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Director-General of Licensing

Mr HIGGINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE

The Director-General of Licensing met with representatives from the Endeavour Drinks Group on 22 October 2016 to discuss, among other things, Dan Murphy's entry into the Darwin retail market. When did you tell your Director-General of Licensing about the 400 square metre policy? When did you inform the Chief Minister of this meeting between the Director-General and the Endeavour Drinks Group?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition questions us making decisions that are in the best interests of Territorians.

I said before and will say again, we were elected with a mandate to tackle the issue of alcohol-related harm in our community. We said we would do that, and since coming to government we have put in place a number of measures to protect the community. We strengthened Sunday trading. Last week the House passed the Banned Drinker Register legislation. We have put in place a number of measures to protect the community.

I have a working relationship with the Director-General of Licensing. She attends CE meetings and other meetings as appropriate. She puts in place the policy, legislation and regulations the government asks her to. But she works at arm's length. She is there to interpret and put in place legislation for Territorians.

Unlike those opposite who have been dragged kicking and screaming to table their documents, we have been up front with Territorians. We released political donations before we had to. We have provided correspondence in the public domain. It was only this week that the Leader of the Opposition, when challenged and pushed, tabled that documentation.

I am proud to be the minister for licensing and the Minister for Health, and I am putting in place measures to protect Territorians.

Jabiru – Plan for Sustainability

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

I represent the seat of Arnhem, which is home to Jabiru township and Kakadu National Park. This is a special part of the Northern Territory. There has been much anxiety for this township and the region since the CLP shamefully washed their hands of responsibility for the town and its sustainability in 2015. Can you please outline to the House the government's plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of Jabiru, which is a wonderful town full of wonderful people.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this Saturday I will be speaking at the Mahbilil Festival in Jabiru. At the festival I will be reassuring the people that they have a future beyond the closure of the Ranger Uranium Mine. This is something they need to hear often.

I understand they are worried. One of the very first things we did as a government was go to Jabiru and let them know that we believe in supporting all Territorians, and that includes Jabiru. We are there for them.

That future will be determined by the local people and backed by my government. That future will be driven by traditional owners who have, over many decades, had the decision about the future of their land determined and opposed by others. Not anymore. My government believes that the future of Jabiru and the people of that region are important to the Territory and that their decisions matter.

We will be actively engaging in supporting the traditional owners to determine what that future will look like. We have already had conversations with the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and traditional owners about what that future may look like. It is exciting.

To ensure everyone understood that the government was re-engaging in this important discussion, I spoke with the Northern Land Council. I wrote to the chair of the land council, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, and the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation advising them of our decision.

I table those letters.

Our position stands in stark contrast to the CLP. The CLP was prepared to see Jabiru bulldozed into the ground. On 8 December 2015, the then CLP Minister for Lands and Planning, Dave Tollner, wrote to the Gundjeihmi and to Senator Scullion, and he said:

... recognising that both the grant of Jabiru as Aboriginal land and the mining future of the Ranger Project Area are Commonwealth decisions, the Territory has decided to discontinue any negotiations for future tenure arrangements in the town.

This is a disgraceful decision. It government turning its back on its own people. We do not support the CLP's approach to the future of Jabiru. We are at the table; we believe in their future and we will work with them on their future, and I can guarantee you it is a bright future.

Services will stay in Jabiru. I believe in working with traditional owners—capturing the potential of that town and its ability to service the region. With the right plan, belief and support over the years and decades to come, we can grow Jabiru. We will be there for them.

We are a government for all Territorians, and we will work with the traditional owners on the best future for Jabiru and how we can best support the people in that region. That is my promise as Chief Minister. Our agenda, as a government, is to work with locals and be a government all Territorians.

Dan Murphy's – Meeting with Chief of Staff

Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER

It has been established that your Attorney-General and your Chief of Staff must have been aware of Dan Murphy's plans to come to Darwin. It is as obvious as Blind Freddy could see. According to you, neither saw fit to mention this to you.

Why do your key supporters work so hard to hide information from you, and how can Territorians have confidence in you making the right decisions when your Chief of Staff and Attorney-General clearly do not?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there are some terrible errors of fact here. My Chief of Staff was not advised by Woolworths in that meeting that Dan Murphy's were coming to Darwin. The Director-General has confirmed that she did not advise the Attorney-General of the meeting she had with Woolworths about Dan Murphy's in the NT. Those are two allegations by the opposition that are incorrect, and we reject them.

Government Trust and Transparency

Mr KIRBY to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE

Can you please update the House on how the government is acting to restore trust and transparency in government, and are you aware of any alternative policies?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this government was elected with a clear mandate to restore trust in government after four years of appalling behaviour from those opposite. It is exactly what we are doing. We are restoring trust and delivering on election commitments. That is why we reaffirmed restriction on Sunday trading and why we have brought back a cap on takeaway liquor licences.

We have brought back the BDR, which those opposite scrapped, and which led to the two most violent years in the Territory's history. We all know the horrific alcohol-related harm statistics in the Territory. We have talked about them at arm's length. That is why this government is not making any excuses. We are doing the hard yards, the heavy lifting. We are determined to tackle alcohol-related harm. The Territory is unique and we have a challenging context. We must address the volume of alcohol in our community.

The Leader of the Opposition has been free and easy in hurling accusations around this House and in the media over the last few weeks. His record shows he is a hypocrite. This week we introduced the Territory's

first ICAC legislation, which those opposite have opposed for many years—the Member for Araluen and the Member for Blain.

An independent inquiry into political donations is under way with the appointment of Justice Mansfield, who has broad terms of reference and powers. That was opposed by the CLP.

Member for Araluen, I remind you of the facts and the dates; you might want to check your diary. On 20 August this parliament passed a motion to establish a political donations inquiry. You tried to overturn that, but you were unsuccessful. For three months you led Territorians to believe you had participated in that inquiry right through the Casuarina by-election. But days after that by-election, the political donations inquiry was rescinded; it was overturned by the Members for Daly and Araluen.

Those opposite will always be remembered as the people who accidentally started an inquiry into political donations but then overturned it.

Finally, this week the Opposition Leader was dragged kicking and screaming to release the former CLP government's election commitment to the Australian Hotels Association. The Opposition Leader was a part of that Cabinet.

We are open and transparent. We have released our letter and the ALP has gone on the public record. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition: will you instruct your party president to release your donations? There is a challenge.

It just goes to show the CLP has not confirmed what it has received. The CLP cannot be trusted. It has not changed. If those opposite truly care about integrity and openness then they will release information on their donations and tell the truth.

Alcohol at Political Functions

Mr HIGGINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE

Can you please confirm the following invitation is accurate:

To mark the passing of BDR (version 2) legislation and the introduction of ICAC, Attorney-General Natasha Fyles invites you to post-parliament media drinks.

I seek leave to table a copy of that invitation.

Leave granted.

Mr HIGGINS: Attorney-General, in public you speak constantly about protecting the community from alcohol-related harm, yet in private you host drinking sessions on the fifth floor balcony. On this occasion your drinking session was to celebrate protecting the rest of us from alcohol. Attorney-General, how do you justify your double standard?

ANSWER

I know you host functions here at Parliament House, Opposition Leader, just as I do. We host responsible functions. I would love to see what those opposite call it. Clearly the functions you host are different to ours.

As you know, part of our role is to host functions for different groups and parts of the community to welcome them to Parliament House. There is nothing wrong with drinking responsibly. That is what we continually say. It is the abuse of alcohol—it is a bit cheeky for the Leader of the Opposition to question functions when he clearly has hosted them and will continue to host them.

I can assure Territorians that we have some respect and we drink responsibly.

Waterfowl Hunting Season

Mr SIEVERS to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and NATURAL RESOURCES

I understand you made an announcement about the 2017 waterfowl hunting season earlier today. Can you please inform the House of that decision and the reasons behind it.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Territory's natural environment is one of our greatest assets and we respect it. We also respect that Territorians are deeply connected to this place, our land, and how it shapes our identity and perspective on life. We know how important it is in a range of cultural, social and recreational ways to Territorians.

We need to make sure we continue to protect our flora and fauna into the future, and that we do so based on evidence. To make sure that occurs, today I announced my decision regarding this year's waterfowl hunting season, which will run for eight weeks, commencing on 27 October and running until 23 December.

It is important to note that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources does an incredibly important job. Each year in April and May it conducts a comprehensive and systematic aerial survey across the Top End's floodplains. The science shows that in this year there is a magpie goose population of 725 000, which is just over half of what it was last year, and a quarter of what it was in 2012. It is the lowest population count on record.

Magpie geese bag limits have been set at three per day. Bag limits for ducks remain at 10 per day. We promised we would make environmental decisions based on science, and that is what we are doing. The decline is largely due to a series of bad Wet Seasons that were unfavourable for nesting, with well below average rainfall or long periods with limited rainfall in 2012–13 and 2015–16 compounded.

The previous CLP government was encouraged to take firm action from 2013 to 2016. It either ignored the advice or simply put in measures that went nowhere near far enough given the data it would have received at the time. It was inappropriate and irresponsible. Had the CLP listened to the expert scientific evidence being presented, it is possible we would not need to take the steps we are taking today.

It is also important to note that Aboriginal Territorians hunting on their lands will not be affected by the changes. They do not require waterfowl hunting permits. All the mango farms have been visited. They returned 6000 last year and there will be 5000 this year under the permit, and that will be divided between them.

It is really important that we make decisions that are backed by evidence.

Rocket Launch Pad in the NT

Mr GUYULA to CHIEF MINISTER

You revealed in July that talk is under way with the private sector and traditional owners about setting up a rocket launch pad in the NT. We understand Arnhem Land is being considered as the site. Indigenous people in my electorate are very concerned about this possibility, as we understand talks have already reached the serious stage. When will the critical stage of a comprehensive environmental and human impact study be conducted?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, my understanding, and I can get this double checked, is that the Northern Land Council is running consultations regarding whether there is a desire for traditional owners to go down this path. That will trigger a range of things.

Based on my last briefing, I understand the traditional owners of the land want to pursue this. The conversation is about whether it is realistic, the location and proximity to safe landing—all the things that would stack up. The company has asked the question of traditional owners and is talking with them about whether they want this. They have the information to share with them about how it would work in practice. If that is then okay, then it triggers the process involving environmental impact statements.

I am more than happy to provide you with a briefing about those processes. We like the idea of diversifying the Territory economy, especially in North East Arnhem Land, knowing what will happen in Nhulunbuy and what economic opportunities can exist for local jobs. I like the idea of saying to kids in North East Arnhem Land that they can literally grow up to be a rocket scientist. That would be a fantastic opportunity.

The Prime Minister has been talking about the space industry in Australia, and we in the Territory are leading the conversation for this being a reality in Australia. It can only happen at that site with the permission of the TOs, and that is where we are currently at with the NLC consultations.

It is being sponsored by a private company in consultation with TOs, and that is the current stage. We rely on the advice of TOs on what they are comfortable with on their country, but it seems like an exciting project that provides local jobs and hope for people working and living in North East Arnhem Land, who are asking what comes next.

I think it sends a positive message to the rest of Australia that the NT has the capacity to lead and do great things in our remote places. Being in a remote place is not a barrier to innovation, investment or making things happen. That is why I support this idea being tested and progressed.

Obviously, owners of the land have to have their say, own it and be comfortable with it, but that is where it currently sits. For me it is a very exciting idea that we are very happy to work on to ensure it is feasible, practical, manageable and achievable. But the owners of the land have to want it as well.

Roads in Remote Regions

Mr COSTA to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS

Building better bush roads for Territorians who live in remote regions is a key priority for the Gunner government. Can the minister provide the House with details of how better bush roads help improve the lives of all Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, better bush roads and connectivity in the bush will help unlock economic development potential and provide better access to services and create much-needed jobs in remote and regional areas. The Northern Territory Government is very committed to investing in better bush roads.

We have an extensive program in the budget for bush roads across the Northern Territory. It includes capital works, standalone projects, local road strengthening and widening, and repairs and maintenance. In Budget 2017–18 we released a record repairs and maintenance budget, and we have about \$58.5m for repairs and maintenance on bush roads.

We have some very exciting programs and projects in the budget this year. When you look at the budget and the major upgrades, you will see that we have \$40m for the Buntine Highway; \$31m for the Plenty Highway; \$25m for the Tablelands Highway; \$12.5m for the Barkly Stock Route; \$10m to upgrade the Docker River Road; \$5m for the Sandover Highway, an important access route between Arlparra and the Utopia health clinic; and \$3.5m for pavement and seal widening of the Lasseter Highway.

These are important contracts and projects for bush roads in the Northern Territory to improve service, access and the lives of people out bush, and to unlock their full economic potential.

A range of works are under way. There is about \$2m for the Carpentaria Highway, for pavement strengthening and widening; \$1m for the Roper Highway pavement strengthening and widening; \$1.23m for the Tablelands Highway strengthening and widening; and \$5m for Wollongorang Road, Robinson and Calvert crossings.

Work to the value of \$2.5m has just finished on the Fog Bay Road and Rocky Creek crossing; \$7.5m for Lajamanu Road, between Kalkarindji and Lajamanu; \$5m worth of upgrades happening in Maryvale Road; \$3.1m worth of work on the Buntine Highway strengthening and widening; ongoing work worth \$3m at the Tanami, extending the seal; and \$1m for Dorat Road pavement strengthening and widening.

There is significant investment going into bush roads and it is critical that we continue our work to upgrade the bush road network. Not only does it create better access for people, but it creates better access to services and developing local economies to their fullest, improving the lives of people out bush.

Economy in the Northern Territory

Mr MILLS to CHIEF MINISTER

Your government has come under significant pressure and is struggling to restore trust in government. No slogan or assertion will alter that in the short term. This is disappointing and made all the more troubling by the very real pressure being faced by families in my electorate. In Palmerston, for example, 2722 mortgaged properties exist. At current interest rates, 32% are experiencing mortgage stress; that is defined as, 'income not sufficient to cover repayments and other living expenses'.

In your second year interest rates are likely to increase, increasing domestic pressure, and GST payments to the Northern Territory are not likely to grow. What are your plans to deal with these real pressures in your second year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are very realistic about the state of the Territory economy. If you have plans for the Territory, like we do, they have to be based on realism. There are Territory businesses doing it tough, which is why we have invested in a range of programs, such as community infrastructure grants; the home renovation scheme, which is ongoing; and bringing back a bigger and better Home Improvement Scheme, which is still rolling out. It is about getting money flowing at the lower level.

We still need more money flowing at the higher level, so we brought forward a series of works, as well as having a \$1.75bn cash infrastructure budget—all based on conversations with business. It is a realistic plan for what Territory businesses need, based on the realities of the Territory economy. That is why, in the last census business confidence index, Territory businesses said they were worried about the state of the economy, but they were the most confident in the country about the government's plans for the Territory economy. It was heartening to know we are on the right path, but we are still worried about the Territory economy.

We got the tick the other day from Moody's, saying it recognises we needed this budget for the Territory to make sure we are still delivering what Territorians need. Jobs are what it all comes down to. You need to have jobs. People need money to pay for the roof over their head. We need jobs to keep people here and to attract them here. We have been very focused on the things we know will generate jobs.

The Palmerston hospital project is coming to a successful conclusion; we are on track with that. We also have the Gateway project. There are a number of things we are working on ourselves, such as the police station in Palmerston, to make sure we have that investment directly in Palmerston. We have the first home owner concessions to make sure people can buy into the market, which was a problem. We have seen growth in first home owners, which is really important to the Territory when it comes to population.

There are a significant number of things we are doing in and around the economy, being very realistic about the fact many people are doing it tough. I thank the Member for Blain for speaking on behalf of them. The Members for Brennan and Drysdale speak for the people in Palmerston as well. We need to make sure we are keeping people employed and keeping Territory businesses open.

The Territory has a bright future. We have 18 major projects on the horizon that we are working on delivering. They are some really exciting projects. We do not have enough people living here. We need more people to move here to be able to take advantage of that potential.

Aboriginal Justice Unit

Ms AH KIT to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE

You recently launched the new Aboriginal Justice Agreement within the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. Can you please update the House on how the Aboriginal Justice Unit will improve justice outcomes in the community and deliver on our election promise to deliver an Aboriginal Justice Agreement?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of launching the new Aboriginal Justice Unit in July, during NAIDOC week. This is a new unit which will sit within the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

The establishment of a dedicated Aboriginal Justice Unit shows this government's commitment to improving the justice system to ensure we attain better outcomes for all Territorians, particularly Aboriginal Territorians. Aboriginal Territorians are, sadly, grossly overrepresented in prison figures, both adults and youth. This has to change. We need to do things differently.

The Aboriginal Justice Unit will be the hub that works to achieve these necessary changes to ensure Aboriginal Territorians are able to work with the government to create a justice system that is accessible to all Territorians. We believe all Territorians are entitled to access a high-quality justice system, which is why we need to restore local decision-making and look at what we can do within the justice system.

To deliver on these commitments we must listen to Aboriginal Territorians' experiences within the justice system. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement will be built from the ground up. It will set out how the government and Aboriginal people will work together to make justice work in the Northern Territory. It will build on trust and engagement on justice issues, focus on practical solutions to reduce the levels of Indigenous incarceration, and deliver strategies for implementation of more local decision-making within the justice system.

The six-member Aboriginal Justice Unit will consult across the Territory. They are already consulting with key peak bodies around the Territory in Batchelor, Nauiyu, Bagot Community and Pine Creek, just to name a few.

The Aboriginal Justice Unit staff have also attended the show days in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek to advertise, seek community engagement for this agreement and advise people of upcoming consultations. The unit is being headed by Ms Leanne Liddle. She comes with a wealth of experience. A former police officer, she has worked in a number of jurisdictions, including the UN.

We need to engage with Aboriginal Territorians about our justice system. It does not always need to be in a negative context. How can we make the justice system more accessible? How can we promote Aboriginal Justices of the Peace and access to documents? This unit will continue its communication and travel north, south and all over the Territory, over the next few months.

I very much look forward to receiving regular feedback. I have been updating my parliamentary colleagues on this as we work together to deliver an Aboriginal Justice Agreement that will provide better justice outcomes for all Territorians, delivering a safe, vibrant Territory for the communities within it.

Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter

Mr WOOD to the MINISTER for TERRITORY FAMILIES referred to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS

The Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter has been operating in Malak for the past 31 years, protecting women and children from domestic violence. Right now, many women and children are there. I am told that TEAMhealth has decided to establish transitional housing for clients exiting the mental health system one block away from the shelter. It appears that it is a fait accompli because TEAMhealth already has plans drawn up.

Lack of consultation has been excused by someone saying Crown land is zoned CP, so no public consultation is required for the shelter or the wider community. Regardless, surely this matter should have first been discussed with the women's shelter management out of courtesy before any decision was made.

Are you aware of this proposal? Were you consulted by TEAMhealth at the beginning? Do you support the management of this shelter who say they have great concern about this proposal?

ANSWER

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I know the service well and have had a long-term relationship with the manager. I do not think they have sought my opinion on this issue. I see it as a planning issue, so therefore, I will hand it to the minister for Planning.

Ms MANISON (Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that TEAMhealth has been working on a project on Matthews Road for a couple of years, on community purpose ...

Mr Wood: Patterson Street.

Ms MANISON: Patterson Street—they are near each other.

That project was started under the previous government. There has been quite a bit of work on that. TEAMhealth has been progressing that and in negotiations, looking at the land and the space next door. I have been working with the department, looking at the land in front of the Red Cross. They are also bordering the Hindu Society, which had some concerns about the land.

I asked TEAMhealth if they had been consulting with the women's shelter. The last advice I had is that they had been trying to contact them ...

Mr Wood: I knocked on their door.

Ms MANISON: Yes. They had been trying to contact them and had made several attempts. Further questions will have to go to TEAMhealth regarding that consultation.

Clearly, there are still some processes that TEAMhealth will have to undergo. It is concerning that the women's shelter has these deep concerns. After this, I will get in contact with TEAMhealth to make sure they get together with the women's shelter and have a good discussion about this.

Education – Improvements in Katherine

Ms NELSON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The previous government failed the children of Katherine, as evidenced by the poor results in the 2015 Australian Early Development Census. Can you tell members how this government is improving education services for children and their families in the bush?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Katherine for the question. I know how passionate about and hard-working she is for the students in Katherine.

This was discussed yesterday. I am a firm believer, as is our government, that it does not matter where you are in the Territory—every child has a right to a world-class education. Whether you are remote or urban, wherever you are in the Territory, you deserve a top-class education.

The government has reiterated that it is putting \$124m back into the education budget, \$20m of which has gone directly into school budgets for 2017–18. The global school budget pool now is a record \$489m ...

Mr Higgins: It (inaudible) to match your estimates, hey?

Ms LAWLER: I pick up on the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He was quoting figures from the period 1 September to 31 March, when his government had decimated the education workforce. Five-month-old figures reiterate just how much work has been done by the department in those five months.

Opposition Leader, I hope you attend the Estimates Committee of the annual reports so you have the opportunity to hear from us all about the additional staff. There are an additional 178 staff in our schools in the Territory. Eighty-one more staff are working in bush schools.

The Members for Arnhem and Katherine will be pleased to hear there are 49 more FTE staff employed in the Katherine region. Teachers and people who work in schools are great employees and citizens. The additional FTEs in the Katherine region is a wonderful thing to see. That is in schools and FaFT programs.

I was fortunate enough to go to the new Jilkminggan-Mataranka Families as First Teachers facility two weeks ago, and I am heading to Pularumpi and Milikapiti in September to see their FaFT facilities.

It is about putting dollars back into the bush and benefiting the Territory. Twenty-nine remote schools are receiving the first round of the \$300 000 Building Better Schools grants.

It is a pleasure to be the Education minister and to know we are focusing on education and putting it first in the bush as well as our town schools.

Alice Springs – Crime

Mrs LAMBLEY to CHIEF MINISTER

Chief Minister, this is your government's first birthday, your celebration of being in government for 12 months, yet we hear nothing from government celebrating your wonderful achievements across government.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The CLP Chief Minister did not even make it to the first birthday.

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Mrs LAMBLEY: I want you to tell the people of Alice Springs of all the wonderful new initiatives you have for fighting crime in the wonderful town of Alice Springs.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not a big believer in marking milestones. I believe in working. We have said that a lot. We are a team that believes in working in the best interests of Territorians.

As a local Alice Springs boy who loves Alice, I am very excited by the fact we are doing a lot in Alice Springs as a government.

There is \$20m to revitalise the Alice Springs CBD; \$20m for the national Indigenous cultural centre; \$50m for the iconic national Indigenous art gallery; \$2.3m for the Alcoota fossil megafauna exhibition in the CBD; the beginning of a \$100m arts trail to connect the Alice Springs art experience to art sites across the Territory; \$20m which the Health minister is spending at the hospital; \$11m to support and rehabilitate at-risk youth and improve community safety in Alice Springs; \$6m for the Alice Springs Women's Shelter; \$3m to upgrade the domestic violence court in Alice Springs; \$1.1m to upgrade the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre; \$6.2m to upgrade the sporting facilities; \$300 000 for every school in Alice Springs; and the list goes on and on.

I am happy to talk about what we are doing ...

Mrs LAMBLEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! My question was about new initiatives so we can celebrate ...

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Sit down.

Mr GUNNER: I am extremely puzzled that the Member for Araluen cannot find anything on that list to celebrate. I think it is very disappointing for the people of Alice Springs that not one thing on that list is something the Member for Araluen can celebrate. That shows a lack of heart and passion for Alice Springs.

Mr MILLS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. I am concerned because the question related to achievement, which is a result, not an input. Spending money is not an achievement. We are looking for results from expenditure.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mrs LAMBLEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; my question was specifically about crime.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Araluen, it was not about crime.

Mrs Lambley: Yes, it was.

Madam SPEAKER: Do not contradict me; it was not about crime. You asked about celebration of one year of government being in power. It was not about crime specifically.

Mr GUNNER: We celebrate Alice Springs and love it. We are investing in Alice Springs and working with the people of Alice Springs. I am looking forward to working with the current mayor returned or the new mayor after the council elections, on the future of Alice Springs. These are people who are passionate about Alice Springs and can celebrate it and love it.

We want to work with the people of Alice Springs on a better Alice Springs, because I believe it is the inland capital of Central Australia. I believe it needs to be a destination in its own right again. That is what we have to do to make Alice Springs grow. We recognised in the last term ...

Mrs LAMBLEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the second part of my question was about crime. Can the Chief Minister please answer that.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Araluen. The Chief Minister still has time to answer the second part of your question.

Mr GUNNER: We recognise that Alice Springs, under the CLP's term, plateaued and stagnated. Unfortunately, it lost a seat and a voice in this Chamber because of the lack of investment by the CLP in Alice Springs, and that was bad. We will invest in and grow Alice; we believe in Alice. That also means tackling the issues of crime in Alice Springs.

We have seen a significant increase from 13 000 to 20 000 of proactive police patrols in Alice Springs, because the people of Alice Springs deserve to be safe; they should be safe. We have introduced business security grants and are working with the people and businesses of Alice Springs as to how we can upgrade their security so they are safer, because you should also be safe at work.

As a government, we are investing in Alice, in the social infrastructure, the economic structure and what we can do in regard to early interventions to support the people of Alice Springs.

Local Government Councils

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I acknowledge my electorate officer, Brooke Brenner, who is in the gallery watching us today and enjoying Question Time in parliament. She often listens in, so it is good for her to see it in person.

As we know, the local government elections are happening this weekend. As a bush member who represents a predominantly remote electorate, I want to know how the government is supporting remote communities in local decision-making through local government councils.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am another proud member of Michael Gunner's Labor government, delivering on election commitments. If you promise something to Territorians, they expect you to deliver it. I am also very proud to stand here as part of a team that designed this election commitment to support local government.

As the minister for local government, it gives me great pleasure to announce the \$5m Local Government Infrastructure Fund, which is an application-based fund for regional and shire councils. This fund will go hand-in-hand with the Labor government's increase in the operational subsidies grants, complement the \$5.1m into the local authorities funding and support what we lobbied for strongly in opposition, that is, the return of indexation in terms of the federal grants.

This infrastructure fund is matching the narrative of this government on shared services methodology. We are encouraging regional and shire councils to look at projects to improve efficiency right across the Northern Territory in delivering important maintenance of assets, but also new projects. We have received a lot of responses from councils; however, we have held off this fund until Saturday 26 August, when we will see the new councils established. The new presidents, mayors, council members and local authorities can start to plan and consult with their constituencies and utilise this new fund.

We are especially proud of the new \$5m strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund and of the narrative taken up across the Northern Territory about this shared services methodology. If local government authorities are looking at infrastructure upgrades for amenity of internal roads, dust suppression and greenscape projects, then they can get together and procure together. They can deliver better efficiencies. This will also allow important work to be carried out on significant places like cemeteries. It will be handy in terms of important waste management in regional and remote communities.

It was great to be in the design team and wonderful to be in the election-winning team, and now being able to stand here and deliver this new initiative—this election commitment which will go a long way further to

supporting local government in the Northern Territory. As the minister for local government I have received a lot of positive feedback.

I wish everyone all the best. There has been a great turnout so far, and there should be a great turnout on Saturday. I look forward to acknowledging and meeting all the new local government officials that we will be working with over the next term.

ICAC Inquiry

Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Today at 1 pm Dan Murphy's put out a statement in regard to the misleading information that you stated in the parliament yesterday. I will read from that statement:

I would like to be clear and state unequivocally for the record that I refute that version of the events ...

It goes on further to say:

... I have contemporaneous notes of the meeting that verify that I raised Dan Murphy's Darwin with Mr Leonardi, and my colleague has corroborating notes from my telephone conversation with him in which I relayed my meeting with Mr Leonardi.

Because we believe that it is in the interest of all Territorians to have transparency over this matter, we are prepared to make ourselves and the notes available to any inquiry or investigation.

Chief Minister, to try and restore a slither of integrity in your government, will you now refer this dodgy deal to the donations inquiry and refer yourself to ICAC when it is established?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we have created an independent donations inquiry that has the capacity to look at this. The independent commissioner against corruption has the capacity, when it starts up, to look at anything it wants.

I trust my Chief of Staff, who has very clearly advised that Woolworths did not raise the issue of moving Dan Murphy's in that meeting. There are clearly two completely different recollections of this meeting; we were not advised in that meeting that Woolworths was moving Dan Murphy's. It is as simple as that.

The independent inquiry and commissioner that we have established can look at anything that they want. No one in the Northern Territory is above scrutiny, and that includes me. That is something we wanted to establish after the last term of the CLP. Everybody was available for scrutiny. We established the Northern Territory's first ever independent political donations inquiry to restore trust.

Mr Higgins: Like a snake in the grass.

Mr GUNNER: The decisions made by government are in the public interest ...

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, please pause. Withdraw that, Opposition Leader.

Mr HIGGINS: I withdraw.

Mr GUNNER: It is in the public interest not the private interest. We created the independent inquiry so it had the power to look into all issues relating to donations. Our integrity measures include the ability for the independent inquiry to investigate donations received by the Labor Party.

It is important, after the controversial years of the last term of the CLP government, that no one is above scrutiny. This includes me, as Chief Minister. It is why we have this independent inquiry and have introduced the historic legislation to have an independent commissioner against corruption in the Northern Territory.

Every day that I get out of bed to come to work, I am doing it for the best interests of the Northern Territory. It is the only reason I ran and the only reason I am here. I genuinely believe the entire motivation behind my team, who are a hard-working team, is how we can do better for Territorians. Our policies have always been designed in the public interest.

We know when it comes to alcohol, which is the heart of this, that it causes significant harm in our community and to the health of people and their families. We know it tragically underpins a lot of crime in our community. We have a strong, tough policy on alcohol. Woolworths and Dan Murphy's do not like it, but we have been strong on what we will do when it comes to tackling alcohol. We have also said we are happy for that to be tested.

Former Chief Justice Trevor Riley is currently testing that through another independent inquiry into alcohol in the NT.

There are two independent inquiries. Both those inquiries, in case people do not understand, have powers similar to that of a Royal Commission—plus the creation of the independent commission against corruption. No one has been more open and transparent in the Northern Territory than we have been.

Central Australia – Horticultural Investment

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and RESOURCES

How is the government taking action to attract horticultural investment in Central Australia and create more jobs for Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, our government is committed to facilitating agribusiness investment into Central Australia. The industry as a whole is worth \$224.5m, and as a government, we must support and grow with the industry.

We have already had some great success stories in Central Australia. I have visited Paul McLaughlin from Desert Springs farm at Ali Curung with the Member for Barkly numerous times. They have fantastic watermelons. Another success story, from in the Member for Namatjira's electorate, is the very energetic and colourful Richie Hayes from Rocky Hill Table Grapes just outside of Alice Springs. He is producing fantastic table grapes. We want to see Paul's watermelons and Richie and Leann's table grapes in every supermarket, fruit bowl and lunch box around the country.

I visited Wally Klein from Orange Creek station, who has been doing a three-acre garlic and potato trial since January. I visited Neutral Junction Station, where I saw the pivot irrigation hay production with my learned colleague, the Member for Barkly. There are 90 acres of hay being produced. They are selling it to local cattle industries as quickly as they can grow it. It is a fantastic outcome.

What I really want to highlight is the recently published prospectus Investing in the Horticulture Growth of Central Australia. It is the how-to guide for investing in the Central Australia horticultural industry. It details local information, such as climate conditions, water quality, the availability for potential crops, key infrastructure, topography, land tenure and detailed information on key precincts for development. This prospectus has it all. It has the contacts and the info; it is a one-stop shop for how to invest in horticulture in Central Australia.

We are very proud of the work we have done in getting this out on the behalf of government. I thank everyone for this. We have put out an expression of interest for enterprising use of recycled water on 30 hectares of land at AZRI. It closed on 14 August. It is suitable for table grapes, dates, melons, vegetables, herbs, native bush food, stone fruit, citrus, pomegranates and nuts.

I thank everyone for the development of this. What this means for Central Australia, with this government investing in any way it can in supporting the industry—it is about jobs for Territorians, opportunities for Territorians. I will never get sick of this. It is about the future for Territorians by having a job.

North East Arnhem Land – Artists

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for TOURISM and CULTURE

The Northern Territory Government is putting an enormous emphasis on developing tourism in its major urban centres in 2017–18. That includes showcasing some of the finest art and works of our amazing artists from North East Arnhem Land. Can you tell me what your department is doing to encourage the federal government to achieve greater protection of our NT artists?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, our cultural sector is incredibly important. It is an important economic, social and cultural contributor. It is about preserving and sharing our stories. Arnhem Land is a very important part of that. An important part of our arts trail commitment is the gallery extension in East Arnhem Land.

Your question goes to the heart of the Indigenous Art Code and the work that is happening at the federal level. I am very pleased that I will be joining my jurisdictional colleagues and the federal minister for Tourism, Steve Ciobo, at the ministers' meeting in Beijing over the weekend. I am sure this is one of the issues we will be discussing. I am very keen to look at how we can better support that work through our incredible commitment to the arts in the Territory—our \$100m arts trail commitment.

It is incredibly important that we are protecting artists and ensuring people are educated about ethical purchases and making sure that money is going back to artists and art centres.

We can all probably do more in education. I am very keen. As I mentioned previously, I was very pleased to see representatives of the Indigenous Art Code at our reception for the Aboriginal arts industry over the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair weekend. I talked to various people from across the industry about this issue. We have a Northern Territory representative on that committee. Philip Watkins is also tied into our working group for the national Indigenous art gallery in Alice Springs.

I am happy to have a conversation with you, Member for Nhulunbuy, about your views on how we can do more to ensure we are protecting that work. It is very important. The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory has a very important and valuable role to play in assisting art galleries and centres across the Territory in the preservation of work and upskilling our art workers.

Member for Nhulunbuy, if you have specific concerns I am keen to meet with you and make sure we are talking those to the federal government.

Tourists from China

Mr KIRBY to MINISTER for TOURISM and CULTURE

We have been lucky enough to have Lily Ji, the Chinese actress, here very recently doing some filming through the Northern Territory. I have spoken before about being lucky enough to spend some time with her. Can you please update the House on the government's progress to attract more visitors from China?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are a government that is strongly focused on attracting the Chinese tourism market to the Northern Territory. I am very pleased to continue that work. The department has worked very hard on this for some time, particularly on attracting direct airline flights from China.

Before the election we made a commitment that we would invest an additional \$5m into attracting more visitors not only from China, but exploring the emerging market of India as well. We know there are increasing numbers of Chinese visitors coming to Australia and we want to make sure we are encouraging them to come to the Northern Territory to have the incredibly unique experiences they will only get here.

In March we delivered a successful grants program to support the tourism industry to become more China-ready. It was targeted at a number of tourism operators to have the opportunity to focus primarily on our accommodation providers. The Member for Port Darwin visited one of those providers with us. They were very excited and complimentary about the training. They are seeing an increasing number of Chinese visitors in their establishments, which is fantastic.

We successfully delivered two rounds of the Mandarin tour guiding program in Kakadu. There were 17 tour guides who went through that training, which is fantastic, and there are another 13 currently in progress. When I was in Palmerston recently with my parliamentary colleagues, I met one of the guides who was bringing a group through the Territory. It is fantastic to see the outcomes of these programs already.

We are considering additional programs that will also include Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. This builds on that foundation program, which is a great outcome.

As the Member for Port Darwin acknowledged, Lily Ji, of *Pacific Rim* and *Skiptrace* fame, has been in the Territory filming part two of the *Catch the Sunset* documentary, which will feature Kakadu, Nitmiluk, Elosey, Mataranka and Edith Falls. Part one of that documentary was broadcast on local television in the Shandong Province, with a reach of 100 million Chinese people, which is huge.

I thank the Member for Port Darwin for being very active in showing Lily Ji around the Territory. She was modelling some local fabric and couture dresses as well, which was amazing.

We continue to do the important work, meeting with airlines and encouraging them to come to the Territory. The Chief Minister and I are very proud to welcome a delegation from a major Chinese airline, who spent a number of days in the Territory exploring and sampling our amazing tourism product and what we have to offer.

I look forward to going back to China on the weekend with my colleagues from around the country. I will continue to meet with those stakeholders who have expressed how important this is to us.

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