interests are being looked after and that we are employing them into a safe and supportive workplace. Members of Corrections staff and detained youth have sustained injuries from other detainees, and it is important we are looking at that environment.

Property damage to detention facilities has also been a significant financial burden on the department and on taxpayers, and sometimes renders areas of facilities unsafe and even inoperable. This is not acceptable and cannot be taken lightly, and it must be part of any broader reform.

While there needs to be consideration for the treatment of youth in detention, we must consider the whole community, what the community expects, the impact on the rights of the victim and the safety and security of our staff. I am sure improvements in those areas will lead the government in the right direction in reforming youth detention.

I do not envy you, minister, as this is an enormous job. It goes far beyond a single piece of legislation, and I assure the government that I will watch the developments very closely. We hope your work into the review over the next 12 months is very positive and fruitful. Again, I urge you to keep in mind all of the stakeholders around youth detention and not just the youths themselves.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an interesting bill because it is not only about technical changes, but also allows one to look at why we are here today to discuss this.

We all know there was an ABC report on youth detention in the Northern Territory, and what we saw on the television was pretty horrific; there is no doubt about that. I visited the newer Don Dale about three months

before this was on the ABC and I saw some of the good things people were trying to do. That is not saying it was perfect.

This issue of youth detention is not new. I complained bitterly to the Labor Party for shutting down Wildman River. I asked Dr Toyne not to close it down, and they closed it down. I am supportive of the Loves Creek boot camp—I hate the term ‘boot camp’, by the way. It has received some good reports.

We should not be dealing in a vacuum as if nothing has been tried. There were mistakes, but I do not want this debate to look like some of the good work being done is not appreciated. There are good people out there. Try the St Joseph’s Flexible Learning Centre in Alice Springs; that is a tough place, dealing with kids who have dropped out. Do we talk about the good people who work there?

When the ABC did that report, I wondered why they had not gone to the newer Don Dale and spoken to the person in charge, who has been in corrections for 20 years, worked in Alice Springs, is of Aboriginal descent and was trying things. That was not a balanced report. Yes, it achieved what it was trying to do. It achieved a huge cry about the state of affairs of youth justice in the Northern Territory, but it did not tell the whole story.

Today, we look at changes the minister has brought in. You have to put the changes into the bigger picture.

One of the changes you will not see in the bill relates to the delegation under the *Youth Justice Act*:

‘I, Mark Lennard Payne Commissioner of Correctional Services under section 216 of the Youth Justice Act, with reference to section 46A(1C) of the Interpretation Act delegate to the person from time to time holding, acting in or performing the duties of the position of Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Territory Families.

‘My power and functions under:

- a) ‘section 1191 part 8 other than sections 154(4), 157A and 157B part 10 and section 206(2)a of the *Youth Justice Act* and
- b) ‘Regulations 30(1), 32, 42, 52, 54(4) and 55(5) of the Youth Justice Regulations.’

That is important. The commissioner has passed over his powers to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Territory Families under this act. You need to look at those sections of the act that are now the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, which are the use of custodial correction facilities to temporarily accommodate detainees, delegation by the superintendent and other assistance from correctional officers.

There is a section in the act delegated to be the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Territory Families. That is a good move. Youth detention is now the responsibility of the Minister for Territory Families. That is a good thing.

The other change is that there is a clause which says when appropriate restraints can be used, and that applies to the regulations. We can go to them a bit later. Then it defines what approved restraints are.

Under the old act it said:

The commissioner may approve a mechanical device (an approved restraint) for restricting the movement of detainees.

My understanding is there was never any definition of what restraints should be used. I suppose I differ from some people in this area, maybe even the Children’s Commissioner, and people who made Facebook comments that I supported the use of restraint chairs. I said to people that this is a bit of legislation I agreed to, based also on the information from the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory that this was good legislation. There was no mention of a chair in the second reading.

I am not arguing that we should not clarify that, but sometimes there has been discussion that certain people supported the use of the chair. I know the department had a disagreement with the Children’s Commissioner in relation to that. It related to what they believed was an incorrect assertion by the Children’s Commissioner. The Children’s Commissioner said, ‘The Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services are unwilling to accept the recommendation going forward. The Northern Department

of Correction Services said this does not accord with the information provided by them.' It said, 'As advised at the time the recommendation was provided to NTDCS, the restraint chair was not approved for use in relation to detainees'.

So there was some dispute about whether or not the chair could be used. Without going back over those discussions, the good thing about the changes today is that they clarify it. I had a look at other acts in other states and all of them define exactly what can be used.

I should make an aside there. One of the arguments that was used in the film by the ABC is that we need restraints to stop people self-harming. I am interested in hearing the minister's point of view.

You have to be careful in this debate. We hope people do not get to a situation where they could self-harm. We are looking at how we can change the system so we never get to that stage. What practical ways do we have of stopping a juvenile in detention who wishes to self-harm if those are the only forms of restraints?

I do not know if you know, minister, but there is a facility at the 11 Mile which was built by your government for youth and adults with particular mental disabilities.

VISITORS
Humpty Doo Primary School

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the Year 3/4 classes from Humpty Doo Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Sylvia Gregory, Alyssa Hinds and Jessica Wright. On behalf of Honourable Members I extend a warm welcome to you all and hope you enjoy your day here today.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr WOOD: There is a facility at the 11 Mile, which was built by the Labor government, that has a padded cell. From people I have spoken to, you will not find many padded cells, but my concern is, if I am being told some juveniles will deliberately try to harm themselves, will these particular restraints be able to do that? What methodologies would be used to stop that happening? It is a very important issue and has been raised with me before.

I also welcome the guidelines for the use of restraints in youth detention. They are from the Deputy CEO of Operations and they give advice on how restraints should be used. It is a whole set of guidelines; it is worth reading those. It is very clear and is, of course, as the Member for Spillett mentioned, based on the Havana Rules, which come from the United Nations guidelines on the detention of youth. They are very clear guidelines for anyone wanting to read it, especially those involved with youth detention. It is fairly clear as to what is permitted in the use of those restraints. I thank the department for that briefing.

Some of these types of documents you never see because they are internal. It is important to know that we are not just dealing with the act. There is another lot of regulations that supports what is in the act. The act also changes the register, and how, when and why the restraints are used. Even though it was in the old act, it clarifies that to a larger extent; that is, 158A. Subsections (d) and (e) have been deleted and replaced with a new (d) and (e). It is similar, but clearer and more precise.

There have been changes to the Youth Justice Regulations. One could argue that they are both relatively similar, but the changes are clearer and more precise, so there is less chance of saying, 'That is my interpretation'. It clearly states, in relation to a determination by a commissioner or superintendent—which I think now comes under the Deputy Chief Executive for Territory Families. The commissioner or superintendent may make a determination in relation to any of the following: the management and operation of a detention centre; the maintaining of order within a detention centre; a grievance or complaint of a detainee; or the health, welfare, safe custody and protection of a detainee.

I do not have any problem with the changes, but some issues have arisen. I have spoken to some people at the CPSU, and they have some concerns. They said youth justice officers have to be like parents, but under much stricter control. We are asking them to do what parents should do, but we are looking at every move they make to ensure they do it in accordance with the regulations. Wouldn't it be interesting if we applied those rules to parents? We might not have these kids in this place if there were rules parents had

to follow to make sure their kids behaved. There are lots of reasons kids are in that position. I am not blaming parents; however, there are some cases where parents do not have any time for their kids. Unfortunately, those kids get into trouble.

There have been incidents where officers have been injured. That is a concern. There is a problem with spitting. You only have to look at the riots in the youth detention centres in Victoria. There may be other reasons for those riots. The government said, 'We pull those people out of that prison until the noise breaks down', because they were concerned those prison officers could get injured. They said, 'Better to break up the prison rather than people be injured'. That is a decision for Victorian Government.

Youth justice officers can get injured. We need to be aware of that. It is not an easy job. They do the best they can but there are times where it must be difficult. The people at CPSU also said there needs to be training in de-escalation and force training.

It was mentioned—I hope I am not wrong here—that a handcuffing was only to be in front. I do not know if that is true; I could not find anything on that. It was also mentioned that instead of having spit hoods—I know the previous Chief Minister said there would be no spit hoods. Why, instead of changing legislation, could the minister not just have made the decision and said restraint chairs would not be allowed? Just a simple determination of the minister, the same way the Chief Minister said there would be no spit hoods. Why did we have to bring in legislation to do it? Why could it not be determined by the minister?

There is concern that there are no repercussions if officers are hurt. Should they get the same treatment as paramedics and police officers? If those people are hurt on the job there are penalties for that.

Training is an issue that has been raised here many times and it has been raised in the news. There was a change. Originally the complaint, when all the trouble started, was that youth justice officers only had about a week of training. Now there is a six-month training program, but it had only just started when all this occurred.

They also said to bring in independent experts occasionally to see how things are working. I think there is talk of having—I am not sure which report I read—an independent person or a person from a statutory authority who is able to walk into a prison and check what is happening. I think that is in the Hamburger report.

I looked at the CPSU's comments in relation to the Family and Children's report, and there are some interesting things in it: a quicker response needed for children at risk; help is not always there when support needed; at-risk kids should be monitored; staff numbers are thin on ground at night and on weekends—I have heard that before—some staff have been there a long time, others turn over regularly, the numbers vary. They mentioned kids on remand; some young children are affected by drugs and they are saying there is no training on how to deal with them and there is a lack of rehab services. Their thoughts were that this legislation should be delayed until after the Royal Commission. I raise those. I do not think there is anything untoward there, but the union has some concerns.

The difficulty will be where to go from here. As I have said a number of times, I would prefer Don Dale to be closed down and a new place set up. I do not want the government to rush that \$15m expenditure just to boost the economy. It was meant to be three years down the track on the budget, but they moved it forward. I thought the reason it was three years down the track was to give us time to work out what to do.

I have said many times that I prefer kids to go bush, but the Members for Spillett and Blain have raised a good question. We cannot just talk about rehabilitation without also talking about what we do in relation to people who continually break the law. Not every child who goes to Don Dale is a meek four feet and six inches. Sixteen and 17-year-old 'children', as they are classified, can be as powerful as adults and can have committed serious crime. The problem government will always have is trying to balance between rehabilitation and punishment. Punishment in this case really means taking responsibility for your actions. If part of the process we are dealing with does not reinforce the fact that a person who does something bad must take responsibility for those actions, then we will not achieve anything.

Minister, you would have received an email from Father Dan Benedetti. I know him well; he is a wonderful bloke who is a prison chaplain. He wrote an email last Thursday. It is funny, I had been speaking about this issue last Thursday; I went into my room and lo and behold there was this email. I had enough time to read it and he wrote, 'Dear Michael, Natasha, Nicole, Gerry, Terry and Dale', so most people would have known who got this.

'I am currently the volunteer Catholic prison chaplain in Darwin which includes Don Dale Youth Detention Centre. I have been working in the Territory since 2002. I have recently sent a submission to the Royal Commission on my experience of Don Dale in the past, but I also wanted to reflect on my current experience of the Berrimah Prison. I really appreciate and value your time so I will keep it as short as possible and precise. I am also contactable ...'

And he gave his phone number.

1. 'As a visitor to Don Dale, I find the actual buildings and facilities inappropriate. It is still a prison and sends a message to youth that you are in prison and this is primarily a place of punishment. The facility is old, run down and lacking proper amenities. The best facilities they can give us for our church service is the old room that used to be treatment services. It is basically an old classroom but the rest of the building is dilapidated and the toilet facilities should not be offered to clients or staff, let alone visitors. Coupled with the news it is asbestos ridden makes it physically and financially impossible to make it into a proper facility.
2. 'In my view, Don Dale is psychologically and spiritually inappropriate. Being the old adult prison, the message youth are getting is that this is primarily a place of punishment and not a place of rehabilitation. This is also a facility which is well known as a place of having many deaths in custody.
3. 'If this prison sees fit to create a new facility, please do not build it next to the existing adult prison at Holtze, Howard Springs. Again, psychologically this connects both facilities like primary school graduating to secondary school. It creates a pathway. We want to work against the idea of prison being a part of male initiation and them becoming a pattern of adult life with high rates of recidivism.
4. 'I understand safety, security and punishment are high priorities for youth justice, but rehabilitation must also be of the highest priority. Perhaps a greater separation between older, more serious offenders and younger ones would help younger, less serious offenders rehabilitate.
5. 'As with all Indigenous issues, they need the cooperation and engagement of Indigenous people, especially elders, family and Indigenous health professionals. Our experience of holding church services with the presence and ministry of our Indigenous elders and Indigenous artwork has been effective.

'Thank you for your time. I pray for you all and encourage you to be leaders of integrity, generosity, hopefulness, service and courage.'

I could not have said it better. He is a man who has people at heart, no matter whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous. I hope those words can be kept for when people look at where we go with youth detention, because that is the way to go.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 brought to the House by the Minister for Territory Families. I also commend the Minister for Territory Families for the enormous amount of work she has done already in bringing this bill to the House, but also the surrounding work that sits behind this type of legislative change, which is immense.

This is an important topic and one I am very passionate about, having spent much time over the years advocating for better outcomes and services for young people in the Territory. Hearing the stories of many young people, not just here but across the country in a range of different settings, is important. Again I commend the Minister for Territory Families for her work.

The bill amends the *Youth Justice Act* and Youth Justice Regulations, effectively prohibiting the use of a restraint chair on children and young people held in youth detention facilities in the Northern Territory. It was only in May this year—although it feels much longer—that the former government passed an amendment to the *Youth Justice Act* allowing the use of certain types of mechanical restraints in our youth detention facilities.

In opposition we strongly opposed legalising the use of mechanical restraints on children and young people. Now in government, it is heartening to see the Minister for Territory Families so swiftly working to repeal this legislation and effectively prohibit such a dehumanising and inappropriate method of restraint.

The ambiguity that remained during the initial amendment to this act in May has been raised on a number of occasions in debate. The Member for Nelson touched on it in his participation in this debate as well. I recall that the minister for Corrections, at that time the shadow minister, raised many questions to be answered and clarified. This goes a long way to achieving that.

The way we treat children and young people who find themselves in the youth justice system is at the forefront of community discourse, which has been raised by other members in this debate. I want to pick up on a point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do not believe community safety and treating children and young people in detention right are mutually exclusive. We can and must do both. I do not believe the eye has been taken off the ball in that regard.

Our youth detention facilities exist for a reason. It is about community safety and making sure there is a course of action to address what is unacceptable, dangerous and disgraceful behaviour. It is a system that needs to work correctly and rehabilitate people, not create, young people who are more hardened offenders than when they went in. They are more likely to reoffend if we do not get this right. This is about community safety and getting our response right. If we do not get it right the consequences for us as a community, in every regard, will be so much worse.

As parliamentarians and leaders in our community we too have to take responsibility for our discourse and dialogue around community safety and youth justice. We need to ensure we have systems and institutions that provide the necessary response and keep the community safe.

In terms of community expectations in this space, in the Northern Territory we have an active Royal Commission into our child protection and youth detentions systems, largely as a result of media coverage of past incidents in youth detention facilities in the Territory, and that is absolutely a response to community expectations. There is an expectation in our community, not just in the Territory but nationwide, that we will work to improve our youth justice system.

The Royal Commission recognises the often intersecting nature of child protection and youth detention. It is the sad reality that many of the young people in the youth justice system have previously been involved with child protection at some point in their young lives, something the Minister for Territory Families and this government certainly understand. We have to take a broader view and look at how these systems intersect. The Royal Commission has the full support and cooperation of the Gunner Government, and there is no doubt that we all need to do better by young people, whose lives are so often defined by neglect and/or abuse.

Public awareness of incidents and inappropriate treatment of young people in our youth detention centres started long before the airing of the ABC's *Four Corners* story earlier this year, although those images remained burned into the minds of many. I stand with many others who were shocked and appalled by those images on *Four Corners*, but it was not the first time some of those terrible images of a young boy in a restraint chair, wearing a spit hood, had come to light.

The *Four Corners* story managed to finally turn the whole of the Australian community's attention to the difficult and heartbreaking reality of youth justice. It is a big job that the Minister for Territory Families and this government has ahead of it. We all recognise the challenge, and it is really heartening to hear the support of the opposition for the work ahead.

What I find most concerning is that the young boy was restrained and covered with a spit hood after threatening to self harm. For me, that case generated endless questions about our mental health Acts and how they operate in correctional facilities, as well as questions about how we help young people in our youth justice system deal with and heal from past trauma and better manage their mental health. Again, I do not think that is necessarily separate from community safety and rehabilitation, and making sure we are creating an environment where young people do not reoffend. It has hardened the resolve that this must not be swept under the carpet. Out of sight cannot mean out of mind, and this must be a catalyst for change in our system.

It gives me great comfort that there is will within the government to make positive changes, with the Minister for Territory Families signalling that consideration has been given to the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians' report, *Human rights and standards in youth detention facilities in Australia: the use of restraint, disciplinary regimes and other specified practices*. For too long, decisions made in relation to youth justice seem to have been based on one opinion rather than on an evidence base. There are so many people who are experts in this field who have been making comments for quite some time.

The Minister for Territory Families met with Making Justice Work some time ago. What a powerful group of local non-government organisations. I will name a few of the services involved in that: the Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit; the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory; the NT Legal Aid Commission; and NTCOSS. There is a range of others, a host of non-government organisations that have put a lot of work into a holistic view of youth justice in the Territory.

It is really great that the Minister for Territory Families met with them so early in the piece. The Minister for Territory Families has acknowledged the work ahead of government when it comes to youth justice, and that our efforts will be heavily informed by the outcomes of the Royal Commission. We must seek a better way across the child protection and youth justice spectrum in the NT.

I have spoken in this House previously about the shame that is our high incarceration rate of young Indigenous people. There are too many Indigenous children entering the child protection system, and too many young people, particularly young Indigenous people, taking their own lives.

I recently attended an oration by Hon Linda Burney MP, hosted by the Menzies School of Health Research, with my federal colleagues Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and Luke Gosling MP. It was about truth telling and its importance in healing in this country. It was a brilliant oration that covered a broad spectrum of issues and the fight for Indigenous rights in this country.

She made some poignant observations about the importance of hope. It is devastating that in so many communities in the Northern Territory a sense of hope for the future is missing. A transition into youth detention and, later, adult detention is all too readily accepted. We can and must do better. That is what this is about for me; this is the start of us doing better. We must build the foundation that allows young people to feel hope for their future instead of hopelessness and despair, which so often underpins poor mental health and poor decision-making.

Whilst this legislation seeks to make one change in a broader scheme of changes, it is an important and bold change that says youth detainees in the Northern Territory cannot be secured in a restraint chair under the *Youth Justice Act*, and it clearly outlines devices that are considered approved restraints. It provides clarity around appropriate methods of restraint and removes any ambiguity that may allow standards to slip.

The Minister for Territory Families mentioned in her initial speech that it is a priority that young people are treated with respect and dignity, while also ensuring the safety of staff. It is a priority for government and the minister.

This clarity comes after a number of organisations came out when we had the debate in May. NAAJA's CEO, Priscilla Collins, at that time said, 'The evidence shows that relying on the use of force is not the way to provide a safe and secure effective detention environment. The main failures of our system have been around a lack of relational security, the poor quality of relationships between staff and young people in their care.'

The Vita review identified key factors contributing to the instability and incidents within Don Dale included a lack of training, the absence of a coherent operating philosophy, an ineffective classification system and an overreliance on inexperienced casual staff at youth detention facilities.

All of that is important, but I bring your attention to the first sentence, 'The evidence shows us that relying on the use of force is not the way to provide a safe and secure effective detention environment'. That is important for us to acknowledge. It goes back to the discourse we have as leaders and parliamentarians in looking at the evidence and making statements based on it.

This is a timely change. It was 17 September 2015 when the Children's Commissioner, Colleen Gwynne, put out a press release based on an own-initiative investigation of the former Children's Commissioner, Howard Bath. It says:

The Children's Commissioner's report dealt with seven distinct issues each containing findings. However, the key findings of the report are:

The second point is:

The use and type of restraints as well as the application of instruments such as spit hoods during the incident was inappropriate.

That is something we have known about for some time. That press release came out 17 September 2015. I am glad we are now making really important change. Our youth detention centres should be places that rehabilitate offenders, not create more hardened criminals who are bound to reoffend.

This is a conversation I have had in my electorate; there is a broad spectrum of views. We will all be having these conversations over time. There has been a lot of interest generated. Every person can identify with the fact that we all know youth detention centres exist for a reason, but we all want to ensure that they work because that is what is in the best interest of our community. We require a holistic view of youth justice.

I thank the many experts and organisations in our community who have remained committed to this work over a long period of time, even when they felt that no one was listening. Once again, I thank the Minister for Territory Families for bringing this forward so swiftly, and I commend the bill to honourable members.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also rise this morning to speak on the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill.

We all know the revelations that came out of the *Four Corners* exclusive report, and I do not I think I am alone when I say that, as a Territorian, I was embarrassed. I felt sick to the stomach from watching it. I received many calls that evening, from within the Territory and around Australia, and I got a lot of Facebook messages from people who know me and know about the Territory and how upsetting it was for everybody.

I really struggle with this sometimes; we think we are a caring society but we saw that footage and it made all of us re-evaluate, especially those who are parents, how our youth could be treated. I can hear the other side, and I have heard them over many months, say, 'You are all bleeding hearts; you have to be tough on crime; you do the crime, you do the time.'

They were doing their time. They committed a crime; they had been sentenced. Regardless of what people think, the Don Dale Centre is not a holiday home. It is somewhere we send our youth because they have done something wrong. Do I think we need to do more about the wraparound services for the youths in there? Yes, I do, absolutely. The wraparound service is not only for those who have been sentenced, but also for the rest of the family.

I speak now as a proud Aboriginal Territorian who has many family who have been through that centre and been sentenced to serve time there. There were many stories that we were personally told by family members about things happening there. It was difficult to watch that and then have to say to my cousins, 'I'm sorry; we should have believed you when you told us what was going on.'

We still work through that as a family not only because we have to in order to heal, but also to gather our thoughts and our belief in humans and a society—when we do something wrong we serve the time, we come out and we move on. Sadly, that is not the case. We see a revolving door. Until we acknowledge and address that, it will continue to be a revolving door.

We have an investment of millions of dollars to lock up youths and adults. As we have already heard, this is not new. It is happening all over the world. A few people commit a lot of the crimes, so they keep going through the system. We have a revolving door in our youth justice system, so guess what happens? They get to be old enough and get put in the big prison, and then we spend more money. The money we invest in our youth is money well spent for the future. We need to focus on why these children are in there; we really do.

I could tell you many stories about family, family friends and their children, my cousins and people close to me roaming the streets because the streets are safer than going home. The police might pull them up and chuck them in the van and say, 'We are taking you home', but they get home and the parents say, 'What are you doing here?' It is not always safe to go home to your parents and your house, not only in urban environments but also in remote environments, where we have issues with housing, which this government is addressing. We need to provide more community housing as soon as possible.

When you have youths playing up and roaming the streets—we are talking the ages of nine and 10 onwards—it is not a good situation. We chuck them in the paddy wagon and take them home, but it is not the safest environment. Sometimes there is a reason they are on the street, because it is safer for them.

The previous government took funding out of youth services in Alice Springs and then complained about the increase in youth crime. They came up with a strategy which became—I have a few words in my head—a disgraceful strategy, where they said there was a problem, but they were not investing in it. They

withdrew the money—I think it was about \$4m—out of youth services in Alice Springs, then the youth crime rate went up and they said, 'We will solve the problem by giving \$2m', back into a system they ripped \$4m from. It was a classic political strategy where they took the \$4m out, the problem got worse and then they tried to solve the problem by giving less money. The problem has not been solved; youth crime is still going up.

Yesterday the Member for Araluen said crime is getting out of control in Alice Springs. We were at Richie Hayes' place for a Tourism Central Australian dinner. Minister Wakefield and I, the minister for Tourism, the Members for Namatjira and Katherine and a few others were there. On the way home we were lucky enough to be on the first bus back from the premises; the second bus was rocked, which was quite scary considering there were many interstate visitors and it was dark.

Youth crime is not new, but what did the previous government do? It did not invest enough money into youth services; it took money out. This government has a plan and this is part of it. I commend the minister and her staff and department for doing a lot of work on this. We acknowledge that we have a Royal Commission happening and there will be work occurring after that Royal Commission is finished. I welcome the Royal Commission because it is needed. I am glad there is a focus on our youth in the Territory, and not only the Territory but around Australia. They are our future and we must get it right.

There are many good stories on the flip side about wayward youths who have become outstanding citizens of the Territory.

VISITORS

Adult English Program at Charles Darwin University

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I draw honourable members' attention to the presence in the gallery this morning of members of the Adult Migrant English Program at Charles Darwin University. On behalf of the Chamber, I extend a warm welcome to you and hope you enjoy your time in the Assembly this morning.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr VOWLES: I acknowledge the crowd too; that is fantastic.

I sat through four years of opposition, and being the last sitting day I am glad we have brought this up. I was really disappointed in the last sitting of the 12th Assembly when the former minister, who I had high hopes for as a traditional Aboriginal woman in this Chamber, said during debate on mandatory sentencing that it is better that our youth are in prison, that they are better off and safer because they do not drink and they clean themselves up:

... they do not drink, do not get into trouble, are fed three times a day, are with their family members, sleep in language groups and come out of prison much healthier.

I am glad the former Member for Nhulunbuy said at the time, in representing us as an opposition, what a sad indictment it was that the Member for Stuart, the minister at the time, said it was better that youth were locked up. That is not the answer. We do not want more people locked up; we want to keep them out of there.

NAAJA said what a sad state of affairs it is and that prison is not the solution. Whilst the minister identified the problem, it is not the solution. I quote from NAAJA's Jonathan Hunyor:

The millions of dollars we spend on locking people up, we should be spending on improving the lives of Aboriginal people.

I 100% agree with that.

I was really disappointed; I thought there was a wonderful opportunity for the former minister, the former Member for Stuart, to stand up for her people and tell her story from her lived experience about the reasons we need to keep people out of prison, not send them in there.

The increase in Indigenous incarceration rates is really concerning for me; it is outrageous. I always say the three Ws: wine, women and wheels. That relates to 80% of our prison population. They have either been

locked up for drinking; had a fight with a woman, which leads to domestic violence; or they jump in their car drunk and get pulled up for that, as well as no rego or licence.

We need to be a brave government and address that. Maybe we could have something in regard to community licences and registration for cars in those areas, so that if they are just driving around a community there is a different classification.

What is also really concerning for me is the rising incarceration rate of our Indigenous women. It is something we never speak about. We always say 80% of people in prison are Indigenous but we never break that down to how many are women. There is an alarming increase in incarceration rates for Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women in Territory prisons.

As the minister said, it is a priority that we treat all young people and youths with respect. I fully support the Minister for Territory Families identifying the government's ongoing support for the Royal Commission. We recognise this; we know we have to act quickly.

While we acknowledge that we have to do something, I want to point out that we have a sensible balance in providing the use of suitable restraints. We are not speaking about restraining chairs anymore, which had to happen. We are speaking about handcuffs, ankle cuffs and waist restraining belts. For some people even that will be too much. We have already heard some voices saying that is too much but they are used in detention and they have been sentenced to detention.

I will highlight the newly-inserted section 151AA(3):

... complements the existing safeguards in requiring that for the use of approved restraint to be appropriate; it must be in accordance with a determination made by the Commissioner.

This is from the second reading speech from the minister.

The effect of the proposed amendments is to place a requirement on the Commissioner alone to ensure that a determination ...

I will move on.

The determination will prescribe that approved restraints are used as a last resort where methods of engaging a youth detainee to de-escalate behaviour have been exhausted.

'Have been exhausted', not as the first point of call. The second one, which is out of the second reading and really resonated with me, is:

The bill omits paragraphs (d) and (e) from section 158(1) and inserts a new paragraph (d) to specify that the superintendent of a detention centre must record the period for which the approved restraint was used, including the date and time at which the restraint was applied and the date and time at which the restraint was removed.

These are very important inclusions in the bill.

I have a serious issue with the restraint chair—the wraparound service around psychological and emotional damage of people in that situation. We need to find better techniques. Other industries and the NGO sector have different techniques to de-escalate situations—regardless of what time it takes to de-escalate a situation and minimise the psychological effects and risk of self-harm.

This is what I am saying about long-term wraparound services. The people in there have been sentenced for something they have done. They should not be punished for the sentence while they are there. We need to make sure when they leave the facility they, as well as their family, have the tools to ensure—or at least try—they do not to go back to the detention centre.

In this Chamber we know of people and families that have a continual cycle of people going through the system. We have worked with and know these families. Some of them are my family. What are the core issues of these people and their families that we need to address so we do not have this revolving door?

I commend the minister, her staff and the department for bringing this in. I commend the Chief Minister and our Caucus for making this a priority for our government. We are committed to doing the hard yards and what is right for Territorians in the long-term to produce better outcomes for our children.

I have full confidence that we are doing all the work and are on the right path. We, as a government, will make tough decisions on behalf of Territorians. That is what people expect of us. We want a system that is robust, fair and treats everyone fairly within the rules. We will be vigilant in how we treat our youth. We understand it is our values and actions that set the example that steers the direction they choose to take in life. We are a government that should support this and be brave with our youth. Invest in them early and it will pay off later.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today to support the Youth Justice Amendment Bill and the work the minister and her staff have undertaken in this area.

As we have heard, this bill provides for approved restraints for use on youth detainees, being handcuffs, ankle cuffs and waist restraining belts. Furthermore, the bill provides for operational accountability regarding the use of restraints. This is perhaps the most important provision; staff at youth detention centres have to know the proper procedures to be adopted and when and where to use them.

I, like most right minded people, was deeply moved when I sat in front of my TV on that evening in July when the ABC's *Four Corners* program aired footage of a child being restrained in a chair with a spit hood covering his head. Surely I am not the only one who had a shiver run down their spine because of those images and their similarity to the barbaric scenes of executions in electric chairs.

Perhaps it is my deep lifelong philosophical and ideological opposition to the death penalty that triggered my response, but I was moved to tears at that point. Much more of the footage from the program caused deep anger in me as well, such as watching the same child as a 10-year-old being set upon by three rather large adult men and other brutalisation towards him at various points.

It does not matter how deserving the child was to be in detention; this is not a question of being in detention, as some people have incorrectly interpreted. This is a matter of how we as a community deal with those youth while they are in detention.

The debate is not about crime or being tough on crime. The provisions of this bill are about how we treat children in detention and, therefore, the long-term results of our detention system. Detention is, or should be, about how we rehabilitate offenders. It is not about an immediate fix for current crime or crime rates.

The concept that detention is punitive does nothing to fix crime rates or re-offending. In fact, this bill and this government are looking at crime rates as the problem it is, a long-term problem, not one that will be simply fixed by detention.

As the Chief Minister has said on a number of occasions recently, the problem of crime requires a range of responses, from acute responses to medium and longer-term responses. The acute responses to the problem include providing our police service with the necessary resources to react to events, but also to provide patrols to assist in identifying possible crime and criminal activity. These responses will help the community and the immediate stresses they are dealing with. Although these responses will not correct the problem, it is the medium and longer-term responses that will start the process of reducing crime and recidivism.

As the Chief Minister has repeatedly stated, it is about giving children the best possible start. That is the priority of this government. It is the policy concentration that will begin the process.

The Member for Spillett referred to community expectation in her response. It is my view that community expectation is anathema to dealing with problems of re-offending and recidivism. Community expectation is piqued by political expedience; it is not informed debate. Community expectation is heartfelt but, ultimately, reactionary. The solution to the problem of youth crime, if there is a solution, will come from proactive reforms not kneejerk reactions to immediate crises. Everything we do has long-term effects.

I have been the victim of crime. When I lived in Sydney my house was repeatedly broken into and my personal belongings stolen. I do understand the feeling. Since moving to the Territory my experience is that the level of crime has reduced markedly. That is, however, not to demean other people's experience; it is just mine. I have certainly felt that surge of anger on returning home to find my back door kicked in once again or waking in the morning to find my bedroom ransacked around me while I slept.

I saw the children responsible for the break-ins. They used to wander the streets and alleyways to scout out the houses. I knew who they were but I felt for the police in terms of their ability to track them down. They were very quick. They always took one of our bikes.

The answer is not to simply lock these kids up ad infinitum. Yes, that soothes my personal sense of revenge. My home has been broken into and my belongings stolen; the person responsible should receive appropriate punishment including, if appropriate, a custodial sentence. What we really need is a system to deal with youth and other offenders in such a way that reduces the likelihood of that person re-offending. That is the single most important result our detention centre system should set out to achieve.

Systematic, state sponsored revenge will not reduce the likelihood of the detainee re-offending when they are released; they have to be released, that is part of this problem. The reaction is often about being tough on crime and offenders and often fails to take into consideration that these are property offences and you cannot lock these people up for life. They have to be released, so what we do with them and how we treat them while they are in detention is the single most important thing we can do as a community and as a government. It is not about being soft on crime; it is about being smart on crime. Being smart on crime is all about reducing the likelihood that our houses get broken into and our goods get stolen. It is also about being humanitarian in our response. This takes more time to see results but they are the results we all want.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS **Question Time**

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I advise that the Minister for Housing and Community Development will not be in Question Time. He is on his way interstate to attend a meeting. I have advised the opposition and Independent members of that and I will be taking any questions on his behalf.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT **Christmas Greetings**

Madam SPEAKER: I take this opportunity, while we are all in the Chamber, to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Congratulations to everyone who was re-elected. Thank you to the staff, the DLA staff, the two Clerks and everyone behind the scenes, who you all know. It was a lovely Christmas party, Chief Minister. Thank you.

I hope no one over the Christmas holidays glues themselves to any railings. I do not want anyone abseiling off buildings. Have you not seen the news, Treasurer? Protesters glued themselves to railings during Question Time in the federal parliament.

Mr Higgins: I could not work out how they glued themselves.

Madam SPEAKER: Glue comes in plastic containers now, not metal.

Thank you, everyone. I wish you a safe, prosperous and happy Christmas time with your family and friends.

VISITORS **Mitchell and Cooper O'Leary**

Madam SPEAKER: I welcome, in the gallery, Mitchell and Cooper O'Leary, who are home schooled. They have come to view Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Madam SPEAKER: Pay careful attention.

**YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 5)**

Continued from earlier this day.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I thank all the members for their contributions to this debate. It has been a very important and strong debate.

There were some questions from the members on the opposite side, and I want to address those. I thank the Member for Spillett for her encouragement that we will work together on this, because it will be an important, difficult and emotional issue. We need to work through it in a way that will have positive outcomes for young Territorians. We will all need to work together.

The Member for Spillett raised the issue of workplace safety, which we have talked about significantly with the unions. We have held many meetings with them. Staff are meeting regularly with unions to ensure they are comfortable with the new policies and procedures being put in place and are feeling skilled enough to deal with incidents. They are also reviewing incidents as they arise so that learning on the ground can be applied to the policies and procedures.

The purpose of this bill is to give staff stronger guidance on the use of restraints in youth detention centres in the Northern Territory. As the Member for Nelson pointed out, there were some issues with clarity in the previous legislation. This bill gives an important expansion to the determination-making power relative to restraint use. That was the purpose of the legislation change, so that there was clarity for staff.

In regard to workplace safety, it will always be safer for staff if they are using restraints as a last resort. I know, from the footage on the *Four Corners* program, there were incidents where there were up to six adults in a very small space doing very difficult work. There are times when children may need to be restrained, but the less often we do that means the less everyone, the child and staff, are at risk. That is an important point.

We will continue to work with unions. We will continue to work through the issues. If we are to work through this very difficult issue, then we will need to do it all together.

I thank the Member for Nelson for his contribution to the debate. As always, it was very thoughtful. I understand this is an issue you are very interested in personally. I look forward to working with you ongoing. I thank you for taking the time to be briefed by the department. A member of the opposition also took that briefing and I thank you for your input. You made a great point about delegation. I take this opportunity to thank the Commissioner of Corrections, who has been very supportive of the changes to the machinery of government and delegating to the Deputy CEO.

If there are any thoughts as to why it is delegated to the Deputy CEO, it is because the employment arrangements for the CEOs are slightly different under the Employment Act in the Northern Territory, so it is most appropriate it sits with the position of Deputy CEO, not the person.

I thank the whole public service for its work in moving youth detention out of the correctional services and into Territory Families. It is not a small undertaking. One of the reasons we committed to looking at the *Youth Justice Act* is that the complexities of moving it from corrections without legislative change were almost impossible. I thank everyone for their work in this complex area.

Member for Nelson, you also talked about the approved restraints. In your speech you mentioned approved restraints and why we did not specify the chair. The Member for Spillett also had some questions about whether that provides flexibility for people on the ground as new types of restraints come forward. We felt that defining the specific restraints that can be used on youth detainees in youth detention centres in the Northern Territory would give clarity and transparency to this issue. If that is to change again, it is important that it comes before the House. I feel very strongly that it is an issue of such public importance that if the power sat with the minister the Northern Territory public would not feel satisfied there was enough transparency in the process. We have provided specific information so that we can have transparency. It is an issue people have been very concerned about, so we want to ensure that if there are changes, people know about them and they are scrutinised by the House. For us, it is a transparency issue.

You talked about engagement with youth without restraints. There are other options in terms of restraint. The department is using a hierarchy model. There are certain decisions made at each stage starting with de-escalation and then moving up through the types of intervention that are needed. We will always ask

staff to use restraint as the last resort, and there is now a hierarchy of getting permission to use restraints. If restraint needs to be used then it needs to be clarified from a high level, from somebody outside the organisation. That is an important step forward to ensure there is extra transparency and documentation around that.

There is medical restraint that can be used, but that is under the *Medical Services Act* and can only be applied by a medical practitioner. If a situation is escalating and there is concern about a person self-harming, medical advice is sought in that circumstance. Concerns have been raised in regard to access to medical issues, and I have been working with the Minister for Health to increase access to medical resources in the facility and increase access to psychological services. We are working together on a plan to ensure young people who are in detention are getting access to regular medical treatment.

I was given a case study of a recent situation in which there were some behavioural issues as a result of someone changing medicine. It was handled by the doctor attending the site at the time. The doctor gave medication and used restraints in negotiation with the unwell person, and then they were transported to the hospital.

We are finding that by the use of external supervision we are supporting staff to not have to go to that escalated level. In terms of the use of restraints, if someone has self-harmed, that is a case-by-case assessment by the staff on the ground. We are making sure they have had additional training and they review of previous incidents so that they are learning the best ways forward.

We will be keeping the Youth Detention Restraint Practice Advisory Group to keep an eye on how policy development is going. It is important that as many people have eyes on this process as possible and that there is input from staff, unions and experts from outside the department.

We will be continuing an equality improvement process to ensure that we are moving forward and improving what we do every day. We want to build a culture in our youth detention centres that supports staff learning and development, and ensures that we are doing the best job possible for young people in detention.

The Member for Nelson asked why this amendment is required and why did we not just ban restraint chairs. We felt it was important that this was a legislative change, that it was clear in the legislation and that there was transparency. Spit hoods were banned by the previous government but they are also seen as an occupational health and safety measure rather than a restraint. That is why they are not fitted under this legislation. Workers have access to spit masks so they are protected if a child is spitting, but it is an ongoing issue on which we will have to continue working with staff.

In terms of the determinations, the commissioner, or the person he has delegated those powers to, is the only person who can make a delegation. One of the reasons we went for delegations in this legislation is because it means the detainee has to have access to information if it is in a determination.

Under this legislation, young people coming into the detention centre need to be provided information pertaining to their conduct. There is a set of rules around when and how restraints will be used, which will be provided upon entering the detention centre to ensure increased transparency for these young people. We have set up a process to ensure that happens and that information is explained in a way that is understandable. This increases the rights and responsibilities of the detainee in knowing what the process is if restraints are used on them, and they can judge if restraints have been used inappropriately. This is about making sure it is clear to young people coming in where the boundaries of this legislation start and finish.

There have been concerns raised with me in regard to someone not following this procedure. The result is the same as with any policy that is not followed in the public service. The processes are exactly the same. We would go through a process and it would be taken very seriously. That is the information we are providing to staff.

I want to update you on independent oversight. It is something we will continue to work with. I suggest the Royal Commission will have some views on this as well. At the moment the Children's Commissioner can inspect the youth detention centre at any time. We have ensured the phone she can be contacted on is accessible. We also need to have feedback from the public and experts in this area on what the best model would be for the Northern Territory, particularly if we are expanding the options for youth detention in a range of ways, such as the boot camp at Loves Creek, which you mentioned was overseen. There are a lot

of issues to consider in that process. I am sure you will be, Member for Nelson, but I encourage you to be involved so we can access your wisdom in this area. I think that answers all your questions.

I also want to comment on the speeches made by the Minister for Tourism and the Member for Fong Lim. This was a big issue when we were all campaigning. We heard people's distress on this issue. People had very strong views that the pendulum had swung too far. Whilst we want young people to take responsibility when their behaviour is unacceptable, many people felt that this was disproportionate.

Even victims of crime told me that the system would not help anyone. This is where we want to keep our focus. We want to ensure that the juvenile detention system is working in a way that helps young people become strong contributing members of our community. That is the aim of what we are doing today.

Because we received such strong feedback throughout the election campaign, I am proud to deliver the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, which delivers on the promise we went to the election with, to prohibit the use of restraint chairs for youth detainees. This is achieved in the legislation by the amendment specifying the devices that may be used on youth detainees: handcuffs, ankle cuffs and waist restraint belts; therefore excluding all other restraint devices for use. The Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 also provides increased accountability for the use of approved restraints on youth detainees by requiring the commissioner to make a determination.

On 25 July 2016 ABC *Four Corners* aired an investigation into the Northern Territory's youth detention centres. The report showed CCTV footage, which was the most powerful image in that program. There is no doubt those images had a significant impact on the community. I acknowledge the Member for Spillett saying this is a difficult and challenging portfolio. The child protection and youth justice system requires reform. It is not just a Northern Territory issue; we are seeing this as an issue across Australia, particularly in the youth justice system.

We have a real opportunity in the Northern Territory to make some important changes. As a government, we have committed to fully cooperating with the Royal Commission on the protection and detention of children in the Northern Territory. However, while we wait on its findings, as a government we need to consider taking immediate action on this specific issue. We have committed some money to the Alice Springs and Don Dale facilities. The letter from Father Dan, which I also received, was a very strong message about the state of those buildings and how they do not support the rehabilitation of children. We need to ensure these facilities are safe while we develop plans for new buildings. This is work we need to start now while we wait for the Royal Commission because the process can take a long time in government. We will keep the Royal Commission updated on any work we do.

We are in a position where we know some of the things we need to do. Building new buildings is one of them. It is clear to anyone who has been in those buildings that they are not what we need. We want to get started on that process. We are consulting with the non-government organisations on the model for rehabilitation that we need to put in place. This is not just about buildings. Buildings take a lot longer in planning, so we have put a stake in the ground to ensure we have money in the forward estimates period. I look forward to working with the NGO sector on these issues in developing this model.

I want to address the worker safety issue. We recognise that the safety of youth detainees and staff are linked together. The amendment and new drafted determination will provide both staff and youth with clear guidance regarding what restraints can be used and the circumstances in which they can be used. This creates a more predictable environment which is conducive to a calmer, less reactive interaction between staff and young people. Predictable and consistent rules and reactions from staff create a greater sense of safety for the young person. This in turn is intended to reduce the severity and frequency of incidents in the centre and improve the overall safety for both staff and youth detainees.

It is important to think back to that footage where people were in and out of small spaces in difficult circumstances. They were quite stressed. They were high-risk scenarios for everyone involved. We need to make sure restraints are only used when necessary.

The proposed change to legislation and the creation of the new determination will be complemented with training that strengthens the ability of staff to de-escalate the behaviours displayed by youth detainees without the use of restraints, while also preserving the option to use restraints when needed to ensure the immediate safety of staff and detainees. There has been discussion that this means children will not be restrained, but that is not true. There are very clear guidelines as to what restraints can be used and when they can be used, as well as a better recording of this to ensure there is accountability. Better training and better policies are wrapped together in one big package.

The Member for Spillett was implying that this cannot be just one thing that we do. It is not; this is part of a whole package. We recognise that we need to have a range of things happening at the same time to address the significant issues of youth crime and our youth justice system. We need to ensure the immediate safety of children who are in the custody of the state. We also need to prevent children going into the system and provide them with pathways out of the system to prevent an intergenerational, lifelong interaction with the justice system. We need to intervene as early as we can because the evidence tells us that the earlier we get in, the fewer kids we will have in this system, and the fewer kids we have in the system, the more we can focus on ensuring they receive a good service that helps them become good, strong, productive members of our community.

The Territory has a small population and because of that we need to ensure everyone in the Territory has the opportunity to fully participate in our community. This is one of the ways we will help young people to find their place, by the way we treat them in detention. It gives a strong message to young people about how we value them. Some of the most powerful responses I had to *Four Corners* were from young people who were distressed that this was happening to other young people. It sends those kids who are not doing the wrong thing the message that they are not valued as well as other citizens. We need to understand that what happens in youth detention has wide repercussions for all of us as a community. We need to make sure the rehabilitation works and those precious dollars we invest in children are for strong and positive outcomes.

The purpose of the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is to specify the approved restraints that may be used on youth detainees—that is, handcuffs ankle cuffs and waist restraining belts—prohibit the use of restraint chairs and provide increased accountability as to the use of approved restraints on youth detainees through requiring the commissioner to make a determination governing the use of the approved restraint.

I will now draw your attention to some of the key features of the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, including restraints approved for use on youth detainees. Section 151AB specifies that only the following restraints are approved for use on youth detainees: handcuffs, ankle cuffs and waist restraining belts. This gives effect to the government's intention to prohibit the use of restraint chairs on youth detainees by specifying the types of restraint that may be used on youth detainees. This is an important commitment, made before the election by our government. It is a very significant policy shift on the use of restraints in the Northern Territory. We can reassure the Northern Territory public that the process for approving restraints for use is now safeguarded by increased regulatory oversight.

This bill, when passed, means legislative amendment would be required to permit any additional device for use as an approved restraint.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families) (by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill now be read a third time.

MOTION

Establishment of an Inquiry into Options for Political Reform

Continued from 30 November 2016.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the Chief Minister's motion to establish an inquiry into political donations under the *Inquiries Act*. This is a very important motion that, if passed by the Assembly, will give real momentum to Labor's commitment to restoring integrity to government.

The key recurring theme in the Chief Minister's speech was trust. What are the reasonable expectations of the community when it comes to political donations and campaign funding, and do Territorians have confidence in the current arrangements? In the wake of the Foundation 51 scandal there is a major challenge confronting us all to re-establish confidence in the community that we serve its interests, not our own.

It is very easy to take the key foundation stones of our democratic institutions for granted. We are blessed in Australia and the Northern Territory to live in democracies which thrive on the separation of powers, the courts, parliament, the independent electoral commission and institutions designed to protect the rights of our citizens. Above all, it is the right of eligible citizens to vote in free and fair elections based on a universal franchise that is the heart of our democracy. Any threat to these foundation stones, particularly when they

jeopardise the trust of the community and the way we are governed, undermines our democracy. This is the real tragedy of Foundation 51.

In the Northern Territory, and other Australian jurisdictions, electoral law requires the disclosure of political donations to parties and their candidates. These provisions are designed to protect our democracy. Put simply, their purpose is to eliminate or minimise the risk that money—an often dirty word that no one really wants to speak about when it comes to elections—donated in secret can influence decisions made by political parties and governments.

People, companies and organisations have the right to support the parties of their choice with political donations. We accept that fact, but they must be disclosed as required by the provisions set out in the *Electoral Act*. Foundation 51 did not do this and we all know that; it was set up as a separate entity with the deliberate intention of circumventing these disclosure provisions. Why else would its director state:

I will be mortified if this information becomes widely known. It must be closely held for obvious reasons.

Let us not forget that hundreds of thousands of dollars of in kind and cash support was provided by Foundation 51 to the CLP in secret. Now it is not so secret. This arrangement strikes at the heart of our democracy and begs a fundamental question: why the secrecy? What did Foundation 51—by extension the CLP—have to hide?

Without the leaks from within the CLP itself, subsequently exposed by the media and debated in this Assembly, no one would ever have known about the deliberate evasion of the disclosure laws by Foundation 51. This secrecy was a direct attack on laws designed to protect our democracy. That is why there was so much community anger when the secret operations of Foundation 51 were finally exposed. That lack of trust was felt by all of us during our election campaign.

The Leader of the Opposition said he was not involved in the Foundation 51 operations, and I accept his assurance on that. I am encouraged by the support he, and others opposite, have indicated for the Chief Minister's motion today. Others in the CLP knew about Foundation 51 and the support it was providing directly to their party. The leaked emails prove that the members of the CLP management committee and former Chief Minister Adam Giles knew about the activities of Foundation 51 in relation to the CLP.

It is now a matter on the public record that Foundation 51 did not disclose on time the substantial financial support it was providing directly to the CLP. That is why the investigation into Foundation 51 is included in the terms of reference for the proposed inquiry. That is why it is so vitally important. The people have the right to know about the full extent of breaches of the *Electoral Act* by Foundation 51 and, by extension, the CLP.

The inclusion of Harold Nelson Holdings in the terms of reference is indicative of this government's determination to adopt a bipartisan approach to the inquiry in the public interest. We heard the Chief Minister speak extensively today in Question Time about rebuilding that trust. That is just part of it. We need to restore trust with the community, so let us not forget that a number of the terms of reference are forward looking with the intention of designing a more transparent disclosure system and assessing funding arrangements for elections. Most of us in the House want to see that happen.

I am sure honourable members will support the assessment of possible initiatives in the terms of reference, such as the caps on campaign spending, full or partial public funding on political campaigns, caps on political donations, and more frequent and quicker declarations and disclosure of political donations. These are all very good components that are being proposed by this inquiry.

We have a responsibility in the community to develop the best possible funding and disclosure regime. We do not want to see what has happened in other places happen here. I am sure all members of this Assembly would support that objective.

This applies to all members of this parliament, and anyone who has run for public office, because we all know it costs money to run a campaign. I have had my fair share of those over the last 15 years, and it takes money to improve our communication and get to everybody, given how big the Territory is. It is so important.

It is true that we also value the support of our families, friends, donors to our political parties and campaign workers. It is essential that we comply with the disclosure provisions in the *Electoral Act*. That is a very

reasonable expectation of us, our parties and our sponsors. The inquiry provides an opportunity for new and transparent disclosure provisions in the *Electoral Act* in the public interest. It also provides an opportunity to examine, in detail, other measures such as public funding and caps on campaign expenditure.

I welcome the Chief Minister's commitment to electoral reform as part of Labor's agenda, and the government's agenda, to restore integrity to all levels of government.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the motion for an inquiry into political donations. I commend the Chief Minister for bringing this motion to the Assembly yesterday. It is a long time coming in the eyes of the Northern Territory public.

In his speech the Chief Minister talked about fundamental elements of democracy. These elements make up our identity as a democratic system, as well as the rules that govern the processes ensuring elections are fair and equitable. These fundamental elements underpin the jurisdictions across the country and directly affect how Australia is governed at the state, federal and local levels.

As a newly elected member to parliament, it is a privilege to be part of the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly. My campaign across the Arnhem electorate was a tough one, tough but enjoyable. The Arnhem electorate is, geographically, the fourth largest electorate in the Northern Territory. As I previously mentioned in the House, some of the communities and towns within my electorate are spread far and wide. These communities consist of Alyangula, Angurugu, Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt, Milyakburra on Bickerton Island, Numbulwar, Ngukurr, Urapuntja, Mataranka and Mulgga Town Camp, Manyallaluk, Barunga, Beswick, Weemol, Bulman, Gapuwiyak, Balma, Ramingining, Mirnatja, Jabiru and its town camp, Manaburduma, the Kakadu homelands of Mudginberri and Djirribiyak, Whistle Duck and the one place I have not visited in the electorate yet, Werenbun, which is near Edith Falls in Nitmiluk National Park. To travel around the Arnhem electorate whilst campaigning was a large effort, however, an enjoyable one.

To travel around such a large electorate during a campaign costs a fair bit of money. The costs that must be covered include fuel—in some communities it is up to \$2.50 per litre for diesel—accommodation, commercial flights, charter flights and incidentals. I was lucky enough to use my own four-wheel drive vehicle during the campaign which significantly saved me costs during this campaign period.

I am a proud member of the Territory Labor Party, which provided me with immense support during the Territory campaign. During the campaign I received financial donations directly provided to the Labor Party which were centrally tracked in order to meet the requirements and regulations of the *Electoral Act* administered by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

As the Chief Minister stated yesterday, there is nothing wrong with political donations, provided they are made with no strings attached and are fully disclosed within the timeline set out in the *Electoral Act*. There are clear and strict processes that must be followed, as outlined by both the Australian Electoral Commission and the Northern Territory Electoral Commission. When we look at a situation like Foundation 51 and the CLP, there are many questions and concerns. As the Chief Minister pointed out yesterday, Foundation 51 spiked a high level of public interest and we, as the new Labor government, feel it is the public's right to know the full extent of any breaches of the *Electoral Act*.

It will be interesting to learn the full extent of what the inquiry will find in regard to political arrangements between Foundation 51 and the CLP. It will give new meaning to the saying 'looking after your mates', and not in the noble sense. It is neither a matter of 'us versus them' nor a case of 'let's get them'. This inquiry will be an independent and impartial inquiry into the process and reporting of political donations across the board.

Our Labor government is fully committed to being open and transparent to the Northern Territory community. It was part of our pre-election commitment to restore trust and integrity to government. As outlined in the discussion paper tabled by the Chief Minister yesterday, having government processes that the public trust is crucial in having a fair and just society. The community must feel confident that their elected government will be open to scrutiny and be transparent in its decision-making processes. Keeping the public's faith that our Territory government is governing for the people, by the people and with the people, has huge implications now and into the future of politics in the Northern Territory. The previous CLP government took Territorians for granted and displayed arrogance and disrespect for the community and the Acts which govern them. It dismissed the intelligence and heart of Territorians and it

cost it dearly. This was clearly evident with the result of the August elections and the wipeout of the CLP members to just two. It is an unprecedented result in a Territory election to have an opposition made up of just two members, who are outnumbered by our five Independent colleagues in the Assembly.

As the Chief Minister stated yesterday the inquiry will provide the opportunity for input from the general public, political parties, independent candidates, honourable members of this Assembly and any other interested persons to contribute to the important public debate.

I commend the Chief Minister for bringing this motion to the Assembly and urge all members to support this motion in order to restore trust and integrity, not only in our government but in the processes of our parliament so that Territorians are confident in their representation by the elected members of the House and the political parties, or independent values, which we each represent.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also rise in support of the Chief Minister's motion for an inquiry into political donations.

Restoring integrity to government was an integral focus of the Michael Gunner Labor team in the lead up to the Territory election in August, and this request for an inquiry is vital to fulfilling that commitment. In order for us to carry out our work in an open and transparent manner as responsible parliamentarians, we must ensure we share information with Territorians as we were elected to represent their best interests, not our own.

Elections are costly. I have learned this first hand through my campaign, and I was fortunate enough to be supported by the wonderful Labor team as well as friends and family. Unfortunately, as a single 34-year-old woman, I did not have the financial capability to pay all the costs on my own. I acknowledge that political parties and individuals must raise funds to run a competitive campaign, and I understand the hard work this entails. I pay my respect to all of those candidates who contested the Northern Territory and federal elections this year, as they too raised funds and sought donations to promote their candidacy as a part of their campaign.

Campaigning is an essential part of any election as it is important for constituents to have a clear understanding of who we are, the platforms we are campaigning on, whether we are affiliated with a political party and what we hope to achieve if we are lucky enough to win the seat.

In my electorate there were seven candidates contesting the seat of Karama. There was a clear difference between the amount of electioneering material produced by each candidate, which was directly linked to their financial outlay. I am not sure if the electioneering material influenced voters, but I received feedback from voters that the visibility of such material helped with the recognition of candidates. I also received feedback from a number of constituents who felt the use of corflutes on fences and roadside stalls was a waste of time and money; however, I received countless moments of recognition from community members because they had seen my electioneering material.

We know all campaigns require investment and there are businesses, organisations, community groups, individuals, family and friends who want and are able to contribute financially to the campaign of someone they believe in, someone they trust and someone they know will work hard every single day to make this wonderful Territory even better. Each donation is important and allows a candidate to have greater flexibility in determining how they would like to engage with constituents and promote their key messages during their campaign.

The Territory Labor campaign focused on clear and effective communication with Territorians. We worked hard as a united team to ensure that Territorians received correct information on what Territory Labor stands for, the quality of our Labor candidates, our plans to support Territorians and to demonstrate that we understand Territorians deserve better representation in parliament.

Political donations is a sensitive topic that requires clarity through disclosure. Every Territorian deserves to know where these donations come from and to be assured that there are no strings attached to such donations. I applaud the introduction of this inquiry; it provides us with the opportunity to review how donations have worked in the past and, more importantly, to create guidelines as to how this can work better in the future. It will allow us to consider ways in which the needs of the voter are focused on by providing a fair system for each candidate to be considered. We must continually look at ways in which we can better serve Territorians. We must look at ways Territorians can feel more included in political processes but this can only be achieved if we start by restoring integrity to government.

Labor released the *Restoring Integrity to Our Government* trust and integrity reform discussion paper in the lead-up to the election. This discussion paper outlined our commitment to deliver an open, accountable and transparent government for all Territorians. During my many engagements, both within and outside of my electorate of Karama, this commitment was well received. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, but there were hesitant individuals and groups who feared this commitment was just more political rhetoric. As such, some were left wondering if a Labor government would and could deliver on this commitment. It is vital that we do.

An excerpt from Michael Gunner's introduction at the beginning of the discussion paper reads:

The community must have confidence that all Territorians are treated without fear or favour by Government, and that the resources of government are always employed in the public interest.

This statement sums up exactly what we intend to achieve through this inquiry; it will help to ensure that Territorians can have faith that all parliamentarians are solely focused on the needs of their constituents and the Territory in its entirety, not the needs of a few financial contributors.

I also quote a list contained within the discussion paper that outlines our understanding of the importance of having an open, transparent and accountable government. Within our discussion paper we acknowledge that:

- *Restoring integrity to Government requires leadership at the highest level of Government through actions, not just words.*
- *Government held information belongs to Territorians, and apart from a tight prescribed set of circumstances should be made freely available to the public.*
- *Scrutiny, accountability and transparency is a crucial feature of a healthy, democratic society, it protects against corruption and wrongdoing and produces better decision making and greater benefits to the community.*
- *The integrity framework of Government must be holistic and complimentary, each part of the framework must together to support open, transparent and good Government.*
- *Individuals and organisations within the integrity framework must have sufficient autonomy and resources to perform their role.*
- *Maintaining a healthy integrity framework relies on continuing review of the effectiveness of the system.*

We acknowledge that public donations are an important issue and that this is not the first time we have raised the need for such an inquiry. I am aware that a previous proposal to establish a similar inquiry was voted down in parliament in late 2014. I feel it is timely and relevant for this proposal to be raised again for consideration.

The Chief Minister and my colleagues raised considerable issues with the link between Foundation 51 and the CLP, so I will not recap on that topic. I will say, however, that we must learn lessons from previous political donations in order to implement better practices for the future.

In closing, the Chief Minister proposed this inquiry to help restore integrity to government, and put in place a fair and transparent process that ensures the government delivers in the best interest of all Territorians. I am pleased to commend this motion to the House.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, prior to the recent election, one of Labor's three core promises was to restore trust in government and us, as representatives of Territorians, and the work we do for them and the decisions we make.

This initiative is one step but the government has taken other steps along this important road since being elected in August. They include:

- announcing its intention to set up the Northern Territory ICAC to restore public confidence in the institutions of government and the conduct of public officials

- the introduction of the Public Information Amendment Bill to stop odious use of government departments for overt political advertising
- the setting up of the Select Committee on Opening Parliament to the People to consider ways to make parliament more inclusive to the broader community.

On arrival at this place I was fortunate enough to be appointed to the Selection Committee and to be elected as the chair of that committee. While I am relatively new to this place, I have found the work of the Selection Committee incredibly interesting and thoroughly enjoyable.

I have found the role of reforming parliament to improve and increase interaction with Territorians, to be an exciting one. In early November a number of the committee members, including the Members for Araluen, Stuart, Sanderson and myself, visited the parliament of Queensland to witness the portfolio committee system—it has been in use there for the last five years—and discuss the benefits and advantages of the system with Queensland parliament members.

We spoke to members of the Labor government, the Liberal National opposition, the Katter Australian Party and Independents. There was universal support for the portfolio committee system used there. The select committee now has public hearings listed for this coming Monday. We had 12 comments on the green paper that was tabled at the last sitting of parliament, and have another written submission on the way. I look forward to the responses from the public on that hearing, and on moving forward to making some solid proposals for this parliament to consider for reforms to the committees system and opening the parliament.

I firmly believe that opening parliament to the people is a fundamental reform that will improve the way we govern and underpin a reconnection with the people of the Territory. However, opening parliament to the people is just one of the government's initiatives.

The people of the Territory deserve to have some faith in their government and elected representatives. They deserve to have faith that those representatives are in parliament fighting for them, doing what they said they would do when they met them on the street, at sporting events, door knocking and in various media appearances while campaigning.

I am fairly confident that no one ever got elected by telling the voters they were more interested in their developer mates than they were in the community, more interested in the mob that wants to overdevelop their particular suburb, or that they would rather support some lobby group with little, if any, direct interest in the local area.

We all know what it is like to campaign, to meet people in our electorates, do the long hard hours of door knocking and listening to the concerns of our constituents. That is how each of us was elected. We gained the trust of our individual electorate. I cannot imagine throwing that away, but that is what some elected representatives do. Unfortunately when they do that we all suffer; it is guilt by association.

Yesterday the Chief Minister said that this is the first step in the electoral reforms outlined in Territory Labor's paper on restoring integrity to government. These electoral reforms walk side by side with the parliamentary reforms that are already under way with the select committee. The reforms include opening parliament to the people, the establishment of ICAC and the introduction of the Public Information Amendment Bill. Together these reforms will pave the way to restoring the trust that is sorely missing in our political institutions.

The actions of a few can cause detriment to many. In the case of parliament, the actions of a few rogues diminished the efforts of the rest of us. I am a newcomer to this place but even before I started here my reputation was tarnished among many people simply because I had chosen to enter the political arena. Given I was a lawyer before coming here, some might say that I had no reputation at all to tarnish.

It is incumbent on us, this 13th Assembly, to begin the process of rebuilding trust and restoring community confidence. If we do not undertake this important task, we will see a further erosion of trust and confidence. I am not sure there is that much left.

This motion is a very important part of that process. Democracy is a resilient beast but it can also be fragile. When parliamentarians are seen to be taking undisclosed payments from groups with specific interests, this undermines the system and public confidence. Unless there is some independent mechanism in place to deal effectively and publicly with these issues when they arise, we are all diminished.

Electoral funding is core to public perceptions around impropriety. How a candidate or a political party obtains funds must be open and accountable. When the source of those funds is undisclosed or worse, actively disguised, the voters rightfully asks themselves, 'Why?'

Large corporations and wealthy individuals donate money to political parties. Some, but not all, unions provide funds to the Labor Party. None of this is particularly disturbing, and in the case of the unions there is an historical link. This is not necessarily about buying favour; it is more because those entities see their own interests as more closely aligned with one party's principles than the other. I personally see no problem with this as long as it is fully and transparently disclosed.

I suppose the question is begged where an entity donates money to both parties. There may be some philanthropic purpose in promoting the democratic system, but then I do not recall any instances of those entities donating money or amounts to independent candidates.

I will not buy into a debate about the last four years of the CLP government, as tragic and dysfunctional as it was. Nor will I suggest that either side of the political fence has a mortgage on the moral high ground in this area. However, what I do suggest is that whatever has gone on in the past, we have to do better in the future. It is up to us to establish a robust set of ground rules that provide a durable base upon which we can begin rebuilding public confidence as we move forward. The establishment of an independent inquiry, as provided by the Chief Minister's motion, is the appropriate way forward. The independent inquiry will look into the issue of political donations and other relevant issues. It will report back with recommendations on how best to amend current rules or the implementation of new rules. This is long overdue.

The inquiry's terms of reference will also provide for the consideration of funding of political campaigns. In the Territory there is presently no public funding, and political campaigns are undertaken largely at the expense of the major parties. Individual candidates provide additional funding, often through fundraising activities. In this model, independent candidates are at a distinct disadvantage. As has been stated, elections are an expensive business. The inquiry will consider whether there needs to be some restriction on spending or whether there might be some scope for public funding. I will not pre-empt the result of the inquiry but I am confident it will appropriately consider these issues and report back to the government accordingly.

I note the Member for Blain's comments in his speech yesterday about how he supports the inquiry, but he hopes it does not become a witch hunt. I wholeheartedly agree with those comments. In my past life I had some experience with the lingering aftermath of such an inquiry, which raised its head again today. It is nasty and spiteful and causes unnecessary and irreparable injury to a person's reputation, and the personal toll it takes on the individual's health and mental wellbeing is immeasurable. It is simply not enough to have avenues of appeal, as successful legal appeals do nothing to repair the underlying damage. The damage is immeasurable and, more often than not, completely unseen. For this reason, and the reasons stated by the Member for Blain, I entirely agree with the comments that the inquiry is a great opportunity to look into the nature of political donations and the funding of election campaigns, but any good work will be undone if the inquiry is perceived to be a witch hunt.

I agree with the Member for Blain that the community is looking for a new way. Throughout my doorknocking, the people of Fong Lim consistently told me they were sick and tired of governments being elected and using their numbers in blatant attempts to vindictively skewer their opponents to take them down personally. I have never understood the need of some politicians to follow this path. It seems either incredibly short-sighted or completely oblivious to the inescapable fact of political cycles. In any event, I am with the Member for Blain; the inquiry has to be independent and be allowed to follow its own course, conduct its own inquiries and inform itself as it sees fit, without influence.

We have already recognised the necessity of this approach, which came out last week in the debate on the motion put by the Member for Goyder. It was regarding planning issues over the last four years and setting up an inquiry into those issues. The appropriate way to deal with that is, as the Deputy Chief Minister outlined, through an ICAC. That is the best way forward, to allow an independent body to consider those.

Part of the amendment proposed by the Opposition Leader and some of the comments of the Member for Nelson include expanding the terms of reference of the inquiry to include unions. As for the amendment to investigate unions, I had to think, 'Really? Has no-one studied Australian political history?' How far do you intend going back with that? Will it really discover anything we do not already know? Does it go back to the strikes of 1880? I remind members opposite that is where it started. The Australian Labor Party was formed out of those strikes, out of that very significant and important time in the history of workers' rights. The Australian Labor Party was formed as, and remains, the political arm of the broader labour movement. Yes,

the Labor Party receives funds from unions. That is not hidden. That is open and disclosed. The unions are the industrial arm of the Labor movement. It is true, in times past the unions have exerted more influence on various parliamentary Labor parties, but while the relationships remains strong, it is not the same as it once was.

None of this warrants the inquiry spending any of its precious time, or taxpayers' money. The relationship is known and it is clearly understood by the voting public. If there is any doubt about that relationship, it is regularly brought up during election campaigns. The inquiry is about finding out about those who attempt to hide the fact that they are donating money to political parties or individual politicians. These are the donations that undermine the system. They are the donations and donators that undermine the public's faith in the system.

I do not have a problem with unions, corporations or individuals choosing to donate money to a political party. I understand why certain sectors of companies and individuals might be precluded. I say this, as I do understand the purpose of the New South Wales legislation in precluding property developers. That sector does not seem to have a good track record. Usually I do not like tarring everyone with the same brush, but there is a level of consistency the New South Wales government cannot ignore.

In general I do not have a problem with an individual donating money to a political party on the basis of personal choice, or, in the case of a company, how that corporation sees its best interest being supported by a future government. This is a very different concept from donating money secretly in hopes of garnering some political favour or favourable determination. This is why we have disclosure and declarations of interests. If the public is unaware of the donation and, as a result, unaware of the underlying interest, there can be no faith in the decisions made by that government.

One example is Coopers Beer. Since moving to the Territory I have almost exclusively partaken in drinking Coopers. It, as I understand, donates money to the Liberal National Party. Coopers does not donate money to the Labor Party. Sometimes when I think about this it disturbs me, but not for very long. I find I am able to get over it fairly quickly. The truth is, for whatever reason, Coopers chooses to donate its money to the Liberal National Party. It may be for family or ideological reasons. It does not matter. It donates money and those donations are disclosed. Everybody knows about it. I must say I am not as sure about those individual companies who donate to both parties.

What it comes down to is disclosure of donations and interest. This inquiry should not be sidetracked wasting time and money on inquiring into the nature of donations such as those; it should spend its time making its inquiries into donations that are disguised or undisclosed. If it does that, I look forward to the report it provides to the parliament at the end.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, at the last election I ran as an Independent for the first time, which is totally different to running as a member of a political party. I made the decision well prior to the election that I would refuse all offers of political donations. I made this decision because I did not want to compromise people; I did not want their names to go on a public document that could be scrutinised and judged by people throughout the community.

One thing I am very aware of is that people can be persecuted because of their political affiliations. Even though I am just an Independent running in one of 25 seats in the Northern Territory, even people connected to me could be persecuted, judged or marginalised; they could miss out on jobs, or miss out on social opportunities and invitations.

As we all know, the Northern Territory is an incredibly small jurisdiction of around 245 000 people. Everyone knows everyone, and everyone is interested in each other's networks and connections. As an Independent candidate I made the decision well in advance that it was too compromising for people to give me money. I decided to finance the whole campaign myself, which was run on a shoestring. It was an economy package; I shopped around and I got some good deals. I think the whole thing cost around \$16 000. It could be a little bit less or a little bit more. It was not an enormous amount of money. As a member of a political party the first time I ran in a by-election it was more than triple that. It is a different experience to be an Independent and to run as a candidate in an election as an Independent. I did not do any television advertising. The choices I made were the cheapest possible choices for my advertising and the handouts and fliers I used.

This motion before the House is, by-and-large, a good thing. One thing I agree with is scrutiny of these bodies like Foundation 51 and Harold Nelson Holdings. Let us look at how they function, the relationship

between them and the Northern Territory Government, and between them and the political parties. Let us have a close look. Why not? Let us just go for it, take the lid off the can and have a good look.

I always have a problem when a lot of resources and energy are spent on going backwards, on looking at what happened in the past. I am not one to do that. I know you have to do that to some extent, to clear the air, to provide a pathway forward sometimes.

It bothers me that this motion says:

... whether there have been any breaches of the Northern Territory Electoral Act in relation to donations made to political parties in the Northern Territory over the last 10 years.

Ten years is a very long time. I would hate to think that an enormous amount of time and resources would be put into that. Let us move on. Let us reflect a little and move on. Ten years is taking away from the future, the opportunity to focus on what is next and what could be, rather than what happened in the past. I do not agree with those very long timeframes.

I worry that this could be a very cleverly disguised witch hunt for the Labor Party. As a member of this Chamber for the last six years, I have heard the Labor opposition and Labor government talk endlessly about their suspicions around Foundation 51. It has been a constant theme since my time in this Chamber began in 2010. They are obsessed with Foundation 51 and obviously think there is a lot more to it than meets the eye. There could be; I do not know. This motion is really a way in which they can look at Foundation 51 without looking bad.

This government is very conscious of looking honest, open, caring and lovely. 'We do not want to look like the former government that went after us for Stella Maris and other anomalies; we will do it in a sensitive and well-conceived manner.' It is not particularly well-conceived from my perspective. It looks like a witch hunt. It is a nicely worded motion, but it is a bit of a witch hunt.

I just read out point number eight, which has six points under it, five of which pertain to Foundation 51. The last one pertains to Harold Nelson Holdings and:

... the activities of Harold Nelson Holdings and its compliance with the Northern Territory Electoral Act.

Let us get real. If we going to have an inquiry, let us make it fair. Let us dig into Harold Nelson Holdings just as much as Foundation 51. Let us be fair, open and honest. Both of them probably have things that happened in the past that could be found as questionable or irregular. Let us make it a fair inquiry and not a carefully disguised witch hunt, which I suspect it is.

I have some concerns about full or partial public funding of political parties and candidates. Why should our small jurisdiction of the NT pay for anyone's political campaign? I do not agree with that philosophy. There is not enough money to go around as 70% of our revenue comes from the federal government. We do not lift our weight in regard to generating enough income for anything, pretty much. We are a fully dependent jurisdiction, and here we are considering spending millions of dollars to pay for political campaigns.

How much did the Labor campaign cost in August this year? My guess is in excess of \$1m. The poor old CLP, on the bones of its bottom, probably had trouble scraping together less than \$1m for its campaign. The modest estimate would be \$2m to \$2.5m just for the major parties to conduct their campaigns a few months ago. If you add the exorbitant costs associated with the Independents campaigns—all of about \$100 000 between the five Independents who ran—you are talking about another impost on the taxpayers of the Northern Territory. I just do not agree.

If you want to run for public office in the Northern Territory then stump up, do your fundraising and pay for it yourself. I believe that. It is difficult. Some people find it more difficult than others. The reality is we are good income earners. When I was a member of the CLP I would contribute about 4% of my income to the CLP; I know the Labor Party all contribute closer to 10% to their party as a matter of course, as a member of parliament representing the Labor party. There is a generous source of income for political parties from their members of parliament, if they have many, to pay for campaign expenses. With 18 members in this Chamber, the Labor Party would be generating a bit of money each fortnight purely through the levy political parties put on their members.

It is not fair to put more pressure on the Northern Territory budget and the government departments that are scratching around for funds. If you want to spend more money in one area then you have to get it from

somewhere else. Are you going to take it from health or education to pay for your election campaigns? I do not think so. It is not a good idea. That is a decision that lacks integrity. That is my personal opinion. I refused donations from anyone because, in terms of integrity, I thought I could afford to pay for it myself, and I did.

The other question I have is, who appoints the person under section 4A of the Northern Territory *Inquiries Act* to inquire and report on options for the reform of political funding and donations in the Northern Territory? I assume it is the Chief Minister. This person should be chosen by a more objective panel of people, for example, maybe the Public Accounts Committee. The person who is chosen cannot have any past or present political affiliations. That is the bottom line for whoever does the job. They cannot, at all, be seen to be siding with the CLP, the ALP or any other political faction or member; they have to be seen as politically neutral. That person will be particularly hard to find in the Northern Territory but not impossible.

Those are the comments I wanted to make. In general terms, I support the establishment of this inquiry into options for political reform, but I do not support the public paying for our political campaigns and I do not support a witch hunt into Foundation 51. I support a general inquiry into all types of entities that may or may not have a relationship with political parties or a role in fundraising. That does not just include Foundation 51 as the main offender. Harold Nelson Holdings has also been identified by the government as being a body of concern; perhaps there are other such entities and bodies that also need to be investigated. Those are the comments I wanted to make but, in general, I support this motion for an inquiry into political reform.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the Chief Minister for bringing this motion into the House. The inquiry into political donations was one of our key election commitments, and it is what Territorians want. We all understand the public's concerns. The public has lost trust in governments, not just in the Northern Territory but across Australia and probably the western world as well. There is a perception that politicians are getting into it for themselves, and a view of 'snouts in the trough' which people are cynical about.

This inquiry will, hopefully, lead to major change which will restore the public's trust and confidence in politicians and government. It needs to be very clear to the public that the reasons people donate money are not to get favours later, have the opportunity to talk to ministers or to have the ear of government. This is about clarity and transparency around donations. The Member for Fong Lim spoke very well about that, saying, 'Yes, we know people donate, but it needs to be about clarity and transparency'.

I will only say one thing about Foundation 51. This is just a reminder that there is a police inquiry into Foundation 51, and we will now let this inquiry do its business.

In the three months since we have been elected this government has done exceptionally well on the platform of restoring trust. We have already introduced legislation on an ICAC to restore confidence, worked on the *Information Act* and, as the Member for Fong Lim said, the Select Committee on Opening Parliament to the People. Three big things have happened in the first two sittings of this parliament. The rubber has hit the road for us in doing the things we said we would for Territorians: to restore trust, transparency and integrity to government.

Last night we saw the launch of the book *Crocs in the Cabinet*. It was about the antithesis of the trust, integrity and transparency of government. The Member for Araluen thinks the inquiry is a witch hunt, or was alluding to that, but I can assure her that it is not. It is about doing things that will restore Territorians' trust in government. My colleagues and I stood for parliament because we want to see a better Territory. We want to see government restored to being a position of honour, a position we should accept and be very grateful and humble to hold. I stood to make a difference. I will live and die in the Territory. I have a grandson now. I want to make sure all our children in the Territory have a bright future.

When governments start to break down, when there is no transparency, when there are allegations of corruption and people do not trust government, we see a breakdown in society. I commend the Chief Minister for what he has done in such a short time in government. I hope these things can move quickly and be cleared up so we all have fresh air to govern correctly and put through wonderful legislation for the benefit of Territorians. It is a major challenge to restore trust and confidence in politicians, but every day, in every way, the things we do here have the community spotlight on them.

My electorate of Drysdale—the Member for Spillett knows this—is an urban, quite contained seat, not like our bush seats where the expense of travel is considerable. The Members for Arnhem and Stuart have to travel vast distances. When you park your car and doorknock on a number of streets, it is a low fuel bill and

a low amount of funds, but for the Members for Arnhem, Namatjira and Stuart it is a considerable expense to run a campaign. When Marion Scrymgour was the Member for Arafura I helped with her campaign. She had to fly to so many areas of her electorate, sometimes because they were inaccessible by road or the time it took to access them by road was considerable. It can be expensive to run campaigns in the Territory, and not all seats are equally cost efficient.

A bit like the Member for Araluen, I made a decision very early in my campaign, when I was preselected, to not be beholden to anybody because of donations. I want to sleep well at night and not feel that I owe any favours or that my name has been compromised because of a large political donation.

I probably ran the cheapest campaign from our side of the House. It was funded through fundraisers and social functions where good friends and family donated. They were people who supported me and knew I would be a great politician and do great things for the Territory, rather than, 'If Eva gets in I can seek favour from her', or, 'I can benefit from those positions'.

It was one of my goals to run the cheapest campaign, to win my seat based on talking to people—a real grassroots campaign. It is fortunate that we have Facebook now, which is a very cheap option for reaching a lot of people. I used Facebook considerably, and I also doorknocked. I went out every night after work—I had a day job—and on weekends to talk to people and listen to their stories. One of the consistent stories I heard was a lack of trust in government.

One of the benefits of sitting down and talking to people over a cup of tea or a glass of cold water, especially on a hot build-up day, is for people to actually hear that you are genuine and getting into politics for the right reasons and not to increase your superannuation, travel to China or have massages in Singapore on the Department of Education's budget. It is about getting in to make the Territory a better place in the long term, to show leadership for the Territory.

I held community barbecues and I was accessible to the community. It was a very cheap campaign; I think I only spent about \$3000 on my campaign. I had one introductory flier and one how-to-vote card; that was it.

When I was campaigning I could see the rubbish that was put in mailboxes and littered streets from the opposition and other candidates in the party. I could not understand the sense of people. If a letterbox has not been emptied since the last time you put a flier in it, why would you shove another flier in there? All those fliers are on the ground because three other people have also tried to put fliers in, and you can see that no one is in the house, so why do you keep putting fliers in? To me it was ridiculous. I suspect that the candidates running against me probably had people letterboxing for them who actually did not care. One of the good things about having family and friends doing the letterboxing with me was that they could look at a house that obviously had no one living in it and make the decision to not put more fliers in the letterbox. Those are the things that people talk about. 'Why are people continuing to put fliers in mailboxes and waste money when those people are not actually home?'

Campaigns can be run very cheaply in the Territory, and a lot of Territorians are very grateful for that, especially in Palmerston. There is a large number of people in the lower socioeconomic bracket and they do not want to see coloured fliers saying, 'I shoot and I vote' and all of those things—hunt, fish, shoot, whatever the flyers were that were littering the streets.

To me this inquiry is important because it is a landmark time in the Territory. I have been around the Territory a long time, and I look back to those historical days of the CLP in the 1980s. It was a silver service. In the 1980s if you donated you did not need to tender for jobs in the Territory. If you donated you got the nod.

The iconic poster by Chips Mackinolty, the mum and dad talking, the mum saying, 'Our daughter wants a cowboy outfit, let us buy the Northern Territory Government,' resonates still to this day. This is one of the reasons people have stood in this House—including the former Chief Minister and the current Chief Minister. We do not want the Northern Territory Government to be seen as just a cowboy outfit. It needs to go beyond that.

Political donations are seen in the Territory as a cowboy outfit. If you have the money you can buy yourself favours. The time to change that is now. We need to make the message very clear to all Territorians that yes, you can donate to political parties—people are passionate about politics in the Territory—but it must always be transparent and clear. Everybody needs to be clear about those donations and that they are not underhanded, not seen as 'research' or something else. This is why Foundation 51 was set up. It needs to be clear that money is buying television ads, flyers in letterboxes, radio ads or whatever else.

We need to restore integrity to government. The Labor discussion paper talked about open, transparent and accountable government, along with our commitment to youth. When I was doorknocking, these were the two most important discussion points that people wanted to hear about in my electorate. Additional money for boat ramps was not high on the agenda for people. They wanted to know what we will do for young people in the Territory; are we going to spend money that hits the mark and ensures our young people get a great education, address the issues around crime and give kids opportunities into the future?

Another discussion point was about the embarrassment of the previous government. How will we be a government that Territorians can look up to and know they are in good hands, that they do not have to rush out every morning to buy the *NT News* to see what the latest scandal on the front cover is? How can they be assured that the Territory government is making decisions in the best interests of Territorians?

I understand the public's concerns because prior to being preselected I was in the same boat. I felt that businesses were getting benefits because of political donations. Whether that is true or not—and this inquiry will find out those sorts of things—it needs to be very clear and up front that, yes, there can be political donations, but they need to be made in a transparent and open way. The donations and interest around them must be disclosed. We need all sides of government to be open to scrutiny on that.

The Member for Araluen said the Territory is a small place. It is a small place but—this probably surprises you—there is a large number of people who do not know the movers, shakers and power players in this town and in the Territory. They just want to get on with their lives and know that the government is doing the right thing. That is the goal of this government, to do the right thing. Doing the right thing means that in health, education, housing, our contracts, our tenders and the infrastructure being built there is a clear process and that people adhere to it—that there is the most appropriate use of government funds being used. We need to make sure those processes are adhered to.

I am very supportive of this motion, but all these things take leadership. I commend the Chief Minister for his leadership on this, as well as with the ICAC and the public *Information Act*. It would be easy to come into government and turn a blind eye to these things, but we have heard loudly and clearly from Territorians. I commend the Chief Minister on his leadership over just three months and that we are already starting to move towards changes Territorians are in favour of.

I will continue, as the local member, to listen to the people of Drysdale. That is what they want. They want politicians who are fair and get on with the job, and are not benefiting themselves or their party in any way because of donations.

I commend this motion to the House and I am proud to be a member of this government which has moved quickly to restore trust and confidence to Territorians. I hope the work this motion puts in place will change the Territory in the long term. I do not want to travel south and talk to people who are laughing at the Territory, saying, 'Oh yes, you are that cowboy outfit'. That reference should have died in the 1980s. It should not be around today, but the last four years of CLP government brought it back. We need to make sure we are seen as a transparent government that is doing the best it can for Territorians.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I want to expand on a point the Member for Fong Lim made in his speech about the response to being a politician. I think it is very telling of the state of politics in the NT over the last four years. This motion is about rebuilding the trust of the people of the Northern Territory. I did not have the same disadvantage as the Member for Fong Lim in being a lawyer; In a previous life I was a social worker and ran a women's shelter. Overall, people were fairly positive about that as a profession, so it is a shock to me that when I tell people I am a politician, there is a wisecrack back. I find it distressing, in some ways, that the profession has taken a big hit in the face of Territorians.

I see my previous and current jobs as being very similar. This job, as the person representing the people of Braitling, is about service to the community and speaking up for people who do not have a voice, as was the job at the women's shelter. It is about being a strong and passionate advocate for the people you represent. Whilst I now represent the people of Braitling, when I worked at the women's shelter I was an advocate for women who were experiencing violence in Central Australia. I intend to bring many of the skills I had in my previous role to my current role: my ability to talk at a moment's notice, to talk to people, listen to people and support people when they are having a difficult time, and to solve problems and work within a team. These are all the same skills but the importance of them in this place has been undermined by the lack of trust from the community. I am proud to be part of a team which is prepared to tackle that, prepared to be on the front foot and take leadership.

When I was preparing this talk someone asked if anyone had tried to influence me already as a politician. I thought, 'Absolutely not'. Maybe I am not senior enough. I think people have a dark view of what can happen. The reality is—as I know from my first three months—that both sides of the Chamber have very hard-working people who are trying to do the best by the people they represent. We need to have this insurance. That is what this bill provides. It provides clarity, certainty and a mechanism for people to raise concerns they have. People do have concerns, quite specific concerns. Some of them may be unwarranted.

I pick up on the Education minister's point on people thinking that some businesses had an advantage under the previous regime. That was discussed constantly in Alice Springs during the last term of government. It is not fair to the people who are winning contracts either. They may be winning those contracts because they are the best people for the job. It undermines everybody. Most of the time we can assume there is a conspiracy behind something that is actually quite straightforward and maybe just a mistake or an oversight. I think sometimes things can be amplified.

The way forward is with this bill, which will give the people of the Northern Territory confidence. I spoke previously today in the House regarding transparency. The reason for the legislation I put forward, as the Minister for Territory Families, on restraints, was to increase transparency and confidence in transparency; as many eyes on a problem as you can get will only bring better outcomes, not only in youth justice, but in political donations and a range of government areas.

I very much support the Member for Fong Lim's work in opening the parliament to the people because people think it is much more mysterious than it is. As someone who is new to this House, what I have found is a group of very hard-working people who have the best interests of Territorians in their heart and everything they do. I am proud to be part of a team that is prepared to put forward this legislation.

I feel very fortunate, as a new politician, to have become part of this team very unexpectedly. Most people know that my opponent had significantly more resources than I did, but the way I won this seat had nothing to do with money. It had to do with talking and listening to people; that is how I won the seat of Braitling, by turning up and showing an interest, and that is what I intend to keep doing through this term. I will work on the ground, listen to people and use the skills I talked about.

One of the reasons why that worked is because people are jaded by money being splashed around. There was a lot of very expensive, glossy paper going through the mailboxes of the people of Braitling. We need to ensure that people are confident those processes are not open to misuse. I look forward to the outcomes of this inquiry. It is a unique opportunity for all of us to participate in, to not only ensure processes are transparent but that we can rebuild the confidence in the House and in the profession of being a politician.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I also rise to comment on the motion for the inquiry into political donations. I think everybody understands why this is such an important topic. As quite a few people have mentioned, during their campaigning, while speaking to Territorians, it was one of the hottest topics that came up. It was not just behavioural standards within this Chamber but standards outside of the Chamber as well.

There were a number of comments made over the last few years about what donations had done for certain people. Social standards have changed for political people or anybody elected into a position through society. There is a much higher emphasis these days—for me, one of the stark reminders of how much society has changed over the last few years was when the concrete pour happened at Pamerston hospital. A few years ago, if that happened we would not have heard much more about it. There may have been something in the paper, but in this day and age everyone has phones and cameras and knows how to use social media. It was very quickly put online and found out for what it was. You can probably use that as a guiding light and an example of how much standards and society have changed.

I fully commend the motion on the inquiry into political donations. It is high time for reform of the political funding regime and ensuring we have the accountability the public desperately seeks. I understand the comments made by the Member for Araluen and a few of the other Independents. We have good relationships with various unions. I understand what the Member for Fong Lim said, as I have also had the luxury of visiting Barcaldine and looking at where some of the structures and the party we believe in had its inception. I was not, in any way, looking to be a political activist at the time I visited that place. I was there for the historical aspect and I found it extremely enlightening. There is also a workers' centre not far away. I encourage everybody to go there if they get the opportunity.

Should there be a cap on how much parties can spend on campaigns? Coming out of the US election campaign—I do not think any of us want to get into a situation of having those amounts of money involved in campaigns. It means we are more opportunistic towards things going wrong.

When large companies and entities make massive donations it is not always reflective of the people in the street and the people we in the Chamber represent. It will be interesting to see if full or partial public funding for candidates will be approved. It will be debated as we go forward, as will the appropriate level to cap the values of political donations to parties and groups, and whether current donations, disclosures and requirements are appropriate. We have all seen some examples of that over recent years where the inappropriateness—I do not need to go into it; it has been well covered in some of the comments made.

There is concern amongst the general population. We have all come across some of those concerns through doorknocking and people stopping at mobile offices on the side of the road. An amazing thing, I found, was hearing people say that although they voted the same way for as long as they have lived in the Territory, they could not bring themselves to do that this time. That was on the back of some of the behavioural standards, and the donations and financial aspects contributed to it.

Any of the limitations, restrictions or caps that may be introduced will be an interesting part of the debate going forward. Whether there have been any breaches of the Northern Territory *Electoral Act*—I understand that members have been saying that 10 years is a very long time, and perhaps it is. The Member for Blain, in a cautioning manner, explained that we may not like everything we hear or find out if we look back 10 years. I can completely understand that, but you can imagine the furore in the House if we decided it would only go back four years. I commend the Chief Minister for making sure it is a 10-year time frame in which we are looking for any breaches of the Northern Territory *Electoral Act*. Foundation 51 has been well discussed already, and there are other mechanisms for any other relevant political funding and donations to be investigated.

It harks back to the trust people have spoken about, which has significantly decreased, especially in the Territory. I understand what the Minister for Education said about Chips Mackinolty highlighting the cowboy outfit. It is time to move past that. I have one of those posters. I hope in four years' time we are not looking back on that and seeing ourselves. I am sure we will not see ourselves as any part of an outfit like that.

Trust between elected members and the people we represent is something we will have to work hard to restore. I am sure we will make some mistakes along the way. We are big enough and open enough to take it on the chin when we do. Restoring integrity to government is something we cannot shy away from; we made many commitments on that. We made those commitments during the campaign because those issues were brought to us.

We have heard most of the members speak about the things that were brought to them during their campaigns. We promised to listen and we have listened. We were very open and honest about this in the lead-up to the election, and it is high time for a change around the scrutiny, accountability and transparency of governance in this House.

We have heard comments over the last few years about money opening doors and affording people opportunities. I think that has long been a concern. There is a difference between genuine donations to support a party you align with and massive individual donations to get favours for particular businesses or people.

The policy we are discussing was set out in our pre-election commitments. I mentioned the millions of dollars that are spent overseas and some of the trouble that brings. We need to steer clear of that. There is no need to inject or invite more money. We have heard some people in the House say that there is a waste of money, such as when the Minister for Education referred to pamphlets stacked on top of pamphlets, not being read or utilised. We can adjust how we deal with campaigns in the future. We do not want to go into a system where political donations and funding can directly affect the outcome. We may have seen that in years gone by, but the motion we are debating will go a long way to clearing up those misconceptions.

Territorians have placed trust in us to protect them, to improve on some of the standards that have been set over many years, and to improve on a lot of the underpinning democracy. They see this as one of the controls we should be utilising to make sure things are more transparent and enforceable. There is nothing wrong with political donations, but we must have those controls right to ensure the standards we have set for ourselves, and those we want to set as a Northern Territory Government, and as elected members within the community, are met. They certainly have changed over the years. It is time for us to catch up and abide and align with expectations in the community.

If we get some of these motions right and we have the opportunity and ability to pull things up, there will be a lot more trust within the community. We will not see a lot of the evidence that we have seen in the past of things going awry, fingers being pointed and allegations being made.

If we have the ability, under the improved arrangements we are proposing, to have measures to ensure there is much better scrutiny, I think that is something all Territorians can look forward to, that we can all enjoy, and we can relax more because there is no opportunity for things to go awry. It will be one part of the puzzle that we need to do to start to build confidence back in the Northern Territory parliament and the Northern Territory Government.

The inquiry is central to one of the commitments we have been discussing, which is transparency in reporting. This will be fundamental to restoring the public's confidence. It is certainly high-time for it, and we all heard plenty about it throughout our electorates.

I understand what the Minister for Education said, as the majority of us who have had to travel interstate in previous roles have also experienced those constant claims or queries from people interstate, which are extremely embarrassing. In August 2015 the Assembly passed a motion to establish an inquiry that would have tightened up some of this type of regulation. It would have been welcomed under the current government, but unfortunately it was not at the time.

We all know that Territorians' standards and their expectations of politicians, the representatives of this House, have changed significantly. Social and community standards have all changed. I think that is a good thing. It drives us to be more accountable. It drives us to be more open and transparent. It was repeatedly discussed in meetings during our campaign, and nobody from our side had any fears about being a more open and transparent government going forward.

I commend the motion to all members and look forward to the continuing debate.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Chief Minister's motion to establish an inquiry into political donations in the Northern Territory.

We, as a new Assembly, have a big job to do, which is to overcome the reputation of Northern Territory politics from the last four years. We all have our own personal reflections on that time, but one thing is for certain: we were the laughing stock of the nation. Two-and-a-half Chief Ministers, many reshuffles, midnight coups and very serious allegations are the reasons why over the last four years the Northern Territory was considered incapable of managing its own business. It is extremely disappointing. As a born-and-bred Territorian raising my children here, I want people to have pride in the Northern Territory. I want to go interstate and overseas and have people recognise us as punching above our weight, not a backwater that decides to hold press conferences at midnight to announce there is a new Chief Minister but the old one will not resign, or a place where—within this Chamber we saw the Speaker reappointed, which is testament to her role. There was an attempt to roll the Speaker simply because the government did not like her. We have to reflect on the past four years and make sure we change things. This motion goes towards doing that.

Just yesterday there was a book launched in the state library, *Crocs in the Cabinet*, which reflects on that period. I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition has apologised to Territorians for that period of time. We need to move forward, and this inquiry is a key part of the government's plan to restore integrity to the government and rebuilt the trust of Territorians that was trashed by the Country Liberal government over the last four years. We need to rebuild the trust of Territorians and trust and respect on the national stage. We have many opportunities to do this, and we need to have confidence.

One of my roles as a minister is to regain the trust of the Australian Government, to say we are capable of delivering services for Territorians and that it can trust us to deliver them. You only have to look at the Palmerston hospital debacle of digging a hole and filling it back up, and trying to convince the federal government that things were on track. There was comment, at one point, about whether the Northern Territory deserves self-government. As someone who is proudly Territorian, that was extremely disappointing to hear. This inquiry and this motion to look into political donations and rebuild trust is very important.

Over the last four years we saw breaches of donation disclosure provisions by Foundation 51, and subsequent attempts to cover them up. They are directly relevant to the inquiry foreshadowed by the Chief Minister's motion. This is an important point as to why the activities of Foundation 51 are included in the terms of reference for the inquiry. Restoring public trust and integrity to government are important for a

number of reasons. It is the right and decent thing to do. Territorians are entitled to have confidence that government policy and decisions are being made in the public interest, not tainted by secret donations.

That is a point a number of my colleagues have spoken about in the House. Everyone is entitled to donate to a political party. It might not be who you want a donation to go towards, but as long as things are open and transparent we can understand the reasons why the donation was made. We can have clear confidence that decisions are not made simply because of a donation. That is an important point.

We need to rebuild trust if we are to successfully tackle the complex policy challenges we face in the Northern Territory, such as creating jobs in difficult economic conditions, successfully investing in Territory children to deliver healthy and well-educated Territorians, creating a safer community and protecting our unique natural assets. These challenges rely on the trust of Territorians in their government because they require sustained partnerships between all members of our community. We need Territorians to trust us, and this motion is a step forward in that we are willing to have scrutiny into our system, and we are tackling the job of rebuilding trust.

The behaviour we saw over the last four years was reprehensible. I do not think anyone who served in the former Assembly will ever forget some of the debates and the manner in which things went down. We voted to establish an inquiry into political donations. The Member for Nelson—and I pay tribute to him—brought forward the motion and it was passed by the Assembly after lengthy debate and consideration. The government—it was quite comical—immediately tried to reverse the motion but was unable to do so. Minister Elferink, the then Attorney-General, moved that standing orders be suspended to enable, in his words:

... this House to reverse its decision in relation to the inquiry into political donations made earlier this day. The Northern Territory Government made it abundantly clear we would not be supporting this matter. The House has made a decision, and I move the motion be put forthwith.

Even though the former Attorney-General acknowledged that the House had made a decision in favour of an investigation into political donations, he was determined to overturn it.

When it was apparent that the CLP government did not have the support of parliament to block the motion, the inquiry motion stood. Then, throughout the Casuarina by-election, the then Chief Minister maintained on a number of occasions that the inquiry would proceed. He publicly stated that it would go on. These comments turned out to be hollow promises from former Chief Minister Giles. They were soon revealed to be typical to the deceptions that characterised his leadership. Soon after the Casuarina by-election the CLP government reversed the parliament's decision as soon as it could. Minister Elferink rescinded the previous parliament's motion and replaced it with:

... an alternative means of independently investigating political donations.

A special investigator was established to examine political donations with the then Chief Minister issuing a press release that said:

The special investigator will report on the effectiveness of the existing legislation covering political donations and the processes applied in other jurisdictions.

The investigator will also look at the use of public funding models in other jurisdictions and whether this approach might be applied here in the Territory.

Territorians at that time expressed disappointment in the decision from the former government. I heard from my community in Nightcliff, Rapid Creek and Coconut Grove, that they felt betrayed by the government that the motion was not passed. It was clearly indicated by the Chief Minister that it would happen, but nothing did. It is timely that this motion comes to the House as that disappointment carried through the recent election campaign.

We have questions. Why was the CLP government so determined to kill the inquiry into political donations? Did they have something to hide? It will be interesting to see whether the current CLP members in this House support the Chief Minister's motion.

This inquiry will examine if the donations made to political parties and candidates over the past 10 years were compliant with the Northern Territory *Electoral Act*. This is important for restoring trust and integrity

into government. What we aim to do with this inquiry is genuinely examine improvements in political donations legislation, and reform any areas where concerns exist.

Today we heard from a number of speakers on this side of the House. It was interesting to hear the different comments and stories, some from relatively new members. It was interesting to hear the Member for Braitling's comments about telling people she is now a member for parliament and the look on their faces. It should be something we are all proud of. It is a privilege to be a member of parliament. Everyone here works hard.

Mr Gunner: All 25 of us.

Ms FYLES: I pick up on that interjection from the Chief Minister. All 25 of us, I genuinely believe, have the Territory's interests at heart. We will not always agree. We come from different political persuasions. I feel a difference within this Chamber. People are here for the right reasons and, sadly, I cannot say that of the previous four years I spent in here. It was a toxic environment. Bizarre decisions were made that one must ponder and question. This inquiry to go back and look into political donations will be interesting.

Territorians very loudly and clearly told us that they wanted integrity reforms, and that is what this inquiry is designed to do. Consistent with the reasonable expectations of the community, the proposed inquiry will investigate breaches of donation disclosure by Foundation 51, which were known to the Country Liberal Party Executive Committee but never acted on. I note the Leader of the Opposition's amendments to the motion, but the government will not be accepting them. In terms of those amendments, everything is already included. All other matters relevant to political funding and donations are covered in point nine.

The Member for Nelson made a comment about the late Frank McGuinness, the former Auditor-General for the Northern Territory. I was fortunate enough to know Frank and work with him through the Public Accounts Committee. I respected and valued his work. The Member for Nelson questioned the report of Mr McGuinness. The report can be provided to the committee so we can have that important body of work acknowledged.

The specific and detailed references to Foundation 51 are necessary because the information is already on the public record about its activities and the relationship with the CLP and the previous government. We have seen emails from Graham Lewis about its activities. Although we saw the continual denial by former Chief Minister Giles of any knowledge of it as well as the repeated and regular exposure of the information which proved he was not telling the truth. Territorians deserve answers about what transpired. They are entitled to them. We saw a police investigation. There was a *prima facie* case to make that the law had been broken by the actions of Foundation 51.

I hope this motion will pass the House today. I know that many members on this side have thought long and hard about this. It is key to us. It is about changing the face of government and politics in the Northern Territory.

Referring to the comments from the Member for Drysdale, I remember—although I was younger—the talk around the dinner table. I was growing up in the 1980s and early 1990s in the Top End of the Territory. There are still stories that fly around. We need to have respect restored. Over the last four years we raced back to the 1980s, and one could question if we went deeper than the 1980s with some of the behaviours of our previous government. This is an in-depth motion; the terms of reference are quite detailed. I think this motion will put us on a path of integrity and trust.

I was disappointed at the Leader of the Opposition's attempts to draw moral equivalents between Foundation 51 and Harold Nelson Holdings. Harold Nelson Holdings has been completely compliant with the *Electoral Act*. It was interesting that the correlation was made. The current terms of reference give the inquiry broad powers and do not constrain it from looking into an action or entity in the same terms as Foundation 51.

The proposed inquiry will also look forward and make recommendations on such possible initiatives as caps on campaigning expenditure, public funding of political parties, caps on donations and other options to improve transparency and accountability in our electoral system.

It was interesting to hear the comments the Members for Araluen and Drysdale made. Election campaigns are hard; they do take resources. I have seen, over many years, the dedicated efforts of hard-working people out letterboxing in unfavourable environmental conditions and campaigning for people. I have

family, friends and supporters, and I have been very lucky to receive their endorsement by way of donation. These donations have always been declared, as the process requires.

This is where we enter the area in question. There is no issue with people making donations—that is our system—but when people are not upfront about it, we start to have questions and a lack of integrity. It was interesting to hear people talk about grassroots campaigns. The member for Araluen was very open and honest about the campaign she ran this time. The member for Drysdale—I do not think anything beats hard work. As somebody who loves to get out there and meet my community, I do not think there is any amount of television or radio advertisements or flashy posters that can overcome genuinely being there for your community. It is an important time to take a look at what Territorians want. What will this inquiry propose?

The Chief Minister has raised some points in regard to caps on campaigns or potential public funding and how that would look. We all agree that we do not want to see millions of dollars spent on a political process where the person who can get the most money wins. We want a parliament that is reflective of the diversity of the Northern Territory, with people who genuinely want to make a difference. We would rather spend money on Territorians, health services, roads and key pieces of infrastructure. It is a challenge and I welcome the Chief Minister's attempt at tackling this issue. We do not want to see ourselves go to an American-style presidential campaign; just look at the last couple of months in America and those jets whizzing around from place to place. The inquiry looking into those aspects of the electoral system will be very important.

The inquiry will also look at the current disclosure timeframes for donations to determine if they are still appropriate, which is another important issue that different members of the House have had opinions on. This is a big step forward to restoring the integrity to government and the Northern Territory parliament. In our *Reforming Our Democracy* paper before the election, one option that was suggested for discussion was instituting real time electoral disclosure provisions to ensure donations are listed publicly as soon as they are received. Electoral disclosures are now made publicly available on the Northern Territory Electoral Commission website; however, there is still a delay between when that donation is made and the disclosure. This inquiry will have the ability to consider the most appropriate time frames and methods of public disclosure.

We want a system that provides openness and disclosure for Territorians, but we need to be practical about that. One might say that as soon as you receive a donation it should be uploaded, but there are members who are not Darwin based and their electorates are not 15 minutes from the city; they are often travelling through the bush for many days, out of phone range and lacking communication. That is something this inquiry will take into consideration, and it will put practical measures in place. It is the duty of parliament to support this inquiry. It is in the public interest and all of our interests; I genuinely mean that. The 25 people in this House are all here genuinely representing Territorians, and if we want to restore honour and trust to our positions, supporting this inquiry is the way forward.

We saw some chaos over the last four years. We had the inquiry motion supported in the House, only for it to be rolled two months later when the CLP finally worked out the numbers. Timely enough—it was after the Casuarina by-election.

Considering that we have discussed a number of measures in this new Assembly, it is very timely to consider whether current arrangements should remain in place or if we should look to other measures. What would deliver for the public interest? What would be the best way forward to make sure the public interest and public policy come first?

This motion is central to our policy on restoring trust and integrity to government. It is something our community wants us to do. They want to have faith in our system and trust in the government. Over the last four years we saw absolute dysfunction and chaos. We saw denials and leaked emails. We need to allow time for this inquiry to look in detail at our system so we can have an open and transparent system, and Territorians can have faith in us to do our jobs. We can pave the way for future campaigns and future members of parliament. It is a significant motion, and it is a significant body of work that will be undertaken.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms FYLES: I did not notice the clock. I will keep my remaining comments short and allow the Chief Minister to wrap. This is an important motion to establish a practical basis for reform. I support this motion and I commend the motion to the House.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate and their support to establish an inquiry into political donations. It is a very important inquiry and another step in progressing the government's commitment to restoring integrity to government and to this parliament.

The inquiry will examine options to enhance and strengthen political donations' disclosure, public funding of elections, caps on campaign expenditure and the treatment of associated entities. We have not formed a view on these issues. It is clear these are things that need to be looked at and we want to get independent advice to inform us on how to reform. It will be a practical look at how campaigns, donations and elections work in the Northern Territory so we can make an informed decision on how to reform.

The findings and recommendations of the inquiry will inform any subsequent amendments to the *Electoral Act*. The Leader of the Opposition supported the motion in general terms, and I appreciate that, but he proposed amendments to apply the Foundation 51 terms of reference to include Howard Nelson Holdings. This is not necessary. The inquiry has unfettered powers to inquire into Howard Nelson Holdings. The numeration of terms of reference in relation to Foundation 51 is based on large volumes of documents and prima facie evidence that is on public record. We therefore do not support the proposed amendments.

I want to be very clear about the terms of reference. They are based on the information on the public record, but the inquiry has the power to pursue any matters relevant to political funding and donations. It will be broad and unfettered. They can look into any issues they choose. They can go as far as they want into Howard Nelson Holdings or unions. The numeration of the terms of reference in relation to Foundation 51 is based on what is on the public record and what we need to do to honour our commitment to Territorians.

That is why we support the motion but not the amendments to the motion. The Member for Nelson supports the motion, but generally agrees with the amendments moved by the Leader of the Opposition. However, they are not necessary and that is why we do not support them. It will be a broad-based inquiry. The commission will have the capacity to look into whatever it wants to in regard to Howard Nelson Holdings or the unions. If they see a thread they are welcome to follow it. The weight of evidence on the public record demands how we phrased it around Foundation 51. That is keeping true to our promise and commitments to Territorians going into the election.

The Member for Nelson encouraged having a broad range of people make submissions into the inquiry, and I endorse that 100%. We will make sure the report by the late Frank McGuiness is considered as part of this inquiry process. We all miss him but his work will live on.

The Member for Blain welcomed the inquiry and recognised the need to investigate past breaches of the act, but emphasised the need for a new approach based on a fair and honest inquiry. He also supported the amendments moved by the opposition. I have explained that the inquiry has the power to pursue those avenues without the amendment. They can follow whatever they need to, if they see a need for it.

In her thoughtful contribution the Member for Sanderson placed focused on the expectations the community has for this parliament to support the fundamental institutions of our democracy, including the need to have the best-possible electoral laws in respect of disclosure of political donations and related measures in the *Electoral Act*. The Member for Sanderson saw the inquiry as an opportunity for new and transparent disclosure provisions in the interest of the public.

The Member for Arnhem spoke about the thrill and hard work of visiting the large number of towns and communities in her electorate. She believes the inquiry will provide the opportunity for input from the general public, members of this Assembly and the broader community so they can contribute to the important issue of electoral reform. I agree that the expectations, views and opinions of the public should very much inform how these things work.

The Member for Karama saw the inquiry as an opportunity to review how donations have worked in the past and to create guidelines about how they could work better in the future. She reiterated that the community must have confidence that all Territorians are treated without fear or favour by government and that the resources of the government are always employed in the public interest. That is a crucial point, that there can be confidence that the public's interests come first, not private interests. I hope that there has

never been a case of private interest dictating public interest, but often this work, and the other work we are doing around the ICAC and other things, is simply removing that question, fingers crossed. We have to ensure that the system is healthy and works. The past needs to inform the future. This needs to be a practical set of reforms, not a theoretical set of reforms. It has to be grounded in how things work to ensure we have that reform agenda working.

I thank the Member for Fong Lim for his thoughtful contribution. I thank him for the work he is doing, as Chair of the Select Committee on Opening Parliament to the People, which is directly relevant to increased transparency and accountability concerning the activities of government. It is a very important body of work, and I am looking forward to what comes out of that and how it will flow through our parliamentary processes. The Labor government, in 2001, brought in the last great wave of reform with the estimates process, freedom of information and a significant number of other things. The body of work being done by the Member for Fong Lim as chair is crucial to the ongoing reform agenda of the government.

The Member for Araluen was concerned about the 10-year perspective of the investigation into donations, and wanted a future focus on electoral reform. It is fair to say—and I have talked about this a little in response to other members—that the experience of the past is a sound platform to inform essential electoral reform into the future. I want practical reforms, I really want this to be a practical reform process and not a theoretical one.

The Member for Araluen asserted that the inquiry should not constitute a witch hunt into Foundation 51. That is not the intent of the inquiry, but there are some things that need investigation that have been on the public record over the last four years. It is important they are cleared up.

The Member for Araluen also raised the issue of the high cost to candidates and political parties participating in elections. I think we can all sympathise with that. I heard a few members say that hard work is the most valuable thing you can do when running as a candidate. We know plenty of candidates put a lot of hard work in but might not get across the line. The number of votes they have generated is attributed largely to the hard work they did.

I agree with the point the Member for Nightcliff made, that we have 25 hard-working members of parliament in the Chamber. We will not always agree, but we passionately advocate on behalf of our constituencies. The tone of this Chamber is very different to the tone we had for the last four years. It was a much more hostile and toxic place. We might disagree at times about how we go about things, but there is a mood for reform in the Territory, and this parliament is embracing that.

The Member for Araluen also raised concerns about how the commissioner for the inquiry would be appointed. We went through this recently, during the last term of parliament. While I commented on the hostility of that place, and it took a long time to establish an inquiry into the establishment of an ICAC, we adopted, and will adopt in this instance, a similarly transparent and professional approach. That process saw the appointment of Hon Brian Ross Martin AO QC to head the Anti-Corruption Integrity and Misconduct Commission Inquiry, and no one questioned his ability to do that work. It is important that inquiries start with trust in the person conducting them. We will not put that in danger; we will go through the process of appointing someone who can do this work. In general, the Member for Araluen supported the establishment of the inquiry, and I welcome that.

The Member for Drysdale mentioned how recent experience has detracted from public confidence in the existing arrangements for declaring political donations. She strongly advocated for transparency and openness with respect to political donations as part of the government's broader agenda to enhance government accountability. The Member for Drysdale also acknowledged that there are considerable expenses in campaigns, especially in rural and remote electorates. I have had that conversation a lot with our colleagues who work remotely. They have significantly different challenges. Perhaps I can compare the Member for Stuart's workload, or the journeys he must take, to that of the Member for Port Darwin. I think he can ride around his electorate on a pushbike in much less than half a day. I do not think the Member for Stuart should take a bike anywhere near his electorate. He would still be peddling. There is a significant difference in the workload between those two, which can have a burden on things like petrol and other costs that become a matter of necessity to serve an electorate of that size. There are cost issues and they can be different from electorate to electorate.

The Member for Braiting spoke about the reputational damage politicians have taken over the last four years. We are on a journey to repair that through steps such as the independent commission against corruption, declaring our ministerial travel costs—where we are going and why—before we go, the committee on parliamentary reform, this inquiry and more. There is a significant reform agenda on how we

restore trust in the Northern Territory. We are very much on that journey now, and I appreciate that people are coming with us.

The Member for Port Darwin expressed similar sentiments to the Member for Braintree, and explained well the 10-year timeframe. There must be practical reform, and 10 years provides a window. Despite the fact there was a book written about the last four years and not the last 10—to be fair about how we scrutinise this it should be the last 10 years. The witch hunt point others have made—let us go to 10. It is about practical reform. It is not about a witch hunt. It is about being informed on how things have worked so we can make sure they work well going forward. The book about the last 10 years would be completely different to the book about the last four, but let us look at the last 10.

The Member for Nightcliff spoke very well, as always, about a similar theme. She spoke about the last four years and the need for reform. I acknowledge the work she is doing on the establishment of an independent commission against corruption, a very important part of our reform agenda for this term to restore trust in government.

I spoke earlier about removing the question mark that can sit over whether decisions have been made in the public interest or a private interest. Something like an ICAC does that; even if the ICAC never meets it will have served its purpose because it removes the question mark that can sit over decisions by having the ability to inquire if needed. That is crucial to community confidence because it went missing and there was deep suspicion. I hope that suspicion was never warranted. I would much prefer it was chaos, toxicity and reshuffles more than anything else, but we want to ensure the community has confidence in the decisions the government makes. It is about the public interest, not the private interest, and sometimes simply knowing that things can be investigated by something like an ICAC can remove those questions.

We have spoken a lot about donations—as we should because this is an inquiry into reforming donations—but there are other elements I have not touched upon yet that are quite important. The first term I reference is one I am very passionate about, which is the question of spending caps on campaigns. That removes a lot of pressure in this space. We do not want to get into this escalating war of fundraising and who can raise and spend the most. That puts a lot of pressure on things. I am fascinated to see what the inquiry comes back with, but I love the idea of, can there be a spending cap? Is that practical? Would that work? How much pressure would that remove from donations? That then forms the rest of the decision-making about caps on individual donations or other types of donations, the question mark about whether you have partial or full funding or not. If you can get the cost of election campaigns down, that makes those other questions much easier to answer.

When I first had this conversation when we released this paper, the journalists in the room who were normally sports reporters got the point quickly and completely. It is just like having a salary cap when it comes to football. It is a very simple way to address what can be a complicated issue. Can we look at spending caps and is it practical? That will be a fascinating part of the terms of reference, and will make decision-making about the other issues much easier. There is a significant body of work here for the inquiry, from spending caps to the question mark around public funding and the methodology around capping donations and reporting.

The member for Nightcliff spoke about the idea of instantaneous reporting, which sounds great in theory. This has to be a practical reform process because there are some impractical issues about simultaneous reporting, such as distance or someone donating money into a bank account and not seeing it for a day or two. We have to get these processes right and make sure they are practical. Instantaneous reporting sounds great in theory, but in practice can be difficult. We want to make sure there is a set of reforms that meets the intention of being open, transparent and accountable, and is practical at the same time.

I wish the commissioner well in how they conduct this inquiry because it will shape elections in the Northern Territory for a very long time to come. This question mark about donations and raising money, spending money on election campaigns and reporting, will shape elections, parliaments and governments to come. It is a watershed moment in the approach we have taken. It picks up on unfinished business we had from the last term. We had this motion—not this particular motion but of similar intent—passed in the last term of parliament but then cancelled as soon as the Casuarina by-election had closed. The Member for Nelson got strung along by the former Chief Minister saying, 'We will do it, we will do it, we will do it', but then as soon as the by-election was over it was scrapped. Obviously the content was about donation reform, and that was bad in itself, but even the action of repeatedly saying you will do something and then not doing it has fed into this complete lack of trust we are now experiencing and need to fix.

This is unfinished business from the last term. I thank all members of this parliament for coming together to complete this business and make sure we get a proper reform into donations in the Northern Territory. We will have best-practice legislation once we have done this inquiry. I do not want to predict the work of the commissioner but I think we will end up with best-practice legislation and accountability in terms of political donations and other measures.

It may be a final and fitting point to pick up on a comment from the Member for Drysdale. Together as a Chamber we can relegate Chips' famous cowboy poster to the archive.

I apologise to Chips if I affect any future sales of his poster. If we can do that as a Chamber it will be a significant achievement. It will become archival material and not contemporary art; it will become historical art. That is something that is in our hands. This inquiry is a good part of the process, as is the independent commission against corruption, the reform into open parliaments, and simply the way we behave and act as a Chamber. I wish all of us well in performing and behaving better in this term, contributing to reform measures that will see open and accountable parliament in the Northern Territory, and putting the Chips Mackinolty poster into the archives in Millner, Rapid Creek. The Member for Johnston is putting his thumb up. He wants it there and not on the walls in the contemporary art galleries around the place. We can do that together.

I thank members for their outright support for the motion, or for their general support with preference for amendments. I understand where the Opposition Leader is coming from, but the terms of reference had the power to go into all those things. The commissioner can then make all their own decisions and be completely independent of us. I thank you all for your support, either explicitly or in general terms. I look forward to having this inquiry and a genuine set of practical reforms for the Northern Territory based on the practical experience of how donations work in the Territory.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that the amendment moved by the Opposition Leader be agreed to.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 5

Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Higgins
Mrs Lambley
Mr Mills
Mr Wood

Noes 19

Ms Ah Kit
Mr Collins
Mr Costa
Ms Fyles
Mr Gunner
Mr Guyula
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.

Motion agreed to.

PAPER TABLED **Fuel Card Report**

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the latest quarterly members' use of fuel cards report.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

The Auditor-General of the Northern Territory's report to the Legislative Assembly November 2016—consideration adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I cannot believe we are standing here reflecting upon another year that has been. It was certainly a very dry Wet Season; then when the Dry Season came, we got the rain.

The Nightcliff electorate celebrated the revoking of the lease over an area of our harbour as one of the first significant moments of 2016. It was an exciting moment for our community. The hard work of everyone coming together was acknowledged.

We saw a number of new businesses, including, but not limited to, the Lucky Bat Café, Famished and the Chantilly Kitchen open in the electorate. Some initiatives also opened in the electorate, such as the Think Lab, which is changing the nature of the work environment in the Territory.

The Nightcliff community has had a busy year and as it draws to a close I have the privilege of reflecting upon our remarkable electorate. We had the wonderful Nightcliff Seabreeze Festival. Although traditionally it signifies the start of the Dry Season, it was a great success despite the unseasonal downpour.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge Irene and Sylvia Mellios, who make a wonderful effort in our community every May with Australia's Biggest Morning Tea at the local Greek Orthodox School. Each year they work tirelessly to raise funds for cancer research, and it is one of the top ten morning teas in Australia year-in year-out.

Once every four years we have the Territory election. It is an honour and privilege to again represent the people of Nightcliff, Coconut Grove and Rapid Creek, a community I am very proud of and passionate about. I acknowledge the honour that has been given to me to lead our community and represent them in parliament for the next four years.

I was also given the great honour, by the Chief Minister and my Caucus colleagues, to be sworn in as a minister—the Attorney General and Minister for Health. I also enjoy the role of Leader of Government Business. I thank all of my colleagues for their support and acknowledge the role you have placed me in.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the schools in the electorate: Nightcliff Primary School; Nightcliff Middle School; the Essington School; St Paul's Primary School; the Nightcliff Preschool; and the Three Year Old Kindy. To all of the staff, principals, parents and students, thank you for welcoming me at so many school events and assemblies over the year.

Nightcliff has a number of seniors and it is absolutely wonderful sharing morning teas and attending lunches and breakfasts with them. I thank them for their support, and I hope we can continue to support them as well.

To the Nightcliff Evergreens, I am absolutely honoured to continue serving as your patron and I am very grateful for your support in my electorate office. To the Nightcliff Sports Club, thank you for your support. It has been a privilege to take on the role of patron for the sports club, which is certainly part of the hub of our community. We have a number of sporting clubs that I am very privileged to be the patron of: Nightcliff Bowls Club; Nightcliff Swimming Club; and Nightcliff Orchid Society. Although I must be the only patron who has been asked to not attend the Nightcliff Tigers' football games; they are on a winning streak and I have not made a game all season, so I am sure if I turn up and they lose I will not be the patron for much longer.

I am sure I have forgotten some people, but I want to acknowledge Carly and Amelia, who have done a wonderful job of running my electorate office, and Dawn Lawrie, who volunteers her time every week to be a justice of the peace, thank you. Dawn comes to my office on Tuesdays and offers her services, but she is also only a phone call away if someone in the community needs support.

I would like to take a moment for our wonderful childcare workers. My youngest son will be attending school next year, which means we will not have a child at the Nightcliff Family Centre. Those ladies are truly amazing; they have been running that centre for many decades. I will still drop in to visit them, but I want to take a moment to thank them for their support in helping me do my job. I could not have become a member of parliament with a four-month-old baby if it were not for the fabulous childcare. I will continue, on behalf of childcare workers, with the Big Steps campaign, to ensure a fair day's pay for the fabulous work they do.

To the people upstairs in my ministerial office, thank you for all your support. We have had many challenges, but I am enjoying the new opportunities.

To my friends, who I do not see very much of anymore, thank you. I appreciate being invited to dinners, although often I decline.

On Monday evening this week I was requested to attend a meeting at 7.30 am on Tuesday, which was fine as the role encompasses that. After a quick phone call to my parents to let them know, sure enough, Poppy pops around on Tuesday morning to take the kids to school because Paul was also working. I could not undertake this role without the wonderful support of my parents, Andrew and Cheryl, and my wonderful partner, Paul. We have had many challenges. Our littlest, Henry, is doing super well, although we will attend some medical appointments overseas over the Christmas period. He is doing fabulously and I thank people for their support and thoughts. They always keep him in mind.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge that World Aids Day is held on 1 December each year. Many of us are wearing red and have our red ribbons on. It is a day to raise awareness across the community and the world about the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. It is a day to show support for people living with HIV and to commemorate those who have, sadly, passed away. HIV infection is no longer the death sentence it once was. Effective treatment has allowed people to live with the infection and live relatively normal and healthy lives. Increased public awareness and education has resulted in more people being tested and receiving effective treatment, thus preventing further transmission of the disease. I take a moment to acknowledge the Centre for Disease Control's Clinic 34, which has undertaken good work that allows people to receive high-quality, evidence-based care. The Northern Territory Needle and Syringe Program is a crucial component of the blood-borne virus prevention strategy, and staff are working closely with remote communities to ensure they are supported.

December 3 is the International Day of People with a Disability. It is a United Nations sanctioned day that is celebrated each year. The day is about increasing public awareness and understanding issues experienced by people with a disability, as well as celebrating their achievements and contributions. As the Minister for Health, I am also taking responsibility for disability as an important part of my portfolio. The first meeting I attended in my role as Minister for Health was to meet with the Integrated Disability Action Committee in my electorate of Nightcliff. I was pleased to be able to meet with Sue Shearer and her committee, and to learn about the issues being faced by people with a disability. Since then I have had the opportunity to meet with other key stakeholders, and I will continue to do so to ensure the reforms are current and Territorians are receiving the support they need.

The Northern Territory Government has a strong commitment to people with a disability. The government is reinvigorating its commitment to the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020. Something I very much support—and the Chief Minister has indicated support for it—is working closely with my fellow ministers to ensure that people with a disability have access to employment opportunities within government, for all government's work, so we can support their needs and provide a real opportunity.

I look forward to the challenges in 2017 in all my portfolios. I would like to take a final moment to acknowledge Helping People Achieve. It is a fabulous local organisation that has been around for many years. It does fabulous Christmas trees. If anyone is listening to this, or reading *Hansard* and it is still before Christmas—it makes fabulous wooden Christmas trees, either plain or coloured. They are a very tropical and important way of celebrating Christmas.

To everybody, to all the Assembly staff, thank you for looking after us. It is a tiring job, a busy job, but we appreciate all your support. I look forward to taking some time over the Christmas period to reflect upon the year, and I look forward to 2017 and the opportunities and challenges it will present.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): It is a very rare for me to make an adjournment speech, but I feel a need to do it this year.

It has been a big four years in opposition, and just under three months in government. I am very thankful and honoured. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the people of Johnston who have put their faith in me for a second term. I do love representing you, and love this job. It gets me up in the morning. Having said that, I have lots of sleepless nights, but that is why I put my hand up to contribute to serve the people. I do that with the utmost respect and seriousness of representing over 5000 people in the electorate of Johnston. I thank all the schools, the school kids, the parents and the businesses who have met me over the last four years.

I also thank my old and new colleagues. It was a particularly tough four years in opposition. We banded together, we had our issues, but that is politics. We regrouped in opposition and are very fortunate to have this opportunity to be in government. I would like to thank Michael Gunner, the Chief Minister, for supporting me and giving me the privilege of serving in the Cabinet. It is great to see a lot of new faces here; it is exciting. We have a great team and probably the best assembled 25 candidates we have ever put together in an election. That is no disrespect to all the other people who put their hands up, but we had such a diverse make-up of our team and we see that now in this Chamber. I look forward to the next four years in government and working with everyone here.

I need to thank my family. A special thanks to my wife, who has forever been there. We have had three campaigns, one unsuccessful and two successful. Her guidance and keeping me focused. We always say the long-suffering wife, but the great support and advice she gives me, as well as running the household while I am doing what I believe in—we know we cannot do this without the support of our families. To my boys Ayden, Zander and Noah, thank you for being there when I have some time to spend with you. They are all getting too big now but that is fine. To all my extended family—my mum, my sisters, my brothers. There are too many friends to mention, who continuously keep me level, grounded and make sure I know why I am doing this job and putting my hand up. It is such a privilege.

I would like to thank all the people who helped me in my campaign. There are too many to mention but you know who you are and I have thanked you individually already. A special mention goes to my EO at the time, Tamika. Now there is Dan. You were absolute foot soldiers for me. Your planning and dedication to my cause and coming on the journey with me and the Labor Party will forever be greatly appreciated. We must all thank those people who were out letterboxing and doorknocking and making phone calls for us. It is always very humbling. I struggle to comprehend how somebody can have so much faith in you that they will make a call, and sometimes make a hard call, to somebody who does not want to be disturbed and wants to argue and abuse you for calling. I am always very humbled by that.

I make a special mention of my ministerial staff, Steve, Tamika, Sheena, Nick, Tristan, Dioni and Mitchell. The office is functioning superbly. That is our role and we take it very seriously.

I had some interstate people come up who are very good friends of mine, Brenna, Siobhan and my mate Was from Tasmania, who used to live out bush in the Territory. They came up and helped out. Wazza and Ellie B, Charlie and Kez, and Wello—I hope you are catching up, Hansard—Diane, Erina, Kylie and Darryl, just to name a few.

I want to finish by saying a special thank you to somebody who has been there for over the last two or three years, Cathryn Tilmouth. I pay special tribute to Cathryn. Her advice, guidance and friendship, experience at a local and federal level, her knowledge, her cooking and keeping me fed during the campaign—between my wife and Cathryn, I do not know how but I did not put any weight on, so that was great. Her ability to take me head-on when she had a different view to mine. If you are going to have a different view and sell it to me, you need to make sure you are researched. You are not going to stand down. I do not make any excuses regarding my views because I have researched them; I stick to them until I have been told otherwise. I will not say I am man enough, but if I am wrong then I am wrong, and I own up to that. She has done that continuously, sometimes on a half-an-hour by half-an-hour basis during campaigns and now in the ministerial office.

Cathryn's support, guidance and experience—this is all while she was still suffering from the loss of her father, a legend, a pioneer of the Territory, Tracker Tilmouth. He impacted on a lot of people's lives and impacted indirectly on hundreds of thousands of lives in the Territory, especially in remote communities. I thank you and I thank your family for your support through that. There is no mistake that we have a close friendship that was cemented in the period your father was sick and passed away. I unfortunately had the same experience a few years earlier.

Thank you to everyone in here. I hope all members and their families have a safe and happy New Year. I look forward to coming back in the next sittings in February and seeing rejuvenated, suntanned members of parliament.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, over the past month a group of Territorians has made us proud in the sporting arena.

Early in November two young Territory women achieved recognition at the National Rodeo Council of Australia 2016 national rodeo finals. Katelyn Simpson from Berry Springs took out back-to-back national rodeo titles when she won the junior barrel race. Katelyn stepped it up a class and competed in the ladies barrel race, finishing a very respectable fourth place. The week before that she took out the junior title at the Warwick Rodeo. It was a big couple of weeks. This is Katelyn's third national title in 12 months; she claimed the buckle for the junior barrel race, won the Australian High School Rodeo Association's national junior pole bending buckle, and she represented Australia in the United States, which is outstanding.

Another rural resident, Brittany Sims-Hampton, a Bees Creek teenager, also competed in the 2016 National Rodeo Finals. Brittany is the first Indigenous female in Australia to be invited to compete in the event. It was a brilliant achievement and congratulations to her. Brittany has been competing in rodeo since she was six years old and understands the importance of mutual respect between horse and rider to achieve success at this level.

Katelyn and Brittany represented the Northern Cowboys Association, which formed in 1995 to further develop rodeo in the Territory through the encouragement of participation. Both of these young, strong Territory women dedicate themselves to accomplish great things, committing many hours a week to their training regimes.

In addition to the great achievements of these women, we have had great success at the AFL's national draft recently for some of our young men. Ben Long was drafted to St Kilda at pick 25. Ben is the nephew of Michael Long and is a St Mary's junior who had the privilege of being accepted to attend Melbourne Grammar in 2014. After delivering some great performances for the Allies in the AFL's 2016 Under 18s national championship, Ben was asked by the Footscray Football Club to train with them. He put in the effort and it paid off when he won himself a spot in the Footscray VFL side as the 23rd man. Ben performed admirably in his debut, kicking three goals. More importantly his performance meant that he cemented himself a spot in the Bulldog's VFL side. Ben's selection at 25 in the AFL draft is a testimony to hard work, dedication and commitment.

The Territory picked up another win straight away when Brandon Parfitt was drafted to Geelong at pick 26. Brandon started his playing career with the Darwin Buffaloes, following in his father David's footsteps. Brandon moved to Adelaide to complete his final years of school. He became a member of the Aboriginal AFL Academy run out of Alberton Oval. Brandon signed with the North Adelaide Football Club. He was also involved with the NT Thunder program, and was a part of the AIS Academy team coached by Brenton Sanderson. Brandon has been a part of the Territory talent squad since he was 11 years old, and as a 16-year-old he became the first Aboriginal Academy member to be selected as an Under 18 All Australian. His performances over the past two years, across many football programs, have him touted as a top 25 pick in this year's AFL draft. The experts were not far off, and Geelong obviously considered him a valuable choice as they took him with their number one pick, their first available pick.

Willie Rioli was drafted to West Coast Eagles at pick 52. As a 19-year-old, Willie moved to Adelaide to pursue his football career with Glenelg in the SANFL. Battling homesickness, he stayed on in Adelaide with his parents' support. Willie played his junior footy with St Mary's. He was a dual premiership player with the Saints at the age of 19, and was a Cheyney medallist for St Mary's in their 2013 win. In 2014 Willie switched to the Tiwi Bombers, where his dad, Willie Snr, was coaching. He hoped to emulate the previous two seasons and win a third premiership. Willie's selection to the AFL system comes as a result of some serious commitment. Willie, skill-wise, was capable of being drafted as an 18-year-old; however, his fitness let him down. Willie focused heavily on his diet and getting fit. He lost a lot of weight and showed the football world that he was serious about where he wanted to take his football. We have to say, 'Well done, Willie'.

I love sharing all these stories of our high-achieving young Territorians. Their stories are a testament to their perseverance and dedication. To Katelyn, Brittany, Ben, Brandon and Willie, your families and friends must be extremely proud of you. You are inspirational for many young people across the Territory.

As 2016 draws to a close I reflect on the year that was, and make special mention of some people and events in and around my electorate. I would like to acknowledge the four fantastic schools in the Fannie Bay electorate and their principals: Yvonne Harding at Parap Primary School; Marcus Dixon at Darwin Middle School; Trevor Read at Darwin High School; and Lindsay Luck at St John's College. I am pleased to learn of some of the successes that have been achieved throughout the school year.

In particular I was delighted to hear about two fantastically progressive initiatives at Darwin High School. On 19 August, Darwin High School held its first Pride Day. This student-led initiative supported LGBTQIA+ students as part of Darwin High School's ongoing well-being focus. The initiative was supported by the Darwin High School Board, the Northern Territory Aids and Hepatitis Council—what a day to make this speech, World AIDS Day—Headspace, Youth Empowerment Against HIV/AIDS and Northside Health.

In June, 1200 students from across the City Schools Cluster united on the Darwin High oval to spell out 'Bullying No Way!' The event was filmed for youth in a new national television advertisement for the 2017 National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. This followed a campaign led by students at Darwin High School to raise awareness of the impact of bullying. The wellbeing ad, in conjunction with students from stage one and stage two health classes, will organise a series of events asking students and staff to send a strong united message to the community in support of proactive participation in the elimination of bullying and violence. As part of this, the whole school gathered on the oval to form the words, 'Cyber Bullying, No Way'. The event was hugely successful and even attracted the attention of the *NT News*.

Yvonne Harding is in her second year as principal at Parap Primary School, and I was thrilled to hear about the achievements of one of her Year 3 students, Rowan Tindale. Rowan entered a national competition held by the University of New South Wales that was assessed against international competitions. He competed in the digital technologies division and was awarded a high distinction for his entry. He was also awarded a medal for achieving the highest score in his division across the entire Northern Territory and South Australia. This is a particularly remarkable achievement for a Year 3 student, and I am confident we will hear more about this bright young man as he progresses through his school education.

Marcus Dixon is the long serving principal at Darwin Middle School. Some of his students have recently achieved great success on the national stage at the recent Tournament of Minds. In the competition they were split into two teams: science technology and language literature. They were given their challenges and locked down for three hours to prepare their responses in a 10-minute performance. The language literature team had to solve a problem where all the myths and legends in the world had been lost, and they needed to create a new myth that would help bring them back. The science technology team's challenge was to build a warning system that would be triggered when the Earth suffered a catastrophic event. Both teams did a fantastic job and had lots of fun performing for the judges and a large audience.

I am eagerly anticipating finding out more about St John's Catholic College's trip to Japan next year, a culture and language trip that has been planned for the students. The Northern Territory shares a special bond with Japan. This will be the trip of a lifetime for students as they experience the language and culture of such a fascinating country.

On a personal note, it has been a pretty hectic year for most of us, but especially for our party secretary Kent Rowe, and party president Syd Stirling. Thank you, Kent and Syd, for all of your work this year.

I pay special attention to Sharon McAlear, who has done a tremendous job providing the party office with administrative support and is now working for our new federal member for Solomon, Luke Gosling. Thank you, Sharon, for your dedicated and loyal service, and I wish you all the best in your new role.

It has been a year in which we have seen two elections, and the workload the party undertook was nothing less than remarkable, as evidenced by two very successful election results. I thank my committed team of colleagues; 2016 has been a remarkable year and I am genuinely excited by the opportunity we have been given to govern for the Northern Territory. I agree with the Member for Johnston's comment that we have probably never had a better team of 25, which is no disrespect to previous teams. It was just an exceptional set of 25 candidates.

With the spirit of Christmas upon us, I also extend my warmest regards to all in the Chamber. May you all enjoy a safe and merry festive season with your loved ones. Thank you to the staff of the Legislative Assembly, who are always professional and we always rely on your advice and support; thank you very much. I thank our hard-working security team for providing an essential service in this building: Esther, Bob 1, Bob 2, Mark, Yanni, Muchsin, Shikha, Lynn, Michael, Loraine, Sajjad and John. Also to the drivers, Bill, John, Gowan, Yuni and Ben, thank you very much for your service this year.

In my Fannie Bay office I have had a great team supporting me with the local constituents: Lindsay, Lucy, Alasdair and Hamish have proved to be invaluable. Also, thank you to Matt, Jenny, Deb and Caitlin, who have all helped out in the office throughout the year. I also want to mention the staff who worked in the Leader of the Opposition's office prior to the election; what a tough gig that is. They worked long hours, travelled many kilometres and helped put together policy, media and events that I am really proud of. Thanks Alf, Gino, Camo, Tanya, Ange, Wellow, Ryan, Helen, Ella, Charlie, Kez, Anna, Vin, Jamie and Denis. Thank you, Christie.

I wish all Territorians a safe and happy Christmas. Two-thousand-and-sixteen has been a wonderful year, full of highlights, success and great achievements. I look forward to continuing along the same vein in 2017. I also look forward to working with my Caucus colleagues to restore trust in government for Territorians. We will engage and consult with the community. We will be transparent and accountable. I have a fantastic team of enthusiastic colleagues driven by a genuine desire to serve their community and the public. Again, thank you all. As the Member for Fannie Bay, I want to say I really like having colleagues next to me, the Members for Fong Lim and Port Darwin. We work together and they would join me in thanking those schools I mentioned earlier; we share them. I say Merry Christmas to my boundary colleagues as well. Thank you all and Merry Christmas.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have struggled to find the right words to sum up 2016, which is a rare experience for me. It has been an extraordinary year, but everything I want to say sounds too cliché. I feel extremely privileged to be standing here as the Member for Braitling. Braitling is a wonderful place to live and Alice Springs is a wonderful place to live. I feel very privileged to represent the people of Braitling because they are good people. I want to thank all of those who supported me throughout the campaign. I also want to thank the people who have been very graceful in the sense that they did not support me but look forward to working with me; that is a great sign. I am looking forward to working because the bottom line is, we all love where we live and have the best interests of our electorate—I look forward to 2017 and representing the interests of the people of Braitling.

I thanked many people in my maiden speech, so today I will just acknowledge the people who have been on the journey with me since the election. I thank all my colleagues in the Chamber. We have a fantastic team and I have enjoyed getting to know all of you better, especially those members I have not had a lot to do with because they live a long way away from me. I look forward to developing those relationships further and working together in the best interests of the Northern Territory.

I thank my Cabinet colleagues. I am very honoured to be the Minister for Territory Families. It is a big portfolio and there is much to do. I thank my colleagues for their support, particularly with all the new processes, which I think the Minister for Education will acknowledge. It has been really lovely to have such a supportive team around us when we have taken on these extra challenges.

I acknowledge the members on the other side of the House. I wish you all a Merry Christmas. We have 25 people here who are focused on the best outcomes for the Northern Territory, and I feel very privileged to be part of this parliament.

I thank all the ministerial staff here and in Alice Springs. I think we have the start of a really great team which is focused on the difficult work ahead, but also focused on the positives of what we can achieve in this parliament. I also thank all the public servants who work for Territory Families. There are some tough gigs in that department and some really tough frontline work. They work very hard. Everyone, from the CEO down, who I have worked with has been very graceful and positive about what we can achieve, and prepared to look towards a positive future despite the challenges we have in this area.

I thank all the Labor Party staff. It is an amazing organisation. All the staff on the fifth floor are very welcoming. We have a really strong team and we will achieve a great deal.

I thank all the other staff in this place. They have been very patient with me when I have been a bit lost or have forgotten my pass in Alice Springs. I will be that minister who loses her pass, so I thank security for their patience ahead of time. I thank the staff in the Chamber. My first piece of legislation today was a bit clunky. I will get better at it, but thank you for your support, grace and willingness to answer all my questions.

Now it is time to talk about my family. This usually makes me teary, so I will try hard. I thank my family, particularly Gary and Jimmy. It is not a lifestyle we expected at the start of the year, with me travelling so much. My partner has picked up an enormous part of the parenting load. I acknowledge him and what an amazing father he is, and acknowledge that my boy is going to school next year.

This time of year is very difficult for many people. It has been interesting being in a job that is not in the NGO sector, where this time of year is very tough because there are enormous demands and people in great need. I acknowledge all those people on the frontline services. It is—as I said in my speech about the penalty rates—a difficult time. It is challenging when you are in difficult situations at this time of year, and there is so much talk about happy families. We all know there are plenty of families struggling. I acknowledge workers in the NGO sector. There are many in my electorate who will be working over Christmas, such as child protection workers, police, hospital workers—the workers at Alice Springs Hospital do an amazing job—firemen, ambulance workers and those at the women's shelter. There is a range of services that are open over the Christmas period. I will be thinking of them because I know what that is like, while I am spending time with my family this year.

I want to acknowledge all the schools in my electorate. There are quite a few and they are all fantastic. I am looking forward to being the parent of a school-aged child and watching him go through that journey. I am thrilled that he is going to such a fantastic public school, which is something we have to keep fighting for. I look forward to working with the Minister for Education to make sure all kids in the Territory have access to good education.

I will wrap up and say I am thinking of all families this Christmas. When I say families, that is a very broad brush. There are many people with chosen families in Alice Springs who will be having an orphan's Christmas—I have been there over the years—having a great time. When you live in remote areas, you form strong bonds and they are celebrated at this time. I have a sense that in this place we will form strong bonds as well. I am really looking forward to the challenges of next year. I also look forward to working to keep the focus on the benefits to Territorians front and centre of everything we do.

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been one of those extra special and busy years. I would not be the Member for Drysdale today without the help of a number of exceptional people, and the support of the voters of Drysdale.

I thank my family: my husband, Tom; my daughter, Kirby; my son, Lindsay; my son-in-law, Evan; and my grandson, Lennox, otherwise known as Lenny. Lenny is my daily reminder as to why we, as a government, need to do the very best we can for the children of the Territory.

My job as minister and local member, like most jobs these days, keeps me very busy. We do the hard work and we have the longest job interview. I consider campaigning to be the longest job interview I have ever had. Then we have four years to deliver and build the trust of our electorates.

I thank my family for their assistance in keeping the everyday aspects of my life ticking over, such as keeping my car registered or buying a last-minute birthday present, which nowadays I do not have the time to do when there are back-to-back meetings in my diary and my only spare time is late at night.

I thank my electorate officer, Kirby Bolton. Coincidentally, I now have two Kirbys in my life, both spelled the same. When I named my daughter Kirby I did not think there would be too many other Kirbys in the world. Now I have my electorate officer, Kirby, and what an asset and a dynamo she is. Kirby is learning very quickly about the dark art of politics and what the role of an electorate officer is. It is not one of those jobs you grow into. You are literally thrown in the deep end and hit the ground running. Thank you, Kirby, you are a star.

The same goes to my amazing ministerial staff, Bryony, Nadia, Lee-Anne, Keyta and Fred, who is the new man on the block, as well as Lorina. It has been a very steep learning curve for us all, but they have been outstanding and I could not ask any more of them. They are exceptional, hard-working and professional. They have made my job easy and it has been a smooth start as a minister. Thank you so much to those amazing ministerial staff.

I also, as Minister for Education, need to thank all the people in the Education department, including the acting CEO, Vicki Baylis, and all the people who provide the briefs and letters we read and sign very quickly. I know how much work goes into preparing the briefs—how much thought and consideration—before they come to the minister. Thank you to everyone in the Education department who works hard to make sure I, as the minister, am prepared for meetings and am making sensible decisions.

To the schools in the Territory, the principals and teachers, thank you for what you do every day. I am fortunate to have such exceptional schools in my electorate. Thank you to Sue Healy at Palmerston Senior; Rob Presswell at Driver Primary School; Rebekah Stapleton at Gray Primary; Wendy, Jordan and Petrina Hayward at Moulden Primary; Rachel Boyce at Good Shepherd Lutheran School. Thank you to the

outstanding childcare and early years centres in the Drysdale electorate, including Palmerston Child and Family Centre, Rising Stars Gray, Goodstart Moulden Temple Terrace, Gray Childcare Centre and the Gray Family Centre.

To the businesses in the CBD and Yarrawonga, thank you for being such a vital part of our community. I hope you get a well-earned break over the festive season. For most of you, it will be the busiest time of the year. Thank you very much to the businesses in the Palmerston and Oasis shopping centres; I know you will be working long hours over Christmas. I hope to see most of you when we are doing present wrapping and festive things in our shopping centres, which is such a vital part of our community.

As the Member for Braitling said, thank you to the police, emergency service workers and the NGOs who have to work over Christmas. I hope you all have a quiet Christmas and you can sit down and talk to your colleagues and reflect on the year rather than having to rush out to jobs.

To my Caucus colleagues as well, thank you very much for your support. It has been a whirlwind but we have done an exceptional job. We are a fabulous team and I think we will only get better and better. I am going to have a break in January, but I look forward to our first sittings in February because there is plenty of hard work to be done and I know we are up to it. Thank you very much to my Caucus colleagues.

To the people of Gray, Driver, Moulden and the industrial area of Yarrawonga, I wish you all the very best for a prosperous, happy and successful 2017.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I would like to say a big thank you and Merry Christmas to all my constituents in my local electorate area. They are Santa Teresa, Titjikala, Finke, Mutitjulu, Docker River, Imampa, Alpara, Ampilatwatja, Atitjere, Engawala, Bonya and Amoonguna, and all the town camps in Alice Springs: Anthepe, Karnte Camp, Little Sisters, Ilparpa Camp and Old Timers Camp. To the rural residents of Alice Springs, the tourism operators and all the pastoralists in my electorate, I extend a very Merry Christmas and wish them well heading into the festive season, and I thank them for their support over the past year, particularly over the past 96 days, in which I have formed part of the Northern Territory Government.

It has been another busy and rewarding year in the electorate of Namatjira, with plenty of highlights and outstanding achievements, certainly in the last 96 days. Being Christmas time, I am told this is the traditional Christmas adjournment where I thank people and also acknowledge some of the things that have happened in the course of the year. I will try to get through all of that now. I am mindful that you are timing me, Madam Speaker.

I want to start by thanking each and every one of the schools in my electorate of Namatjira. I am very lucky to have a number of outstanding principals at the schools in my patch. I continue to develop and work with them to build good relationships. They are running fantastic schools and their students have wonderful teachers who look after their educational requirements.

I thank the remote health clinics in the electorate of Namatjira for the outstanding work carried out. Their tireless efforts to ensure that the people of Namatjira have quality access to health services is fantastic. Going into the Christmas season, these remote health clinics and the teachers in the electorate of Namatjira are often the point of contact for people living in regional and remote parts of the Northern Territory. I thank them for their continued work over the festive period when many others are out enjoying themselves. These are our frontline workers, who continue to make sure people in the electorates across the Northern Territory are being well looked after.

As always, I thank my family. You cannot do this job without the support of family and friends. I thank them for what has been a fantastic year, and for their support and words of encouragement during the course of the election.

I also take this opportunity to thank the thousands of Aboriginal people, rural residents and members of the LGBTIQ community from across the country for their words of encouragement and positivity on my maiden speech. I value them very dearly and I assure them I will continue to fight for their advocacy and make sure their voices are heard, not only in this Chamber but outside as well.

I thank Territory Labor, which does a fantastic job and works long hours. I appreciate the work it does on behalf of the party. I extend a big thank you to my Caucus colleagues, who spend countless hours talking to Territorians, shareholders and stakeholders, and travelling vast distances of the Northern Territory to visit schools or health clinics. Whether they are engaging in policy debates, local raffles or community

events, we all know they put the hours in. Thank you very much to every member in this Chamber for the contribution they put forth to their local electorates.

I extend my thanks to my electorate officers, John, Eileen and Lala. I thank you for all your hard work and the contribution you make to the people of Namatjira. I know they are well looked after in your hands when I am not in the electorate.

I extend a big thanks to the staff of the Legislative Assembly who have helped me this year. I particularly highlight the Deputy Clerks, Marianne and Russell, for their fantastic assistance in making sure I am well trained as Deputy Speaker. I also thank Jacqui Forrest, who I probably bothered the most. Thank you very much, Jacqui, for everything you have done, the guidance and assistance, often at very late notice. With little or no timing she has been able to help me get things done. I very much appreciate the work of the Legislative Assembly—Mel, Tammy, everyone has done a fantastic job.

I must also give a big shout out to the security team. They are the first people I see in the morning and I am always greeted with a smile and a warm welcome. They are the last people I see each night, and I am still welcomed with a happy smile and asked how my day was. To Michael and Esther, you do a fantastic job with your team and I am very much looking forward to many more welcomes every morning in 2017. I love the work that they do.

I have saved some of the best for last. It would be remiss of me not to offer a big thank you to Madam Speaker. She, in my opinion, needs a round of applause. The Member for Goyder, Kezia Purick, thank you for your support, encouragement and teachings as I took to the role of Deputy Speaker this year. You have been there every step of the way, coaching me to achieve my role as the deputy. Thank you very much, I look forward to continuing to work together in the Chamber to ensure that the Standing Orders are exercised correctly, and also that we can continue our fight to ensure the rural areas remain rural.

I wish all Territorians a safe and happy Christmas. It has been a big year but certainly a good one. In my opinion, Territorians got an early Christmas present on 27 August this year. I am confident to say that they are still enjoying that gift. I will also say, 96 days in and no scandals; that would be #winning. Next year will be an even bigger year, and one with many positive and progressive reforms for all Territorians. I look forward to working with my Caucus colleagues as we engage with stakeholders and discuss policy and the big ideas to keep the Territory a strong place, and also a place to envy.

I very much look forward to working with everyone to achieve those outcomes. I naturally have forgotten to thank people so I will just thank every Territorian for the outstanding work they do. I very much appreciate everyone, in particular the people of Namatjira. What can I say? I represent the best electorate, full of many great people. On behalf of the electorate of Namatjira, I wish everyone in the Northern Territory a happy and safe Christmas. I look forward to working with you all in the future. Merry Christmas, or should I say, Feliz Navidad.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow on from my colleague, the Member for Namatjira. His cheer and spirit are very obvious with his attire this evening, which is very bright for our last day of sittings.

Wow, what a whirlwind ride this year has been, from start to finish. I note we have not finished yet. It has been a challenging year filled with personal growth, learning, tears, cheers, laughs and many fond memories.

As we all know, 2016 held both a federal election followed by our very own NT election, which was a big year for many people. I would like to make a special mention of the five Numbulwar School students and two staff who are currently midway through a two-week excursion at Point Leo, Victoria, which is approximately two hours from Melbourne. I acknowledge Murray and Carol Turner, who have sponsored this reward trip for Numbulwar students out of their own pocket every year for the past six years. Murray and Carol are very generous people, and it is amazing to have them support Numbulwar School and the Numbulwar community, despite being on the opposite side of the country. I hope the staff and students are having a lot of fun and I get to follow their trip on Facebook and see lots of beautiful photos.

I have just been sent some photos from the Katherine Christmas Street Parade and the float from the Barunga community, the first ever entry from a remote community. I congratulate and acknowledge the Barunga CDP workers, both men and women, for their hard work and for joining such a great community event. I had the privilege to see the float in progress during my visit to Barunga a few weeks ago. Well

done, you mob; keep up the fantastic hard work in your community, and I look forward to my next visit to Barunga this month.

I would like to share with the House several of the highlights of my year: holding a community barbeque at Gapuwiyak community with the assistance and support of the previous member for Nhulunbuy, Mrs Lynne Walker; being announced on a loud speaker by Bobby Wunumurra as a candidate for Labor for Arnhem and being cheered by over 300 community members; campaigning on Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island with my mother, Didamain Uibo, and father, Mick Uibo; my live interviews on Umbakumba radio, 106.9, with the thoughtful, intelligent and ever entertaining Percy Bishop; sitting down at the dinner table at my parents' house, stapling flyers with my sister, Jocelyn; travelling with my glovewoman, Ebony Allen, who volunteered three days of her time to help my campaign during the remote polling days in over four communities—we drove, we flew, we drove, we flew; at Urapunga—one of my very cute memories—standing 100 metres away from a shop, watching three school teachers walk their students in two orderly lines to vote during a 30 minute polling booth. Every student had their beautiful school uniforms, which is the bush cucumber, and they greeted each of the candidates who were handing out flyers.

My favourite memory this year was the opening day of the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly. I was danced and sung into the Chamber by my family, the Nundhirribala Red Flag Dancers, who travelled 800 kilometres, or 10 hours, from Numbulwar to Darwin to walk me in that day. To have my whole family there was a joy, and one of the special highlights not only of the year, but of my life.

I take this opportunity to thank the many hard-working staff at Parliament House. To the staff of the Legislative Assembly, thank you for your efficiency and professionalism. Thank you to the security team, the cleaners, the IT crew and Hansard for all your hard work. You make it easier to do a hard job here in the Chamber.

I make a special mention to, and send my thanks to, the Parliamentary Education team. I have had several visiting groups from the Arnhem electorate over the last few weeks that have had parliament tours. Each group has thoroughly enjoyed the thrill of walking through Parliament House, and the extra treat of being greeted with a morning tea, lunch or afternoon tea, which I have been proud to sponsor. The groups that have visited Parliament House recently include three Indigenous leadership conference participants from Gapuwiyak; a Ngukurr school group, as part of the Michael Long Leadership and Learning Centre program; a Groote Eylandt school group, made up of Angurugu and Umbakumba students as part of the Michael Long Leadership and Learning Centre program; the five Numbulwar students who recently traveled to Melbourne; and six Jabiru Year 12 students, who, I am very proud to say, were all Indigenous graduates.

I thank Chief Minister Gunner for his leadership of this newly-formed government, and for starting the process of restoring the public's trust in the government. I thank him for taking his first official trip as Chief Minister to my home town of Numbulwar. He will never know how much that means to me. It was exciting to see my family soon after the results of the election; to be congratulated by my family, friends and community colleagues on winning the seat of Arnhem and to introduce the Chief Minister as the rungal bunguwa, or big boss, of the Northern Territory. It was the first ever visit for the Chief Minister to Numbulwar community, and I know it will not be the last.

Thank you to each of my 17 Labor colleagues. I am looking forward to working with you all over the next few years to make a positive impact on the Northern Territory. I extend my thoughts for the festive season to all members across the floor, the two opposition members and five Independent members, and wish you and your families a safe and happy festive season.

A special thanks to my colleague, Minister Lawler, for all her support and inclusiveness in my role as assistant minister. I also acknowledge the Chief Minister and my colleague, the Member for Namatjira, for their hard work in establishing an Indigenous subcommittee of Cabinet, for which we do not have a proper name yet, but we hopefully will in the new year. We are working on it.

A big shout out to all the staff on the fifth floor; thank you for your smiles and the smell of coffee and toast every time I arrive early in the morning. I am glad that I always have my breakfast now so it encourages me to make sure I have a good breakfast and a full day.

Thank you to the Territory Labor Party for the ongoing support, and to the many volunteers and believers in the new Territory Labor government. I acknowledge and thank my electorate staff, including my electorate officer, Brooke Brenner, in Katherine, who is a cracker of a woman. Thank you for being such a great organiser and supporter. I am looking forward to working with you for the next four years. Thank you to my electorate officer assistant, Helen Lee, from Barunga community, for all of your wisdom during our long

distance travels. Thank you to my newly appointed electorate officer liaison, Kara Burgoyne, from Angurugu on Groote Eylandt. I am looking forward to working with you more in the new year, especially during my visits to Groote Eylandt.

A huge thank you to my family and friends for their support while on the journey to become the Member for Arnhem. Without their support I would not have been able to travel and work as hard as I did during the campaign. A big shout out to my dad, Mick, for being my campaign manager and number one supporter throughout the year.

Lastly, thank you to the wonderful, supportive, vibrant, diverse and thoughtful people of the Arnhem electorate. Without your support and trust I would not be standing here now. I am honoured and privileged to serve as your local member, to learn how best to represent the people of Arnhem and to have a voice in the 18-strong Labor Gunner government.

I look forward to many more trips around the Arnhem electorate, and hope to see people at my Katherine based Arnhem office over the next few weeks while people are in town for shopping. Hopefully the roads do not close while they are shopping in town. I wish all of my constituents and colleagues the very best for this new year, a happy and safe Christmas and a cracker of a year in 2017.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been a busy and rewarding year in Brennan, with plenty of highlights and outstanding achievements. We had a long campaign period and, I must admit, I had a fantastic time meeting and getting to know the great people of Brennan. I am extremely privileged that they have trusted me with this great honour of being their representative in the 13th Assembly of the Northern Territory parliament. I will work extremely hard for all of our families.

In my electorate there are many fantastic schools with great staff and children, including Bakewell Primary School, Rosebery Primary School, Rosebery Middle School and a number of preschools. I have had many discussions with the parents, staff and principals of these schools. I am looking forward to giving out the Christmas prizes for the art projects completed in the last month at the Bakewell school. I am very proud to support our local schools and children's work by showcasing it in my office window every week.

I thank the principals for their ongoing support, including Paul Nyhuis, Jill Hazeldine and Gail Smith. I also acknowledge and thank all the teachers and staff who work very hard to ensure our children are in a safe learning environment, and strive for a quality education. I have enjoyed every school assembly I have attended since being the Member for Brennan. It is a pleasure and privilege to award the students for their outstanding efforts in literacy, numeracy, art and their contributions to the community spirit.

Further, as the assistant minister for men's policy, I make a special mention of the young students of Rosebery Middle School, who recently conducted a White Ribbon Day ceremony. It is so rewarding to see the future men and women of our community getting involved in such an important event.

The Palmerston Markets this year were the best I have seen. The markets were held in the Dry Season, and they provided Eva Lawler and me a great opportunity to catch up with many local people about important local issues. I thank all the people who came to visit us at the Palmerston Markets, all the storeholders, who also engaged with us on local business issues, and all the organisers and the Palmerston City Council for putting on a great event every week. Well done to you all. I cannot wait for the 2017 Palmerston Markets, and to taste my next chilli and curry laksa.

The game of rugby means a lot to me, and I understand we need to create a strong base for the juniors. I congratulate Ben and the team at the Palmerston Crocs rugby union club for providing a great atmosphere for juniors, and community games on Friday nights during the build up season. I look forward to the 2017 season, and I may even put on the old footy boots in the Golden Oldies.

I would also like to say well done to our very own Bakewell resident, Rachel, who organised a health seminar in Palmerston last month and received a fantastic turnout. I was pleased to see so many people attend and take their health seriously. Well done, Rachel.

I thank Relay for Life and the Cancer Council for the amazing work they do in our community. In September I participated in the Relay for Life event at the Gardens Oval in honour of the loved ones that myself, and all of us, have lost over the years. Our team name was Just Us, and that is who we were; we were just us. We walked over 200 laps. I was very proud of our small team, which walked non-stop all night to achieve that number of laps. There were some very sore people the next day but as I say, or they say, 'No pain, no gain'. I also congratulate everyone who supported the event and walked or ran all night, plus my sincere

thanks to the cancer survivors who came along and gave us so many great stories. They inspired us to value how precious our life is. Their message was clear. 'Get on with it.'

The Palmerston Association for Dancing should be commended on its double bill world premiere of *The Brolga and the Star* last Saturday evening. It was a great evening and I enjoyed the special performance by the Member for Nelson as a shopkeeper. The young children from our community did a lovely job in their roles as a flock of birds. I now know how important dancing is to our young community, and although I am not coordinated in the art of dancing, I appreciate the training and practice that goes into it.

I congratulate Sandra and the team at Palmerston Own Writers Club, who create very strong pieces of poetry and short stories. Your publication *Snap! Pow!* is a great read. There was a poem written by Kathleen Mills that took my attention. It was about equality and justice, and was named *Curly Nixon*. I urge everyone to read it.

There are many more people and clubs I need to thank, including Palmerston and Rural Seniors, the Over 50s Club, the Bridge Club, the Grow Program, Top End Mental Health, Arthritis and Osteoporosis Club, Palmerston Own Writers, Palmerston Magpies—we are not going too well but we will get there—Palmerston Sporting Clubs, the Palmerston Business group and the Palmerston Men's Shed. I also thank all the frontline services, which have been mentioned tonight; they do an amazing job over the Christmas period, including police, Defence, corrections, health, youth and the list goes on.

I am proud to be a part of the Labor government led by Michael Gunner. I thank all my Caucus colleagues for all their support this year. This government is listening to Territory businesses and families who have been doing it tough. This government is committed to working hard for Territory families, children and businesses to ensure they are always put first on our agenda. We have already started working towards our Palmerston commitments. We announced last week we are bringing a new 24-hour, fully-resourced police station to Palmerston, well ahead of schedule. I thank the Chief Minister, the Treasurer and our Caucus for their support for Palmerston. It is a city we will continue to work hard for.

I thank my family and friends, who have been an amazing support throughout the year. There are too many to mention, and I get emotional if I go through the names so we will leave that. I could not have done all of this without their support, including Hiccup.

I thank my campaign team: Kent Rowe; Ryan Neve; Anna Goode; Ella Maguire, my campaign manager; Aimee Riley; my campaign coordinator, Ryan Schumacher; and my great volunteers, Michaela, Chaney, Paige, Andrew, Baily Rose, Jax, Ella, Richard, Nicole and Simon. A big thank you to all the Palmerston sub-branches for all their support. Thank you fifth floor, security and Legies. Thank you to the wonderful interstate volunteers we had: Joe, Rebecca, Julianna, Ryan, Marcus, Sean and Liam. You brought a breath of fresh air into the last couple of weeks of our successful campaign.

I thank Eva Lawler, Damian Hale, Phil Tilbrook and their families for their friendship and support during the last 12 months. We have grown so much as a team. I always look forward to our next catch up together. I thank Olga and Caitlin from my electorate office; they always look after everyone who walks through the door with the utmost respect and work hard to take care of our local family and children issues. I thank all the staff at Parliament House; you constantly make me feel welcome and like I am home when I am here, or close to it.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish all Territorians, everyone in the House, my family and friends a very Merry Christmas. To all the people of Brennan, our families and children, I thank you for an amazing year. You are wonderful and hard-working people; you want the best for your community. From my heart to you, I wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Today I make you a promise, and one that I enjoy making: I will continue to work hard for you in 2017 to make our great community even greater. We are people of the future. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been humbled by the opportunity that presented itself to me this year. I think a lot of people feel the same way. I thank the people of Fong Lim for the opportunity to become the Member for Fong Lim. I am getting to know more and more of them all the time, but it is a slow process. I enjoy meeting each and every one of them.

Recently I had the opportunity to tour the local schools and meet the principals, Bernie Bree at Stuart Park Primary School and Carol Putica at Ludmilla Primary School. I also visited the secondary schools that the

Fong Lim primary schools feed into—Marcus Dixon at Darwin Middle School, Trevor Read at Darwin High School and Lindsay Luck at St John's Catholic College—although they are in the Chief Minister's office, as he referred to in his speech, in the electorate of Fannie Bay. I have been very impressed with the hard work and dedication each of the principals and their respective staff have displayed. I look forward to attending each of their end-of-year assemblies in the next couple of weeks.

I am also looking forward to seeing Sophie and Eloise graduate from Parap Primary and head to Darwin Middle School in the next two or three years. Marcus Dixon and his staff instil an incredible confidence in a parent who is about to entrust them with his child's education. I can say that both Sophie and Eloise are looking forward to it as well.

To the board and staff of the Buff Club on the Stuart Highway, just alongside my electorate office: it has become one of Sophie and Eloise's favourite spots. They love dropping in there from time to time for dinner.

A member: Good cheap meals.

Mr COLLINS: That is right; it is very old school. Speaking of my electorate office, I see the signage has been installed this week, so I challenge any one of you travelling into the city along the Stuart Highway to not notice where my office is.

To the various business owners in Fong Lim, in particular, Frying Nemo fish and chipper and the Stuart Park supermarket, to my local cafes, Sweet Brew and Bumble Bean, which I believe are among the best in the Territory, and that is saying something as we have started to accumulate some very good cafes in the Territory over the last few years, which is great for a coffee lover.

To the staff of Parliament House and the Legislative Assembly, I join with my colleagues and thank you all for your efforts throughout the time I have been here. You have been a great assistance and are always willing to help with whatever query I have. In particular, I thank Russell and Julia for their assistance with our committee work. They have made the early adaption of new processes so much easier; thank you.

I also take this opportunity to record, again, my thanks to the people who assisted me throughout this very exciting year. Most important is Matt, my campaign manager, and Claire, his partner; my former boss and Matt's father, Gary, for his assistance and advice; my father-in-law, Austin, and my mother-in-law, Margaret. Margaret stayed at home but graciously allowed Austin the indulgence of hanging around the Top End and helping with my campaign for six weeks. Thank you both for your support. I look forward to catching up with you shortly. To each of my children—Grant, Alyssa, Sophie and Eloise—I thank them all for their support; they have been fantastic. My former partners, Vee and Greta, who I mentioned in my maiden speech, I thank each of them for their efforts in maintaining an even keel. To Dom Gomez, Emma Fineal, Noel O'Connellie, Greg Phelps, Marcus Spazapan, Henry Boke, Matt Dean, Garrett Smith, Megan and Paul Lawton, Pam Jenkie, Sarah Newman, Melinda Lowe and Dennis Fernandez, thank you.

To the Territory Labor team, including secretary Kent, Anna, Ryan, Hannah, Matt, Ella, Chrissie and everyone else; to interstate interlopers Hovik, Declan, Emma, who were a great help in the campaign; to Leslie and Heather as well, thank you; to my mother, June, Rob and my brother, Scott, who took the time to accompany mum on the trip up. My mum is about 83 and does not travel well these days. To have Scott come up with her and assist her along the way meant that she was able to get here. It is the only time she has been able to make it up to the Top End and it is possibly the last time she will travel. It was a happy time. I am so happy that she was able to make it up here. I reckon it was well worth her while.

Some of the people I forgot to mention in my maiden speech:

- Julia Irwin, a former federal Member for Fowler and my former workmate. Jules, you are a great mate and I kick myself for leaving you off the first time around. Also to Geoff Irwin, her partner, former shadow Small Business Minister and former Member for Fairfield in the New South Wales Parliament.
- a number of members of the New South Wales Fire and Rescue: Station Officers Scott Mo Jarvis, Zena Z Mohana and Joel Billy Middleton. Despite the distance you remain my closest friends. I spoke earlier today about my experience with the house break-ins in Sydney. It was while I was sharing a house with Billy and Mo in Chippendale that those events occurred, and they were equally traumatised.

- Inspector Mark ‘Pacman’ Reilly, who joined the New South Wales Fire Brigades with me on the same day, 11 November 1983, and who assisted with a Facebook plea to his many friends in the Northern Territory to assist with my candidacy. Thanks, Packy.
- the Council of the Law Society, where I spent four very interesting years—as is often the case, in the end I did not agree with the manner in which certain things were done, but it is a numbers game and I respect that. To Tass Liveris, the President; Candice Maclean, Vice-President; Josine Wynberg, the Secretary; Maria Savvas, the Treasurer; Kellie Grainger, the Acting Chief Executive Officer; and Julie Davis, the Chief Financial Officer, it was a highly-instructive four years and the Territory remains well-represented by its legal fraternity.

On a final note, thank you to all my parliamentary colleagues. You are each an inspiration in your own right. I know I am going to thoroughly enjoy working closely with each and every one of you over the next four years.

In closing I wish everyone I have mentioned and anyone I have forgotten a very happy festive season and a sensational 2017.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, this year has been an incredibly busy and successful year for the young men who participated in the Clontarf program at Katherine High School. I take this moment to recognise the young men who will receive awards tonight for their outstanding performance. Their awards ceremony is happening as we speak.

The Deadly Bloke Award in middle school goes to Tenneson Brown. Tenneson is a deserving winner of one of Clontarf’s most honourable awards. Tenneson displays all of Clontarf’s values and is not only respected by his teachers and staff, but also by his peers.

The Deadly Bloke Award for senior school goes to AJ Rosas. AJ was selected by the NT Government to take part in full-time employment in the business sector while completing Year 12. AJ has always been a leader in the academy and the fact he has managed to balance full-time work, be a state representative in rugby union and complete Year 12 is a credit to him.

Rising Star for Year 7, Zac Motlap, is as respectful as he is confident. He is a leader in his year group and uses this to support Clontarf by ensuring his peers are respectful and well behaved. He leads by example.

The Teachers Academic Awards are awarded to those who have excelled academically in all their subjects. The following students have received the Teachers Academic Awards in their respective years. For Year 7, Tristyn Blaney; Year 8, Anthony Mullett; Year 9 Dylan Rosas; Year 10, Jarius Hoffman; Year 11 Joshua Richards; and Year 12 Dwayne Turner.

The Training Awards recognise outstanding commitment to training. Clontarf offers after-school gym, basketball and cricket, and before school AFL. The following boys have shown great commitment to training: Eric Marchant, Nick Wendt, Anton Bostock, Callum Taylor and Tyrone Charlie. Congratulations to those five boys.

The Athlete Award for middle school went to Matt Hill, who is one of the most talented athletes in Katherine and is only in Year 7. He is gifted with speed and incredible skills. Matt has already represented the Northern Territory in rugby and has the AFL banging down the door, according to his coaches.

The Athlete Award for senior years goes to Robbie Campbell, who grew up playing rugby league and represented the NT on numerous occasions. For the past couple of years Robbie has shifted his attention to AFL and is now seen as one of the elite talents in the Northern Territory in his age group. Robbie is a premiership player in the open Big Rivers football league, and was recently selected to travel to China to represent the Australian Boomerangs.

The YMCA Award recognises a student who has demonstrated the YMCA’s values of caring, responsibility, honesty and respect. This award was given to Codie Adidi. Cody experienced tough times and left Year 12 in 2015 to care for his mother. In 2016 he balanced looking after his mother and completing Year 12, and tonight he is graduating. Congratulations, Cody, and well done for sticking in there.

The award for Most Improved in middle years was given to Isiah Corrigan. In 2015 Isiah was very unsettled and often unable to complete a full day of school. His transformation in 2016 has been remarkable. Isiah has taken a keen interest in football and has represented the under 18s side at just 15 years of age. He

has taken a leadership role at school, and not only makes sure that he is respectful and well behaved, but also pulls his peers in line when they are acting up.

Most Improved senior years was awarded to Zac Govern. At the start of the year Zac had no intention of completing Year 12 in 2017, was not engaged in school, was often in trouble and put little to no effort into his studies. In term 4 Zac's improvement has been absolutely remarkable. His attendance has improved over 30%. He is at school well before his classes start and is on his way to not only completing Year 11 but also to completing Year 12. Well done to you, Zac, for sticking in there.

The School Ready Award Year 7 went to Tryson Swanson. If the world could be filled with more Trysons it would be a better place. He turns up every day with a big smile and a can-do attitude. No task is too hard, and he is an absolute pleasure to have in Clontarf in Katherine High School. It is fantastic to read those sorts of things, so thank you, Tryson, for being who you are.

The School Ready Award Year 8 went to Cody Douglas. Throughout the year Cody has matured into a fine young man. He has a very positive outlook on life, and although he moves around at times, he is always willing to wake up early and come to training and be at school on time. Cody has been a star on our campus this year. Congratulations, Cody.

The School Ready Award Year 9 went to Fraser Tipungwudi. He came to Katherine this year from the Tiwi Islands and has fit in seamlessly. Fraser has great attendance at school and in the morning and afternoon trainings. He is always positive and is someone the staff can rely on.

Special Intensive Program Award senior years was awarded to Gene Hester, who is a quiet achiever and has one of the highest attendance rates in the school. He is reliable, shows respect to his peers and teachers, is on track to do extremely well in Year 12 and will likely finish with even more awards. Congratulations, Gene.

The Northern Territory State Representatives was awarded to the following boys who have represented the Northern Territory in either AFL, Rugby League or athletics: Robbie Campbell, Matt Hill, Brock Johnson, Alton Mole, Jacob McAdam, AJ Rosas, Jet Hill, Mitchell Gillett and Louise Campbell Kossack.

The 2016 Year 12 graduates, these are the Clontarf participants who are finishing this year—congratulations to all of you. I am so proud of you for doing this: Cody Adidi, Jesse Braun, Braiden Dawson, Braiden Hamilton, AJ Rosas, Regan Ryan and Dwyane Turner. I am really proud. Congratulations.

I take this opportunity to wish a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Winter Solstice and a very Happy New Year to all of my wonderful friends, family and constituents in Katherine. The Katherine Street Christmas Party is happening right now, as we speak. I am hoping they are having a great time and the storm has not been too bad.

I extend a merry Christmas to all my friends and family in Darwin, and all the wonderful members of the multicultural clubs I enjoy every once in a while. Buone Feste, Feliz Natal, Feliz Navidad, Selamat Hari Natal, Kala Christouyenna and Merry Christmas.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I would like to put on the public record the achievements of a fantastic teacher who works in my electorate at the Karama Primary School. Her name is Katina Winsley. She was recently awarded the Indigenous Educator of the Year for the Darwin region at the World Teachers' Day Awards, hosted by my colleague, the Minister for Education. The award celebrates the work and achievements of our amazing Territory teachers and their contribution to our community.

Katina is an outstanding teacher, which is why she was nominated by Karama Primary School for the award. I want to share some information on the type of teacher she really is. Katina has a deep understanding of her students, and crafts meaningful and inspiring curriculum for their benefit. She identifies and supports students at risk and works with school staff and outside agencies to ensure each student receives the support and interventions necessary to enable them to access education at their level. She has a strong skill set which she is happy to share with staff through mentoring. She also runs a student to student program, which is an initiative of the Sanderson alliance, to encourage interest and improvement in reading.

Katina is passionate about Indigenous education and culture, which she includes in her classroom by teaching from Indigenous-based texts, inviting visitors to share their culture and language in the classroom, teaching her class Indigenous song and dance to perform at school assemblies and preparing Indigenous food and arts for Harmony Day.

I was privileged to visit Karama Primary School on a number of occasions and I have witnessed Katina in action. Although I have never been able to stay long I can tell you now that she has the respect of her students, she demonstrates confidence in the classroom and she enjoys what she does.

In closing I send a huge congratulations to Katina Winsley, the Indigenous Educator of the Year for the Darwin region, and wish her the very best with her exemplary career.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.