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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 11 am.

VISITORS

Good Shepherd Lutheran College Junior School and Ludmilla Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to some visitors in the gallery. We have Year 5 students from the Junior School of Good Shepherd Lutheran College, accompanied by their teachers, Lynne Pokela and Karen Koehler. Welcome.

Also a Year 5/6 class from Ludmilla Primary School, accompanied by their teacher, Anthony Brereton. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

LEAVE OF ABSENCE **Chief Minister**

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that a leave of absence be granted to the Chief Minister for today, who is interstate on government business.

Motion to agreed to.

Member for Arnhem

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that a leave of absence be granted to the Member for Arnhem for today, tomorrow and Thursday, who is engaged in an International Visitor Leadership Program.

Motion to agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR **Message No 2 – Assent to Bills Passed in November and December Sitings**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 167 I advise that I have received Message No 2 from His Honour the Administrator, notifying assent to the bills passed at the November and December sittings 2016 of the Legislative Assembly. The message is dated 9 January 2017.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS **Question Time**

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I advise that for Question Time today any questions normally directed to the minister for Police should be directed to me, and any questions on the Chief Minister's other portfolios should be directed to the Deputy Chief Minister.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL **(Serial 4)**

Continued from 27 October 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I rise today to indicate that the opposition will be supporting the Statute Law Revision Bill 2016. This bill will make consequential amendments to a number of Territory laws, including updating superseded references, correcting typographical errors and fixing grammatical errors and omissions. None of the amendments contained in this bill are of a controversial or substantive nature; however, they are legally necessary.

Like past bills bearing a similar title, this bill follows the general pattern of Statute Law Revision Bills in revising and correcting the laws of the Territory in very minor aspects. I do not wish to take up the time of honourable members by discussing this matter any further. With those words I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Spillett and the opposition for their indication of support.

As outlined in my second reading speech, this bill makes very minor amendments to various Northern Territory laws. The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, in conjunction with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, regularly prepares Statute Law Revision Bills to update the statute book. The last such bill was in 2014.

Essentially, this is housekeeping. It is an opportunity to update superseded references, make amendments to reflect current drafting styles and correct typographical and grammatical errors that have developed over time. The amendments are not changes to government policies but rather involve updating superseded references and correcting grammatical errors.

The Parliamentary Counsel follows a formal policy when considering amendments for inclusion in this bill. All submissions are considered accordingly and anything that is not a minor amendment is not included but instead must be considered through an individual amendment to that act.

For this bill we have made minor amendments to 62 acts, 13 regulations and the *Criminal Code Act*. Several acts have already been amended to comply with Parliamentary Counsel standardised drafting practices to ensure criminal responsibility provisions of Part 2A(a) are applied in a uniform manner across all legislation in the Northern Territory. It is a good thing for the Territory statute books to have uniformity on these legal principles, and in the second reading speech we outlined the changes. These are not substantial changes, they are minor amendments; however, it has been a considerable period of time since the last Statute Law Revision Bill was presented to the House.

I thank the Parliamentary Counsel and the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice for the work they have put into this. Although it seems minor and we have hardly spent any time within the Chamber on this issue, it is significant and important; we acknowledge the extremely hard work that agency staff put into it.

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.

MEDICAL SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 14)

Continued from 1 December 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I rise to indicate the opposition will be supporting the Medical Services Amendment Bill 2016, which principally deals with the regulation of parking at public hospitals across the Northern Territory.

I thank the minister and her staff for the briefing we received on this bill on Monday. The opposition is hopeful that this bill will provide the Department of Health and its Chief Executive Officer the opportunity to address some of the long-standing parking and traffic management issues which have plagued a number of hospital car parks across the Territory. The opposition supports the provisions which will allow the CEO of the Department of Health to regulate the general conduct of persons within the health precinct. It is for the safety of patients and staff that authorised officers need the legal ability to address inappropriate behaviour, such as speeding and drinking, within the health precinct.

The successful operation of this legislation is predicated on the bylaws which are currently being drafted by the government. The opposition has not seen these documents yet, but looks forward to seeing the regulations and the positive impact that could stem from their successful implementation.

Although the opposition supports the bill, we want to highlight two concerns to the minister. We note that this bill proposes to create an offence for providing misleading information to an authorised officer. This is a practical provision which allows an authorised officer to approach an individual who is contravening one of the bylaws and ascertain that person's details so an infringement can be issued. Whilst the opposition agrees with this component of the bill to ensure people are providing accurate information so an infringement can be issued, we are concerned that the bill does not contain a like provision for circumstances where an individual simply refuses to provide any information at all. In its current form, the

same section on misleading information has been left as a catchall section to include an instance where an individual refuses to provide their details. We hope this is adequate to cover that circumstance.

Secondly, the bill proposes to allow the CEO of the Department of Health to appoint a person to be an authorised officer, regardless of whether they are employed by the government or by a third party. Given this provision, one could foresee a time in the future where—the minister indicated on radio this morning that it would be Department of Health staff who would issue infringements. The legislation is such that if the government chose to have private companies enforce the bylaws, they would be able to do so.

The opposition will watch the implementation of the bylaws which will follow this bill, and hope they will mitigate a number of traffic and parking issues which have long plagued our hospital car parks. I pose several questions to the minister regarding the practical implementation of aspects of the bill, and hope she can respond in her closing speech.

What are the proposed time limits and other restrictions that will be put in place by the bylaws that will stem from this bill, and what corresponding penalties will be applied for any breaches? Will these penalties be in line with those issued by our local councils or the Waterfront Corporation, for example? If not, why?

How will parking and payments for parking within the health precinct be administered? We are a little confused about how, practically, government will do this. Will there be a ticket machine, a boom gate, licence plate recognition technology or a pay-and-display arrangement? How will the Department of Health or the authorised person know that someone has been there for four hours? Will patients and visitors be forced to leave the hospital to top up their parking or move their car, or will the government implement a system that will eliminate this inconvenience? If you are at the hospital all day, after four hours you are forced to move your car or face a fine.

Will only Department of Health staff be appointed as authorised officers or will the government outsource that responsibility to a third party in the future? There was talk about having security staff issue the infringements, so they would be contracted and not Department of Health employees.

What parking provisions will be made available for medical staff, and will they be required to pay for parking whilst on duty? What avenue for appeal will be available for individuals who have been issued with an infringement notice, and what circumstances will be considered adequate for the Department of Health to waive a fine? Finally, when will these bylaws be gazetted and who will be consulted during the drafting process?

Minister, if you can provide answers to those questions in your contribution that will be appreciated.

Madam Speaker, I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, when someone mentions car parking and Royal Darwin Hospital you wonder whether we could write a small book on it. It has a long history. It went from something that was relatively simple—a free car park—to something that had a problem. With RDH expanding so much, car parking became a problem, especially for people going to the hospital who were not members of staff.

The previous government brought in a series of car parking rules. The Member for Araluen, a former Minister for Health, will remember the days when Wilson Parking was the contractor looking after car parking at RDH. The proverbial hit the fan on 17 June 2015; the previous government brought in urgent legislation when it discovered the Local Court was intending to give information to Wilson Parking about number plates, which was illegal. Although local government and Territory government could get that information, it was not for third-parties to have. Urgent legislation was brought into parliament—the Members for Johnston and Casuarina spoke on it—and it stopped Wilson Parking from obtaining the names and addresses of about 8500 people who were issued fines.

I am not sure how everything has been working in the meantime, but this is an opportunity for the government to put in place a uniform control over car parking on government hospital sites. I am not sure if that includes any other sites owned by the Department of Health. I do not know if there is any parking in the departmental building in the CBD that these provisions would cover. The minister might be able to tell us if it covers more than only medical facilities, such as administrative buildings owned by the Department of Health.

The power is now given to the Chief Executive Officer, as written in the bill. The important bit is section 10, which is about bylaws. I am interested in seeing the bylaws. I presume they will come before the legislative

committee, just like any other bylaws. I might be wrong, but I know that if the council wants to change its parking bylaws then they will have to come before parliament to be approved. I am interested to know if the bylaws for the hospital have to be approved through the legislative committee which exists to look at such things. Even though I am making a statement, I am also asking a question; will we see them come through that process or is there another process they will come through?

I am interested to know if there will be the option for Darwin City Council to be the body that looks after car parking at RDH. Once a program of bylaws is set up there will be a need for inspectors, fee collection, et cetera, which will all cost money. It is still Darwin City Council's job to deal with parking offences within the Waterfront, even though the Waterfront does not come under Darwin City Council. I am interested to see whether anything is being said to the council and if it would consider taking over that role because, in some ways, it might make more sense financially.

If each hospital is going to have its own regulations and people maintaining those regulations, what sort of cost would that be to the Department of Health to do that? I do not know whether you would have people at RDH 24 hours a day; naturally, the hospital is open 24 hours a day.

What is the situation with parking at Royal Darwin Hospital? The government has announced that it is looking at building a multistorey car park. I would be interested to see where that is at and what plans have been put forward in moving that policy. I support having a multistorey car park at the hospital, but I also think there is a chance to use that car park for commercial operations to help pay the cost of it. Some of the building cost could be picked up by commercial operators, whether it is clinics or food outlets, because RDH has a lot of people working and living there; to some extent it is a small suburb. There are opportunities there to not only have a multistorey car park but to also have facilities which will offset the cost of building that car park.

I support the idea that we need to bring all the car parking under the control of the CEO. As the Member for Spillett said, we would like to see some of the details in relation to what the bylaws will mean. I support the bill before us.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I agree with the Member for Nelson on that book. Many of us have spoken on the issue of Royal Darwin Hospital car parking, particularly over the last couple of years. I am sure many of the members have had hospital car parking related dreams over that period as well. I am pleased to support the bill that has been brought forward by the Minister for Health in relation to the *Medical Services Act* and the parking regulations.

This reflects on hospitals across the Northern Territory; however, I will focus on Royal Darwin Hospital, in my electorate. This is one important step the Minister for Health is taking towards a more effective and better-flowing carpark at the Royal Darwin Hospital, which we all agree is long overdue. It is something successive ministers have worked on. I have been outspoken on this issue since the former CLP government installed a car parking system that was chaotic and caused undue stress for a number of visitors who were often visiting the hospital in very difficult circumstances. It was a topic of conversation over the last two years, and not just in this Chamber; I remember Pete Davies and Katie telling stories of people who left the car park with fines and did not know how to appeal them. It was a mess.

I am pleased about the fast-tracking of the multistorey car park. It is the beginning of meeting a really important election commitment to Territorians and this government. The Minister for Health has made reference to the inflexibility of current regulations in regard to specific pay-and-display parking conditions which triggered this amendment process. The current amendments allow for better management of the day-to-day operation of the car parks at Royal Darwin Hospital, including issues such as loitering, alcohol consumption and canvassing. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, this is very important for patient and staff safety. Also, given that this campus is fringed by a residential area, it is very important that this is strengthened and rectified for the people who live adjoining the hospital campus as well.

It will provide the CEO with the relevant powers to make bylaws that are specific to our area and for the ease of visitors to the hospital, which has been a topic of conversation for a long time. I have also raised concerns with the Department of Health about local residents in my area who have continually dealt with poor decisions in relation to the Royal Darwin Hospital car park, specifically those who live on Rocklands Drive and in the area around the intersection between Rocklands Drive, Florey Avenue and Roper Street. Anybody who has driven past Royal Darwin Hospital in the last two years will have seen the bank up of cars out the front, and many people have raised concerns about the safety of coming in and out of that hospital driveway, which is something I have continually raised. That is not something that will be solved

overnight but I feel these issues have been taken on board, and measures to address the better management of the car park are exceptionally positive for the residents who are impacted by this as well.

In relation to the changes, time-limited free car parking will be closest to the clinical areas. I acknowledge the need for an interim measure during the time we will be working towards the fast-tracked multistorey car park. While it would remain free, there would be infringement notices with fines for those over the time limit to deter the use of those areas for things like staff parking. I acknowledge the questions from those opposite, which I am sure the Minister for Health will answer in her wrap. It is really pleasing. The Royal Darwin Hospital is a project that has been fast-tracked by this government. The Minister for Health is working so hard on this and I am getting positive feedback from my constituents.

It is important to note that in her second reading speech the Minister for Health said:

Under the proposed amendments and existing provisions in the Interpretation Act, bylaws will be able to provide for ... parking in disabled bays or areas designated as non-parking ...

The availability of disability car parks at Royal Darwin Hospital was raised with the former government by a local advocacy group; I think we can all get behind efforts to keep those who can park in other areas of the hospital doing so, to ensure that those who are not as able-bodied and need the closer car parks are able to get them.

I thank the Minister for Health for her action on the Royal Darwin Hospital car park.

Mr VOWLES (Industry and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would firstly like to thank the Minister for Health for all the work she has done to immediately address the issue we have with RDH. There is an enormous amount of work that has been done so far and we are going through the parliamentary processes of doing that; I want to get that out there straight away.

This was an issue during the last few years when we were in opposition. The car parking at RDH was a bit of a dog's breakfast, and that is putting it politely. Having said that, the Member for Casuarina's lobbying and commitment to trying to fix that, as well as the opposition at the time—and we had many discussions about how we could improve the car parking situation. What is more important is that we did it in a sensible and planned manner. We actually did it right.

We saw in the last government—I do not want to keep bagging the last government, but we should acknowledge some of the work it did and did not do, and the work we are going to do. There were a lot of ad hoc decisions that people had to cope with, and the car parking debacle at RDH was a local issue that was continually raised with my colleagues and me. Some of the stories we heard just did not seem right. It was really affecting people at a time when they should not have had to worry about car parking; they were more worried about their loved ones, their child or their partner, or even themselves.

People had appointments booked at RDH—we have all gone to doctors before; they are not always the most punctual people. You could have an appointment booked at 10 am and still be waiting a little while later. Then you come out to find you have a car parking fine. You could plead with the then contractor, who was rather abrupt and would say, 'Just pay it'. One constituent came to me with an issue; a loved one was rushed to the hospital. The last thing they should worry about is parking and then being forced to pay a fine that was not waived. I thought that was outrageous not compassionate whatsoever.

I commend the minister for bringing this forward, and the work of the local member, the Member for Casuarina. This was raised continuously when we were in opposition, and we need to get it right. That is why we are going through this process. I had a situation where we had someone in palliative care coming out into the car park to find a fine which then was still not waived. I got annoyed about all the phone calls I was making on behalf of constituents, and getting no feedback.

What really resonates with me with this bill is the compassionate approach we are taking. With the NT Government taking control of the management of the car parking facility, we have the opportunity to be compassionate about certain issues. That is important. Most people do not want to go the hospital. They do not want to park there, but they have to go there for certain reasons. When we get a call from someone who says, 'I have done this and this is what happened', we are now able to say, 'We will waive that fee'. That is a part of the bill that I really support.

We made a massive commitment very early in opposition to build a multistorey car park. Those plans are going ahead. The Minister for Health announced the fast-tracking of that commitment. I think it is five

storeys and another 270 car parking spaces at the hospital. This was a commitment we made, and coming into government we will fulfil that commitment. That will not only provide more opportunities for people to have easier access to the hospital and car parking, but it is what we need for the future expansion of the hospital.

As the then shadow transport minister, I went through the issue of personal information—the contractor taking the government to court, saying, ‘We want access to everybody’s personal information through their number plate’, which the Member for Nelson has raised. It was an important issue about the privacy of Territorians. In this parliament, opposition and some Independents stood up and voiced their concerns and fought against that. Thankfully we were successful and they were unable to access people’s information, as it would have started a precedent we did not want: to have a \$50 or \$60 car parking fine and then all your personal information, through your number plate, would be available to a big company or contractor who would know your information forever. There were also legalities and concerns about where that personal information would be stored and what it would be used for. It turned into a much broader conversation, but thankfully that did not go through.

We are putting forward, through this bill, a sensible and flexible car parking system at RDH, a system that is compassionate and run by the NT Government so we will have access and make decisions that will benefit Territorians. That is important because that is our job.

I have had a lot of people come to me who work at RDH, and if you have been there over the last year or so you know that it does not look good; there are cars parked all the way down Rocklands Drive, as the Member for Casuarina said. Staff are trying to park. There are also some works going on there, which we support; however, it is a dog’s breakfast when you go to the RDH car park and see what is going on there. We need this. We will do it sensibly and methodically. This is part of the process and I thank the Minister for Health for bringing this through.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I would like to add to the debate regarding this bill, which most people might be tempted to call the Long Awaited Changes to the Controls of Parking at the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is so much more than that though.

It has been a long saga and is very overdue. I have heard from my colleagues who were in the previous shadow ministry, and it is clear that it has taken the Gunner Labor government to progress this initiative. There is probably not a person in Darwin, or even outside of Darwin, who has not had some sort of difficulty over time with a matter that should have been quite simple. It used to be simple, although we should not forget how hard it was to get a park. That is important to remember. When you really needed one it was almost impossible to get a park.

Having spent more than four years on the Darwin City Council, I know how emotive the topic of car parking can be. In fact, I cannot believe I am standing here today talking about it again. I was having a joke about that with the Lord Mayor out front. I said, ‘I have to stand and talk about car parking today.’ She thought that was quite amusing.

It is a topic that does not appeal to many people until they actually have an issue with it, and that is something we need to remember. This act is not simply about you and I visiting our local hospital and being able to find a park; it is about providing fair and reasonable access to parking for workers, visitors and patients across all our current and future hospital sites. It is important. It is about resetting the parking agenda so that we can have a clear picture of what to expect when we go to hospitals and access vital health services.

It makes sense that any legislation should have flexibility. I heard the Member for Johnston talking clearly about flexibility of things we need to change and adapt over time. The flexibility is created by allowing the creation of bylaws, something I am very familiar with. That is a very sensible and practical approach so I congratulate the minister on bringing forward the legislation to deal with it in that way.

Like most people in the Chamber I have friends and connections across the community who work or spend considerable time at our hospital. For many of them, over the years, parking has been nothing short of an inconvenience they tackle daily. The task is not just about finding a park, but a suitable park.

I have a very close friend who works in theatre. One night when she was working and due to finish her shift she had an emergency but she just could not leave; that is the reality of it. She knew her car parking had expired and out she went. When she arrived at her shift there was not available parking in the free designated parking at that time, so she had to find parking with patients and visitors. It is also a matter of

safety because she knew her shift was ending after dark. Some of the fringe parking that was provided at that time was very much in the dark. She got a fine for \$65 for just doing her job. I think that is what we are addressing here today. I am pretty sure, knowing her, she negotiated her way out of paying it, but she should not have been issued with that in the first place. There should have been more alternatives.

I am pleased changes have already been put into place by our government that have seen the creation of increased free staff parking in areas that are not out in the fringes in the dark. The new parking regimes will also allow her to park closer to the main campus in the main car park over evening shifts. That area is not time limited overnight. That is really important. That is a great relief for all our medical staff. I am sure every member present has heard similar stories. The Member for Casuarina was saying the same thing about her local communities. Using a third-party to regulate a car park is not the answer either; evidence shows this creates tension and anger. The answer is to use localised control where the rules are not profit driven.

As I said before, parking is an emotive issue. Within the city of Darwin, I am sure many people would say we never always get it right, but each year we have an opportunity to review, look at the issues and have the flexibility through bylaws to make changes where they are needed. Who knows, in the future you may need to look at exclusion bays for electric cars. You may need time-limited standing areas for driverless cars or, better still, we might have to think about repurposing of car parks that are underutilised because the use of a car is on a decline. It is all wishful thinking, but all the same, any legislation has to be agile and this provides the ability for that going forward.

The act provides a sensible approach. It provides structure and instruction to the department's CEO that he or she can administer parking in a sensible and practical way that finally meets community expectations. While overstaying your four hours in the free area may attract a fine, for those with a legitimate reason, such as being unexpectedly stuck in emergency—which has happened to me, having thought it was something small and ending up in ICU—the last thing you want to worry about is your car park. There is a mechanism to have that fine waived, and we have to make sure it is as simple as possible.

It is also important that this legislation legalises fines for those who overstay their four hours for no good reason, limiting access to free parking for those in need of access to health services. It is important to get the balance right. This approach through bylaws means that people who need to attend hospital regularly for fairly short visits, such as maternal health and medical imaging, can easily find a park that is nice and close to the hospital. When you are not feeling your best, the last thing you need is to have to walk a country mile to access a simple health service.

I have every bit of confidence that this legislation will alleviate some of the immediate issues associated with parking at the hospitals, and I look forward to a time when we can fulfil our election commitment of building a multistorey car park to address the undersupply of parking options available. That will take time, and today's measures are about making things better in the short-term.

As the current, hastily-prepared regime comes to an end, I am pleased to support the act so our hospital users who arrive in their own transport know what the arrangements are and that they are finally fair and reasonable. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Ms MANISON (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I support the bill that the Minister for Health has brought to parliament. One of the issues that really did bite in the community was the issue of the RDH car parking system implemented by the previous government.

It was a chaotic system. It created great stress for people attending the hospital. Unfortunately it was a system that, from day one of implementation, created problems and issues. It was a very long, slow, drawn-out process where we were finally able to leave this system and the contractual obligations the previous government had signed up to with Wilson Parking. It was one of those issues that, as a local member knocking on doors, was consistently coming up. In many ways it surprised me that it was one of those big issues.

Power and Water and the Royal Darwin Hospital parking were always issues at the front of people's minds because people have to access Royal Darwin Hospital right across the Territory; it is our Territory hospital. Nobody goes to Royal Darwin Hospital for a good time.

A member: What if you have just had a baby?

Ms MANISON: Yes, thank you for that, minister. It is a place where we go for important health services, and visit to support family and friends as they access those critical health services. It can be an extremely

stressful and nerve-racking place to be. To then put a layer on top of a car parking system—and if memory strikes me right it was two hours of free parking initially, and the Royal Darwin Hospital is an incredibly busy place. We are having to build another hospital because of those pressures on Royal Darwin Hospital.

People go to see the staff and attend their appointments, but as well intentioned as they are to be at a certain time, sometimes the appointment will run over. Sometimes when somebody heads to the emergency department there may be other people with bigger problems and risks, so the wait will be longer. It may be, as the Member for Sanderson just spoke about, that people go in for issues and they think everything is okay, but it turns out they actually are not okay and will be in that hospital for a far longer time than anticipated.

Unfortunately the previous system that was implemented and outsourced just did not work well with Territorians. It was a system that was very chaotic. People found that it was often very difficult to deal with the company when they were trying to get answers on those fines and were putting up a perfectly reasonable story as to why they were overdue on the car park.

Frankly, it was a disastrous system. People are very glad to see it go and that we are moving forward, as a government, to implement a better system for parking; for the future of Royal Darwin Hospital; for the people who come to the hospital for treatment; for people who come to visit the hospital, including those receiving treatment and visiting patients; and for staff.

It is important to remember there are a lot of people employed at Royal Darwin Hospital. We want to ensure the staff who have shift work—the hospital operates 24/7—have better access to parking on that campus. The minister has taken a sensible approach here to meet the parking needs at Royal Darwin Hospital. They will be looking at putting a streamlined process in place, so that if people have complaints about fines it will be as easy as possible for people to use. It will be a user-friendly system because we know how stressful it can be. I was never envious of the car park inspectors employed by Wilson Parking. When I would go to the hospital I thought how that must be a very tough job.

As a government we are taking action on this issue. We have legislation before the House to ensure the Department of Health is able to implement a far better system for parking at the hospital. This will be a system that will ensure we can see flow through of traffic because it is important that traffic moves and there is parking availability. The Darwin region has had significant growth over the years since the hospital was first built. Times move forward and population grows. Over the decades, Darwin has become a bigger place than it used to be, so it is time for a multistorey car park.

It is time, when you look at that campus and are ensuring people have reasonable distances in which to park and get to the hospital—it is time to build the multistorey car park. It is a commitment that we proudly made, to look at alleviating and dealing with the issues regarding parking at Royal Darwin Hospital, which is another stress and burden on people who are attending for health services. There has been a great deal of work happening.

Last November I was very happy to be standing here, as the Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, announcing that the Royal Darwin multistorey carpark would be one of the projects that we fast-track as a government. This is not only because the need is there, but also because this is about supporting local business and jobs, and having an economic stimulus affect that we all want to see through the very challenging year ahead. So that was one of the first cabs off the rink.

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has been working incredibly hard with the Department of Health on the development of that project. They are going through the design phases as we speak. They have had some issues with surveying some of the site because of all the wet weather we have had. They are some of the ups and downs of construction in the tropics, but they have been working very hard since we made the decision to take action and bring this project forward to deliver for Territorians seeking health services, and also for the economic stimulus effect.

We are anticipating that tenders for design and construction will go out for this project as early as next month. There is a great deal of work happening there. We are aiming for construction to commence in the middle of the year. This is a project that Territorians want to see. People want to know that when they drive to the hospital they will not have to do laps around and around, especially when they have an appointment or an emergency, or when they just want to see someone who is having a rough time.

It is important that we get this project up and running. It will be a great project for the staff and people who go to the hospital, as well as local business.

I thank the minister for bringing this legislation to the House. Car parking is a very big issue for anyone who goes to that hospital. I am proud that, as a government, we are taking swift action to address those issues. An improved car parking system and infrastructure is desperately needed at Royal Darwin Hospital, and we will deliver it.

VISITORS

St John's Catholic College and Palmerston Senior College

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of some students. We have the Student Representative Council from St John's Catholic College, accompanied by their teacher, Ayesha Fatima. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Also, I welcome the Year 12 legal studies students from Palmerston Senior College, accompanied by their teacher, Anita Turnbull.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms FYLES (Health): Madam Speaker, I rise to sum up the Medical Services Legislation Amendment Bill in relation to car parking. The debate in the Chamber has been interesting. This is an issue for every one of us, even those who are not in Darwin or Top End-based electorates, because Royal Darwin Hospital is the main Territory hospital for northern Australia. This issue has been ongoing.

If you go to RDH and choose to take the stairs—you might be feeling healthy that day—you will see some lovely historical photographs at the end of each staircase, even some from the old hospital at Myilly Point. They have some from when the Royal Darwin Hospital was built, or the Casuarina Hospital as it was named before it was opened. In those photographs you can see the vast areas of space that was car parking; where the Darwin Private Hospital is now was actually a car park at the front of the hospital.

We, out at the Royal Darwin Hospital campus, have seen a great deal of infill and investment in vital health services, which is important, but it has taken away our car parking spaces. As a number of my colleagues have mentioned here in the House, as the hospital has gotten busier over time there have been two factors: fewer car parking spaces but also more usage. There was quite a culmination of that 18 months ago when we had an unworkable system put in place by the previous government.

As the Minister for Health, it is a responsibility of mine to deliver on making it easier for patients and visitors to access Royal Darwin Hospital and have appropriate parking for staff. This measure today, this bill we are talking about, is an interim measure. We have the multistorey car park. My colleague, the Infrastructure minister, has just updated the House on those plans; that is this government's long-term commitment to address these issues. A multistorey car park, five levels—I think it is an additional 270 car parking spaces, so we can all have access to the main Territory hospital.

This is an issue that has been ongoing over many years. It is an issue that was caused by the development of medical facilities at Royal Darwin Hospital. It is something this government needs to address. I believe that these measures today will help address the car parking issues at Royal Darwin Hospital whilst that multistorey car park is being developed and built. It is pleasing to hear the progress on that car park. We aim to have that opened by the end of 2018.

These measures, it is very important from the outset to say, are not revenue raising. That is not the point of these measures. This is designed so we can have car parks near the main tower of the Royal Darwin Hospital campus, so to speak, with four hours or less car parking and the other car parks do not have a time limit.

I have a map in my hand; it is available on the Internet. There was a question from the other side about what was in place and where. It is designed to provide patients and visitors access for their appointments. One of the criticisms of the previous program was the two-hour limit because to get in and out of an appointment in two hours, for outpatients or whatever it might be, is probably not realistic. We believe four hours provides a balance in terms of people having enough time to comfortably get to the hospital and not rush through their appointments while worrying about getting a parking ticket. It will also result in a flow through the car park so that parks are available.

The Members for Sanderson and Johnston raised that the Northern Territory Government has control, rather than a third party. This is a really important point. It is not profit driven; it is about providing a workable system at our hospital. This is a localised plan. It is not intended to raise profit. We really want to see that flow through the car park.

I also acknowledge the opposition and Independent members for their contribution to the debate, and their indication of support. There were a number of questions, and I have written them down as I hope to address them in my closing speech. I also acknowledge the Member for Casuarina for her input into the debate, and her ongoing persistence with this issue. This is in her electorate and some of the changes have impacted local residents near the hospital. It is something she has discussed with me numerous times.

As anyone who has visited Royal Darwin Hospital recently will know, due to an increase in population, a greater use of the medical and ancillary facilities and additional facilities coming on board, car parking and the regulation of traffic and general conduct has become a significant issue. The issues were made even more apparent following the parking regimes under the previous government. I have spoken about that infill. If you look back at some historical photos, and even in recent years—we have seen significant health investment, which is a good thing for Territorians.

As a government we committed to making car parking free and we have delivered on that promise. We have also committed to a multistorey car park and making that free as well. We believe that when people access health and medical services there should not be a further impost on them for parking. At some hospital car parks interstate there are extraordinary fees. I saw a story on television recently about people choosing whether to visit someone or not because of the expensive fees to park at the hospital. We need to ensure we have a balance and it is not a further impost on people who are already engaged in the health system.

As a government we have removed an ineffective parking system that was costing Territorians, particularly at their most vulnerable time. When most people visit hospital, it is not something they want to be there for; there is probably the exception of welcoming a new baby to the family. We need to ensure that when Territorians are vulnerable we are providing support for them, and when they need to access medical services or to visit loved ones they are able to do so.

Parking has been free at the hospital and will continue to remain free. In doing so, we have been mindful to ensure that traffic is well managed and have enabled easy access for patients and visitors, hence making a four-hour time limit on the areas closest to the clinical services, such as the main tower block and the car park near the Alan Walker Cancer Centre. This is an interim measure until we complete a multistorey car park. Overstaying in those areas will result in an infringement notice with a fine, and this acts as a disincentive for people to park there when they know they will be at the hospital longer than four hours. I will go into detail—there have been numerous questions raised about people staying longer than four hours, of which the Member for Sanderson gave an important example.

We have also removed the time limits on other areas of the hospital around the campus, which are suitable for staff and visitors who are staying for a longer period. We are improving access for visitors and patients and we recognise the need for more parking. This is why we fast-tracked the multistorey car park, which was an election commitment of our government.

The design and construction of the multistorey car park will be under way this year. The government has funded \$12m to build the multistorey car park which will increase capacity overall by 270 car parking spaces. Works are expected to commence later this year and will be completed in late 2018. This will be a significant change at the hospital; it will provide access close to the hospital for everyone involved. The government is committed to improving access to parking and to provide the stimulus to consider the most appropriate legislative framework for the regulation of traffic, parking and other personal conduct matters on the NT public hospitals' campuses.

The current medical services Royal Darwin Hospital parking regulations were made in early 2016 to address an issue with parking controls at that time, within the existing provisions of the act. These regulations set specific parking conditions and provided for offences and breaches of regulations. However, these regulations had an application limited to Royal Darwin Hospital premises, and did not allow for regulation of traffic, parking and other personal conduct on any other NT public hospital campus. They set out specific pay-and-display parking conditions which cannot be amended without further regulation, and are unusually and inappropriately inflexible because they do not allow for alterations to the current car parking management conditions by those managing a premises. This is problematic for general

management purposes and particularly relevant during any redevelopment or construction phase at the hospitals.

The current regulations are limited to car parking management without the scope for broader management of other personal conduct or behaviour matters within the hospital campus, which was raised by the Member for Spillett. These amendments to the *Medical Services Act* give the CEO of the Department of Health suitable powers to make bylaws in respect of appropriate arrangements for day-to-day management of all public hospital premises across the Northern Territory, including for the regulation of traffic, parking conditions and general personal conduct.

Current regulations only apply to Royal Darwin Hospital campus; however, there will now be the availability of regulations to all hospital campuses Territory-wide, if required, including the Palmerston Regional Hospital on completion. The CEO will now have suitable powers and functions in respect of appointing authorised officers to carry out the day-to-day management and enforcement functions in accordance with the act and bylaws. Under the amendments, suitable powers and functions will also be given to authorised officers to allow them to carry out their functions.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

RESPONSE TO PETITION **Petition No 3 – Seeking Review of the Seniors Concession Scheme**

The CLERK: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 123 I inform honourable members that a response to the Minister for Territory Families for Petition No 3 has been received and circulated to honourable members. The text of the response will be placed on the Legislative Assembly website. A copy of the response will be provided to the Member for Karama for distribution to the petitioners.

Petition No 3
Seeking Review of the Seniors Concession Scheme
Date presented: 22 November 2016
Presented by: Ms Ah Kit
Referred to: Minister for Territory Families
Date response due: 21 March 2017
Date response received: 6 December 2016

I would like to thank the Council of the Ageing NT (COTA) for their support to senior Territorians and for this petition.

COTA's request for the NT Government launch an immediate and urgent review of the Seniors Concession Scheme has been heard by our government and is being actioned.

A review into the scheme is under way and consultation on these changes is expected to take place in early 2017. I encourage all of your members and the wider community to actively contribute to the consultation process.

Senior Territorians will be better off from 1 July 2017. We are working to introduce changes to make the scheme more equitable and accessible for senior Territorians.

Changes to the scheme will include raising the concession to \$700 every two years and diversifying the concession to be used on a wider range of things, including car registration and healthcare. Those excluded from the concession by the previous government will be back in.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR **Lynne Walker**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of a former Member for Nhulunbuy, Lynne Walker. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

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

Continued from earlier this day.

Ms FYLES (Health): Madam Speaker, before the lunch break we were talking about the important issue of car parking at Royal Darwin Hospital. I was explaining what these changes to legislation would mean, and I was undertaking to answer questions from members opposite.

These changes will allow the CEO to have suitable powers and functions in respect of appointing authorised officers to carry out the day-to-day management and enforcement functions in accordance with the act, under the bylaw. Under the arrangement, suitable powers and functions will also be given to authorised offices from the CEO so they can carry out their functions. It is envisaged at this time that authorised offices will be employed directly by Top End Health Service, but the act allows flexibility in the future. As I have said numerous times, this is not a revenue raising exercise for us, but we are creating legislation that will place the ability within regulation.

I do not see that this will require more staff; it is not about that. It is about managing our car parking situation, which we have all talked about in detail. We have a longer-term plan for car parking at Darwin hospital. With the amendments and existing provisions under the act, the bylaws will be able to provide for the following:

- Offences against the bylaws will be regulatory offences and prescription of penalties.
- The ability to issue infringement notices where 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 in areas designated as a non-parking area, and other inappropriate conduct within the boundaries of a declared hospital.

This could include bringing alcohol onto the hospital campus, which is one that the opposition raised.

- If an offence is committed and the name of the offender is not ascertained at the time of the offending, an infringement notice will be issued to the owner of the vehicle, whether or not the owner committed the offence.
- The bylaws made by the CEO will have general application across public hospitals in the Northern Territory, but operation of them will only commence at a specific premises when a declaration is made and published in the Northern Territory *Gazette*.

I think one of the questions from the members opposite was, 'When would this be put into place?' The parking is free at the hospital. We have allowed a transition period, and this will go through the formal process of ExCo and be gazetted during March. There will be advertising around the hospital. We will ensure that suitable information is passed on to staff, patients and visitors alike.

It is not intended to be a revenue raising exercise; it is about making sure we have functionality at the Royal Darwin Hospital. We need to ensure we have flow through. Once the multistorey car park with additional parking space is built, we will have the bigger improvements. This will allow patients and visitors to park closer to the clinical spaces when visiting the hospital. We heard different stories in the House today, and all members will agree that any changes to improve our access to parking, including free parking for consumers of our health service, are of the utmost importance. We need to ensure we find a balance for traffic flow in our hospital carparks.

As of 1 January, car parking at Royal Darwin Hospital became free for staff, patients and visitors. At the end of last year, once I became the Minister for Health—delivering that multistorey car park, but also what we could do in the interim was one of the tasks the Chief Minister handed me. We had ongoing communications about these changes. Carparks 1, 1A, 2A and 12 are designated for patients and visitors only. These will remain the four-hour free time zones during business hours. I have a map which I am happy to table and which is also available on the Department for Health's website, and it clearly shows which car parks I am talking about.

In terms of the car parks, we are trying to ensure the car parks closest to the clinical services have those four hours. It finishes at 5 pm, so there is a provision for staff working from 5 pm to the next morning; they can park in the main car park. Security can also walk staff to their cars. This is a measure to accommodate

the flow-through of the car park, while also understanding the needs of staff, and security provide that service. All the car parks will be free for staff, patients and visitors alike with no time restrictions; it is just for these main car parks next to the clinical buildings.

There were numerous questions that I will answer now. There was a question regarding the bylaws; the penalties will not exceed 20 penalty units. Examples of waiving a fine—we want to make the process for anyone who needs a fine waived as simple as possible. I have a copy here of a very simple appeal form which someone can ask for in person at the hospital. It can be arranged to be faxed or emailed, and it is on the website. It gets a basic amount of information such as contact details, and then the person states the reason for appeal. One of the biggest frustrations with the previous process was that if you had a genuine reason—the Member for Johnston spoke about numerous phone calls and communications that he was involved in, trying to help someone who had a legitimate reason.

For example, a doctor on call, attending an emergency, if someone's disability permit fell down, visitors to the palliative care hospice parking in non-designated spots—there are numerous reasons why there may be a fine issued when it does not need to be. Somebody can fill in this form and they can have that waived. That is an internal process within the hospital. There will be a tribunal or board that will review that.

There are medical waivers available from the clinical nurse managers if patients need to stay over four hours. For patients who are receiving chemotherapy at the Alan Walker Centre, the clinical nurse managers are able to provide them with what they need. It is not designed to be cumbersome on patients attending the hospital. The four hour-period is only from 7 am to 5 pm. Parking overnight is unlimited, with that time expiring at 8.30 am. We are just trying to make this as easy as we can in rolling it out.

There was a question about the fines recovery, and if fines are not paid they will be referred to the fines recovery unit. That is a process within government that we are familiar with.

The Darwin City Council is not being considered—that was a question from the Member for Nelson—at this stage because revenue is not what this is about. We do not expect there to be huge amounts of money. This is about ensuring people honour the time zones on parking so we can have that flow-through of car parking.

The appeals process—I have spoken about the form—would be managed by the parking services office and disputes can be done by email, fax or in person. If a medical waiver is issued the fine will immediately be waived. If a patient speaks to a clinical nurse manager, that process will end there for them. We are trying to make it as workable for people as possible, acknowledging that we have that longer-term solution which we are fast-tracking through a \$12m investment into a multistorey car park.

Are there any questions, Member for Spillelt, that I have missed?

The bylaws are being drafted concurrently. Once they go through the ExCo process they will be gazetted and there will be appropriate communications regarding that. This is something that has been in place for a period now, but it will be that ability to provide for the fine. In terms of privacy, it is linked to the Fines Recovery Unit within government, so there will be no privacy concerns. The penalties for breaches will be in line with the local council and the Waterfront Corporation; they will not exceed 20 penalty units. In terms of the payments, there will be ticket machines in which people can get a pay-and-display four-hour ticket so that parking officers can identify how long they have been there for.

Mrs Finocchiaro: What about third parties outside of government?

Ms FYLES: No, it is not intended. This is an internal process. The Chief Executive Officer and the security and parking officers will be Top End Health staff. In terms of the fines, if they are not paid they will go within government to the Fines Recovery Unit.

One of the questions was in regard to avenues of appeal, which I have covered. There will be signage to explain to visitors and patients what they need to do.

Mrs Finocchiaro: Consultation on the bylaws?

Ms FYLES: The bylaws will enable the person in charge of the hospital to erect the signage. There will be similar bylaws to council on the Waterfront, in my understanding.

Mrs Finocchiaro: So there will not be consultation on them prior to them being gazetted?

Ms FYLES: We said we would have free parking at the hospital and this is the plan in place to provide that, and also provide that flow-through of parking with the commitment of the multistorey car park. There was correspondence at the end of last year, particularly with staff, about the changes to free parking. In terms of consultation, the signage will go up and we have asked the agency to ensure there is effective communication so people understand the changes. Free parking is something we committed to, and that has been in place since 1 January. Appropriate signage will go up so people can understand these bylaws are in effect.

This is an important issue. I hope I have answered all the questions. It is something the government committed strongly to prior to the election. We are building the multistorey car park but it will take time, so this is an interim measure. We have spoken about the historical changes at Royal Darwin Hospital, particularly the infill of medical services, which is fabulous but also means we have less car parking space available. We have that longer-term plan. The Minister for Infrastructure is driving this. It has been fast-tracked to the investment of \$12m. We believe that Territorians who need access to the hospital will need the multistorey car park in the future.

What we have put in place is a workable measure in regard to providing access so people can get car parks near the outpatients building. We believe four hours is a reasonable time frame. There will be clear protocol if someone is caught for longer. A nurse manager can issue a waiver. It is designed around what we thought was the most workable time frame. Two hours is clearly too short. We think four hours will allow for flow-through of visitors and patients at the hospital.

I thank everyone who has contributed to the debate. I thank the parliamentary drafting team and the staff from the Department of Health. They have put a lot of time and thought into this. It has been on my agenda ever since I became the Minister for Health, and I am working through it. We look forward to progressing the multistorey car park so we can have a significant change that is long overdue at Royal Darwin Hospital.

We have seen an increase in services in recent years with the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre, the palliative care service and the Lorraine Brennan Centre, and we will continue to grow those services with the delivery of the PET scanner and cyclotron in the near future.

The multistorey car park will complement the clinical facilities at Royal Darwin Hospital. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Supporting and Growing Jobs

Ms MANISON (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I rise to deliver a statement outlining the significant work being undertaken by this government to support and grow jobs across the Territory.

We all know the importance of having a job and the impact it has on a person's life and the Territory. We are facing some tough economic headwinds, and protecting and growing jobs is of vital importance to this government. We all know the importance of ensuring more Territorians get the chance to have a job. For too long we have seen the devastating impact that unemployment has on remote communities and families.

It was this government that took a detailed jobs plan to Territorians before the last election, and we are delivering on that plan. In fact, we have built upon and strengthened that plan in consultation with local businesses, NGOs and the broader community. In our first six months of government we have never forgotten the clear message we were told by business and industry before the August 2016 election. If we were to have the privilege of being elected to govern they did not want to see us put handbrakes on the economy. They told us now is not the time. That is a commitment we have always been very mindful of and have always taken action to fulfil.

One of our first orders of business when we came to government was to meet with the Territory Chamber of Commerce, and we have continued that conversation throughout our first six months in government and will continue to do so. We are listening to key industry sectors each and every day. We have listened,

consulted and taken immediate action to deliver the right mix of stimulus, infrastructure investment and projects to grow our economy, create jobs and restore confidence to Territorians.

We do not believe we have a monopoly of the best ideas, but by working with and listening to Territorians, and taking decisive action, we will grow jobs across the Territory. As a government we are considered and strategic. We do not do things in isolation or govern by thought bubble politics. We have a cohesive and detailed strategy to support jobs and economic growth, encourage investment and create safe and vibrant communities in our urban, regional and remote areas.

I do not want to dwell too much on the previous CLP government because Territorians made the ultimate judgment on its performance last August. It is important that we never forget the lessons from those four years of a shambolic government. We will be a government that listens, consults and puts Territorians first.

There is no doubt that the Territory is facing challenging economic times. Many Territorians did it tough in 2016. The former CLP government had no plan for the economy after INPEX. It failed to invest in jobs and left a significant budget deficit, despite selling public assets and making significant money from those sales. It sold TIO and the Darwin Bus Service and leased the port for 99 years, and yet we are left with the deficit position and debt that we have.

This has made the task of economic repair incredibly challenging. Included in this ongoing strain is the Power and Water Corporation and the government owned corporations placed on the Territory's books. The haste the former CLP government took in structurally separating Power and Water meant that it failed to plan properly, and now we see significant increases in recurrent costs which present more challenges to the Territory budget.

We said we would keep the money and jobs flowing and that is what we have done and will continue to do. We have listened to businesses, tradies, contractors and peak industry groups and acted quickly and decisively to put in place the right measures to grow our economy in the short-medium-and-long-term.

We know a secure, rewarding job is the best way to encourage people to stay in the Territory. That is why we are investing in job creation across the NT. The key to this is working closely with the private sector and the Australian Government to secure jobs from innovative industries, the Defence sector and other investors who share our vision for the Northern Territory. Our Chief Minister is in Canberra this week, meeting with the Prime Minister and senior Cabinet ministers, such as Defence and Treasury, to continue to get the investment we need in the Northern Territory.

Our economic summit discussions have already helped shape and evolve our thinking. This critical work will provide Territory businesses with a road map to economic growth. This is an inclusive process with Territorians and the experts on the ground. We were elected to deliver better outcomes for the economy—growing jobs—Territory kids and the bush; as well as to deliver for safer, stronger communities. We have provided certainty and stability at a time when Territorians have needed it the most.

I will now detail the work this government undertook in the first six months to grow jobs, support the economy and to keep money flowing through the Northern Territory. The government is one of the largest buyers of goods and services in the Northern Territory, procuring more than \$3bn every year. We believe that \$3bn should be spent locally, wherever possible.

On our first days in government we put our money where our mouth is and immediately strengthened the Buy Local initiative to support local businesses and job creation. We immediately introduced an extension to the 30% local content rule across all industry sectors, not just construction. We directed that 30% must be driven through the whole tender of the project, not just the top layer. We fulfilled an election commitment to introduce this Buy Local condition to all capital grants issued by the Territory. This represents a major growth in support from government to local business. After more consultation with Territory businesses, we have taken even more action to support Territory jobs. Last week the Chief Minister introduced even more extensive procurement reforms to ensure every opportunity is maximised for small and medium sized businesses to benefit.

Small business must thrive in the Territory. They are the backbone of our local economy. They drive population growth and employment. It diversifies our economic base. Who does not want a good local tradie to call on? Would you prefer to buy from a local retailer and know that your neighbour and your community are benefiting? Our Buy Local reforms are smart, innovative and tangible initiatives.

We have replaced the value for money definition with the value for the Territory definition. Investing in local businesses is giving value to the Territory, and that is what this government is all about. We have prohibited shortlisting on price alone and placed a cap on the maximum weighting on price in tender evaluations to 30%. This means that short listing on price alone and then applying the Buy Local weighting can no longer occur. This does not remove the need for good value, but allows government to acknowledge that buying local has a broad benefit for the entire Northern Territory community. We are committed to get the best value for money in the Territory. The definition to date has been too narrow and has means Territory businesses and jobs have been lost out on in the past.

We have all heard those stories when our neighbouring jurisdictions are doing it tough. The big players are often muscled into the Territory during those times to keep afloat, at the cost of local businesses which are here and committed to the long run of this place. As part of these procurement changes we will continue our solid efforts to be open and transparent by providing tenderers with more detailed post-tender feedback, and requiring all major procuring agencies to provide regular industry briefing sessions.

We are also developing our 10 year infrastructure plan to give our local businesses a better line of sight to the future priorities of government and, importantly, the opportunities to them. It also ensures that we are working with Territorians and business to maximise our economic and social gains from strategic infrastructure investment. To further support the development of the 10-year infrastructure plan, all agencies will now publish forward procurement plans.

We will continue to develop our public and private sectors by providing training and development sessions in relevant communications. Buy Local reforms will see benefits for the local economy identified, evaluated and realised at all stages of the procurement lifecycle. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has advised that since 1 July 2016, 96% of T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 contracts have been won by local businesses, with a value of over \$185m.

Not only did we act immediately to improve conditions for local businesses, we also helped hundreds of Territorians buy their first home. By 1 September, just weeks into government, we increased stamp duty relief for first home buyers of established homes. An additional 262 Territorians have purchased their own slice of the Territory, including 56 first home owners in Alice Springs. We have seen this impact all the major urban centres, like Alice Springs, Palmerston, Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and even the rural area.

This was also a change that the real estate industry told us it desperately needed to see after declines in the established property market, of which first home owners were effectively shut out. We also continued the \$26 000 First Home Owner Grant for new homes—along with providing the \$2000 assistance to purchase household goods—to continue to support local builders and give those wanting to build the opportunity as well.

There is no greater incentive for staying in the Territory than owning your own home. These first home owners will stay in the Territory; they might raise or already have families here and start to grow their own business and contribute to the excellence of the public sector. Encouraging people to stay in the Territory is critical to the economy, and we acted on this immediately.

Along with the increased stamp duty concessions for established homes, first home owners can now also access up to \$10 000 to kickstart their home improvements with \$2000 of that available for household goods. This means that when you move into your first place you can get a makeover; you can get a paint or fencing job, a bathroom reno, you can do some work around the garden and make your new house a home.

We are also supporting local tradies and businesses accessing this grant, a great long-term investment for the Northern Territory. All renovations and purchases under this scheme need to be sourced through local businesses, and nearly \$1m has already been spent with our tradies because of this initiative. This is a great extra incentive for first home buyers to get into the housing market.

On top of this we have also listened to local businesses and tradies and brought back a bigger and better Home Improvement Scheme. I acknowledge this is a decision we should have made sooner, but we did not leave a void as we had introduced other stimulus measures and the previous scheme was still in operation. We did not just cut it off. In fact, we had to extend it at times to ensure people used their vouchers. Businesses and Territorians want this scheme to continue this year as we face a slowing economy, and we have taken action to deliver it with the improvements it needs to deliver the stimulus effect to support local jobs.

NT homeowners are now eligible for one voucher of up to \$2000, on a dollar-for-dollar co-contribution, to make improvements to their home. We listened to tradies, businesses and Territorians, and we made some key changes to the scheme, including that Territorians who have already received the \$2000 voucher can access it again; Territorians who have not previously accessed the \$2000 voucher now have a one-off \$4000 voucher; up to 50% of the voucher can be used towards the cost of goods and materials which reflect the nature of home renovation; subcontracting is now allowed under the scheme, meaning tradies can get help from tradies with other skills as long as they are registered as part of this scheme.

This is an additional \$15m stimulus into the Territory economy, and the NT Chamber of Commerce estimates that this impact could be as high as \$80m. As a government we want to be sure that our stimulus measures also achieve strong, long-term returns to Territorians, and that taxpayer dollars are delivering a real, long-term gain. That is why we acted quickly to also deliver our \$22m Immediate Works Stimulus Package last year.

The Territory's construction industry and industries such as steel manufacturers are telling us that a lack of planning, strategy and foresight from the previous government left them in a difficult position. They told us that a pipeline of works needs to be placed over the next 18 months to ensure local jobs can be supported. This is another area where we have listened and acted.

In November last year, on top of the \$120m of new and brought forward projects to honour our election commitments, set to commence in the 2017–18 financial year, we also put an additional \$22m into the economy. That is an extra \$22m to support jobs now. It is a \$22m investment into public and community assets, health facilities, urban public housing and targeted works for lower-level tradies and small business that will benefit Territory communities for many years to come.

The \$10m immediate works stimulus package for the community and not-for-profit groups is designed to not only create work where it is needed, but also to create and improve assets for all Territorians. The \$10m is available to all Territory community and not-for-profit groups as grants of up to \$100 000 for much-needed repairs and upgrades to facilities and existing assets. This will see our ageing multicultural halls, churches, non-government organisation facilities, childcare centres, sporting groups and community organisations who support Territorians getting much-needed upgrades.

This will support Territory business in the short-term but also deliver a long-term gain to the broader Northern Territory. Beyond the \$100 000 grant the Northern Territory Government will match, dollar for dollar, up to \$100 000 to help fund even bigger improvements. This is a targeted strategic stimulus: creating jobs, improving infrastructure and supporting the groups in the community that support all Territorians. The response has been overwhelming with more than 80 applications already received. Work starts this month with local businesses, and they are benefiting by protecting and creating jobs.

The stimulus package also includes \$5m for urban Territory housing upgrades to fund repairs and maintenance of urban public housing stock, creating more jobs for Territorians and an immediate injection into the economy. The \$5m for repairs and upgrades will have a positive impact on living standards for public housing tenants and fund much-needed upgrades to roofs, fences, bathrooms and kitchens. Online registration opened on 1 February 2017, attracting interest from the industry with 72 registrations by Friday 3 February 2017.

The first works rolled out last week with an initial focus on roofs and fencing. The \$5m steel package is aimed at providing work for Territory construction steel industries and improving community and government infrastructure such as steel-focused bus shelters; 30 crocodile traps; shade structures for sport and recreation for Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek; shelters for parks and wildlife; and shelters on the Larapinta Trail, a very special part of the Northern Territory. It is great tourism infrastructure.

For parks and wildlife—picnic tables, barbecues, bike racks, equipment shelters, mountain bike track bollards and fabricated fencing. Twenty-eight fabricators and 16 businesses have expressed interest, and the department has formulated procurement plans and select tender lists. Procurements are under way.

To date, six packages of work have been awarded, totalling nearly \$90 000, covering picnic tables and crocodile traps planned for installation in Top End parks. A further five packages of work in the Katherine regions and 14 packages of work for the Top End are planned for tendering during February 2017. An additional \$2m of our \$22m stimulus package is being used to repair remote health clinics, providing much-needed improvement in job creation. Two packages of health centre works have been tendered for Ti Tree

and Gunbalanya. The remainder are currently in design, with preparation for calling of tenders in February, and work is to commence next month.

In addition to these stimulus measures to support jobs, last November we also announced and brought forward 37 projects, worth \$120m, to support local jobs over the next 12 to 18 months. We had to make some tough decisions about some projects, which were deferred in order to meet our commitments and ensure we are being fiscally responsible. These were not easy decisions, but they will deliver the stimulus to support more jobs across the Territory. We are honouring our election commitments to Territorians and acknowledging that people want to see these delivered now, whilst support for local jobs in our economy is most needed.

The projects we have brought forward include \$15m for the Palmerston police station, \$5m for the upgrade of the Katherine police station, \$12m for the multistorey car park at Royal Darwin Hospital, \$5m for the PET scanner project at Royal Darwin Hospital—this government will deliver a fully operational PET scanner, which is something the previous government failed to do—\$25m for a new home for rugby league at Warren Park and \$10m for new netball courts in Darwin, with construction to commence this year. We also have our national iconic arts trail, which includes \$10m in East Arnhem Land and \$10m in Katherine. We will be doing some great work in Alice Springs in the future when we set up a national iconic Indigenous art gallery.

We will have tourism entrance statements in Tennant Creek because we want to see more people stay there when they do the long haul drive up the Stuart Highway. We will have \$6.5m for the Tennant Creek integrated school centre. We have brought this project forward to 2017–18, and design work will soon commence. This will support early childhood development in the Barkly, as well as delivering work to support jobs.

We will provide funding for the \$15m to replace Don Dale. We will also provide \$7m for the Alice Springs youth facility. Ten-million dollars will be brought forward to commence the Room to Breathe program in remote communities; that is fast-tracked money because we know that housing needs all the help it can get. Five-million dollars will be brought forward for repairs and maintenance in remote housing as well. You can never invest enough money in that area.

We have ensured that we continue the \$1.7bn infrastructure program of the previous government to ensure spending to support local jobs continues at this extremely high level. This is what businesses said they needed us to do, and we said we would ensure there were no handbrakes on our economy. We continue to see record months of expenditure—in December \$83.9m was expended.

In addition to these significant projects, the government will also deliver the long-planned Barneson Boulevard entrance into Darwin CBD and complete the third and final stage of Tiger Brennan Drive. It is not an overstatement to say Barneson Boulevard will change the face of our CBD. It will create a sense of place and arrival into the capital of northern Australia. It will stimulate economic development in the CBD and provide opportunities for retail and commerce, and it will create jobs.

There is no doubt that the Territory is facing tough economic times. That is why we need to keep money flowing through the \$1.7bn infrastructure program. Central to that is investing in our roads and logistics capability for the long term. It is vital that we see the civil construction sector continue to get the support for jobs that is needed. We need a strong civil construction sector because it will deliver the critical infrastructure that is needed to increase economic development opportunities through increased access to markets, increased productivity and increased access to better social outcomes and services. It, too, will benefit from record levels of investment and procurement changes.

Our smaller Territory companies that have been here for the long haul are in competition with the big national players. This year's roads infrastructure program is at \$696m, compared to last year's roads infrastructure program, which totalled \$605m. That is an increase of 14%. There is \$620m allocated to large capital and minor works projects, and \$76m is allocated to repairs and maintenance works.

The forecast expenditure in the 2016–17 financial year is \$293m, and to date \$183m has been spent. The department estimates that approximately \$110m is yet to be expended this financial year, so the work has rolled out and will continue to roll out.

One of our first northern Australian roads projects, expected to be tendered in the coming months, is the \$80m Keep River Plains upgrade project. This project will support significant private investment into Project Sea Dragon at Legune Station. We will continue to put pressure on the Australian Government to invest in

Territory roads to truly open up opportunities for more economic growth in northern Australia, as well as help close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

Jointly-funded future roads programs include \$77.8m for the upgrading of the Adelaide River floodplain project, which is currently in the planning and design phase; \$39.5m for Barneson Boulevard and the final stage of Tiger Brennan Drive; \$40m for upgrades around the Buntine Highway; \$24.3m on Round Five of the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme; \$37.5m on the Beef Roads Programme; and \$35m on the Outback Way roads in Central Australia.

There is currently \$267m of work out in the market under the roads capital minor works program. That is \$223m in civil work expected to be awarded over the next six months. We also have large civil projects that are currently being delivered, including the duplication of Vanderlin Drive, which is a \$15m project. The upgrade of the Rocky Creek crossing is work that is meant to start shortly, although we have had issues with a lot of rain there.

The Roper and Wilton Bridges and Outback Way projects total \$40m. We have stage two on the Plenty Highway in construction. We have stage three of the Docker River Road to be advertised in February 2017. Larapinta Drive and the complete sealing of the Mereenie Loop was quite a big project. The Port Keats Road, Yellow Creek upgrade and flood immunity is about \$25m worth of work.

Palmerston roads upgrades, including the additional third lane on Roystonea Avenue, are very big and important projects of \$13m, and are almost complete. I know it has been a bit tough with the traffic while these road works have happened, but it will be great for the future of Palmerston. There is a lot of work happening with the duplication of the Temple Terrace between Stuart Highway and Roystonea Avenue, Roystonea Avenue and Temple Terrace intersection upgrade and the duplication of Roystonea Avenue between Temple Terrace and Terry Drive.

We will continue to work to support local jobs in the civil construction sector through our investment in infrastructure because they will play a vital role in the future of the Northern Territory. It has been wonderful to sit down with the civil contractors to hear about the challenges they have had in procurement in the past and to hear issues of competing with big national companies; we want to make sure we package the tenders to support local jobs, businesses and those people who have been here and built the Northern Territory. Some of these companies have been around for decades. They have built this place. They are passionate about this place and its future. It is critical that we support them because they are here for the long-term.

This government is also delivering an unprecedented \$1.1bn investment in remote housing. This is an investment we are proud of because it will make a big difference to the bush. We will build and improve thousands of remote homes across the Territory because we know that when our remote communities and regions are strong, the Territory is strong.

We are building homes in the bush because we know a good home leads to good education, health, community outcomes and local jobs. Over the next 10 years this government will invest \$1.1bn in remote housing: \$500m for new remote housing under Home Build NT; \$200m in Room to Breathe; \$200m to expand government employee housing, including housing for local government employees; and \$200m for additional repairs and maintenance funding.

We have brought forward \$10m to commence our innovative Room to Breathe program. Twenty-three communities have been selected based on levels of overcrowding to provide a fair geographic distribution across the regions and where existing Indigenous businesses have the capacity to undertake the work within the time frame. I am advised that community consultation is under way in some of these communities, with further consultation expected in coming weeks.

In addition, \$5m for repairs and maintenance for remote housing has been brought forward, with families expected to benefit this financial year. This will go a long way in easing overcrowding in existing houses. It will provide spaces where families can raise healthy children, and will restore dignity and privacy. By the end of the financial year, another \$90m will be spent on delivering remote housing across communities in all regions. An additional \$5m has been brought forward this year to urgently commence repairs and maintenance for existing houses.

To improve housing in the bush is to improve health, education, economic and social outcomes for all Territorians. We are doing this by working alongside communities to give them more of a say over their lives. We are restoring local decision-making in housing, health and education. Where possible, this work

will be delivered by a local workforce, which will build local economies in communities. Some of these works have already commenced and others are in the planning stage, ready to go in the next few months.

In order to build on our jobs agenda, we need a well-gearred and capable public sector. We also need to ensure that we are being fiscally responsible so we have the capacity to invest in infrastructure and services where they are most needed. We have delivered considered and responsible measures to stimulate our economy, grow jobs and improve the lives of Territorians. We have not only created the right conditions for jobs but we have also directly created jobs.

Over the next four years we will grow our police force, delivering on the promise made but never delivered by the former government. The increase in police numbers will help combat crime and allow police to plan for the future. It will provide the certainty and stability our police service needs to plan for that future. More police do not come cheap, which is why the government is looking for new ways to ensure we save money where we can in the budget.

We are reversing the cuts the former government made to education and adding more teachers and support staff to classrooms across the Territory. We are investing in youth justice, an area left devastated by the previous government, to tackle the issues of youth crime; ultimately this will stop kids from getting into trouble in the first place, and will ensure they become productive members of the Territory rather than adding to the numbers in courts and prisons.

We have already saved millions through our machinery of government changes, including the consolidation of a number of key government departments to create a more efficient and synergised public sector. I am still asking the tough questions, as Treasurer, in the lead up to the budget about where we can cut more waste, duplication and nonessential services and programs because we have a budget to manage. We will be strategic, methodical and considered about how we do this to ensure the public service is working efficiently while driving the outcomes we all want to see. Our investment in jobs and the economy is also about strategy and doing things smarter with the short and long-term solutions to our challenges.

In November 2016 the Chief Minister one of the Territory's biggest ever business delegations to China, and also visited Japan and Korea. We had representatives from 68 Territory businesses who were building relationships, strengthening the Territory economy and creating jobs. This culminated in the Rizhao Economic Summit on November 4 and 5 in the Shandong province. This gave Territory enterprises the opportunity to connect with Chinese business people to discuss investment and trade opportunities.

We saw another sign of stronger ties with China last week when Landbridge, the owners of the Darwin port, unveiled its design for the \$200m luxury hotel at the Darwin Waterfront, which is expected to generate more than 500 jobs during the construction phase and ongoing jobs when it opens. I acknowledge the work of the previous government on this luxury hotel development. This is a very exciting project, and it illustrates the importance of developing these relationships for the future.

We are bringing back the Arafura Games to build on our sporting and cultural ties, and our business and trade relations with our Asian neighbours. We are continuing our friendships and strong relationships with our Asian neighbours such as Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, the Philippines and China. We are also looking to extend those relations to India to see what opportunities are there for the Territory to boost trade, business, tourism and, ultimately, jobs.

Another crucial component of our jobs strategy is Defence. This is why the Chief Minister is in Canberra today, maximising Australian Defence opportunities for the Territory. Those opportunities mean jobs, investment and growth for Territorians. On top of that, our economic summits process has begun in earnest and is creating a solid foundation for the years ahead.

We are putting Territory business first. The development of this long-term economic framework, supported by our 10-year infrastructure plan and logistics master plan, creates a solid blueprint for the future, designed by and for Territorians. We have talked to industry groups, business, regional economic development committees and local stakeholders. We have developed principles and targeted strategies and recommendations. Now Territorians will have an opportunity to have their say about the Territory's economic future during the third phase of consultation, which commenced last week. Territorians deserve a government that puts them first, a government that listens and consults before taking action. Our economic summit process is inclusive, broad-based, consultative and strategic-no thought bubbles.

In conclusion, this is a government that, in its first six months, has built solid foundations to build a stronger economy and grow jobs. The Buy Local rules are stronger than ever before. There is more help for

Territorians to buy their first home or renovate their existing one. There are tens of millions of dollars of additional constructions projects being rolled out, and more are on the way. We are delivering the economic stimulus needed to support jobs and business. Our record building program is creating jobs and the quality linkages we need for the economic future. The Territory's biggest ever remote housing program is under way and will accelerate throughout the term of this government and beyond.

There is a strategy for today, tomorrow and the next generation to maintain, sustain and grow jobs for the Territory in our urban centres, regional centres and bush communities. This is a government that listens, acts and delivers.

Madam Speaker, I move that the statement be noted.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister. It was great to hear the critique of all the infrastructure projects that the previous government started. It made me feel proud.

It is a pleasure to be able to speak about jobs. We, the Country Liberals, have never stopped focusing on jobs. It has taken the Gunner Labor government over six months to update the House with a statement that effectively reveals that having a job is a good thing. That is good. It is nice to talk about why having a job is wonderful, but Territorians want action and they deserve job-creating action now.

There was no mention of how jobs will, could or should be created. The Gunner Labor government's grasp on job creation is very scary as we career over a jobs cliff with the end of the construction phase of major projects like INPEX. It is very disappointing. The truth is that the Gunner Labor government did not feel it necessary to change the Country Liberal's 2016–17 budget—not a word or a dot. Nothing. The Gunner Labor government knew it could not do any better, with no credible economic plan and no coherent strategic narrative.

It is time for the Gunner Labor government to stop stopping and start starting—starting investment and jobs by fast-tracking the superfluous moratorium on hydraulic fracturing. Start creating good construction jobs now by allowing Dan Murphy's to come to the Northern Territory.

Let us look at what the Gunner Labor government has done. Government has seen Territorians terrorised and terrified by troubled teens. We have seen it before but, for your benefit, let me repeat that there is no point fast-tracking one half of the police station. I am referring to the Gunner Labor government's decision to fast-track \$15m for the completion of stage one of the police station at Palmerston. What about stage two? When will stage two be completed? Will the government now concede that fast-tracking one half of the project is poor planning? Will the government fast-track stage two of the Palmerston police station?

The strange priorities of this Labor government have seen spending sprees such as:

- announcing \$700 000 for reporting on the feasibility of achieving a 50% renewable energy target by 2030, a \$700 000 per year commitment to be made every year until the Gunner Labor government gets the results it needs. To compound the strangeness of these priorities, the previous Labor government commissioned two reports into the same thing. It sounds a bit like the Singapore syndrome.
- \$250 000 for a website to make fuel companies more efficient at price setting if they should so wish; this at a time when there are four online companies offering very sophisticated price comparison packages, not to mention the traditional media presence of TV and print. The biggest clanger of all is that the commercial operators, who have built and run websites, estimate the minimum cost of such an endeavour will be nine times—you do not have to take your shoes and socks off for that, you can do it on your hands—what the Gunner Labor government is planning.
- \$550 000 on an economic summit series that has only received two written submissions and 35 views on its high-gloss, high-production, high-cost promotional video. That is 35 views. I get more views when I wish my wife happy Valentine's Day. Value for money? Probably not. Strange priorities.

The Treasurer spoke a lot about infrastructure in her ministerial statement, and that is really good. In fact, every time I hear the Treasurer speak about the historic, ground breaking, nation-building infrastructure program, I smile because that is the Country Liberal's infrastructure package. Territorians can see it. Building strategic infrastructure in the Territory is what we did best.

Thank you, Treasurer, for the very kind words about the Country Liberal's huge package. It is a huge package. Territorians were confused when the Gunner Labor government wanted to cut this huge package.

They were concerned when the Gunner Labor government decided to kick critical and strategic infrastructure programs into the long grass. Territorians were confused as to what criteria was used to evaluate infrastructure projects—which ones would be scrapped, canned, binned or banned.

Banning is something the Gunner Labor government is getting very good at. Think about it: banning Dan Murphy's from Darwin, banning hydraulic fracturing, banning two questions in a row to a minister, banning their own members from debate. It is time to end the jobs ban.

In the lead-up to the 2012 election, Territory Labor was spending its way to \$5.5bn of net debt. That is twice the \$2.7bn the Treasurer claimed she had. The previous Labor government had no hesitation in making future generations of Territorians pay for its reckless ways. There was never a cost-benefit analysis of any major project, and why would there be? Labor knew it could just put it on the corporate credit card.

The Country Liberals had a plan and a vision for the Territory then, and will continue to have a plan and vision for the Territory into the future. Labor speaks about building confidence, delivering certainty and creating jobs. Where there should have been certainty after the election, Labor has delivered uncertainty and inaction. The only jobs Labor has created have been assistant ministerial jobs for the Labor backbench. No real jobs, just gammon titles.

Although Labor talks a good game on openness and accountability, there was nothing open about the \$450 000 extra part-day holiday impost on taxpayers for the public service and the unknown cost for struggling small businesses. It was not even part of Labor's pre-election costings. We strongly believe it is all about jobs. The policy settings and signals sent to business should say we want to make it easier to create jobs in the Northern Territory.

We believe in a bigger Territory. A bigger Territory is a better Territory with a brighter future. People will come to the Territory if there is an opportunity to do a bit better in life, not for an extra half-day holiday. The Home Improvement Scheme is symbolic of the suite of aspirational policies the Country Liberals had in their plan for the Northern Territory. It is about realising that 70% of the wealth is held in residential real estate. It is about 10 000 families that could have benefited. It is about opportunity for all.

I take this opportunity to remind the Chief Minister of his statement to the House on 29 November last year, that homeowners do not create jobs or benefit the Territory. What about the thousands of Territory homeowners who support small Territory businesses when they upgrade their louvre windows or protect their neighbours by getting drains cleaned and debris moved?

Property is big business creating thousands of jobs. One positive investment, like a voucher, can set in train a continuing economic cycle. Our initiative saw homeowner-occupiers receive vouchers of up to \$2000 to go towards home improvements undertaken using Territory local small businesses. The vouchers were deliberately small in value because it was about the bigger picture. It was a catalyst for increasing small-scale renovation and maintenance activities, keeping work flowing and keeping Territorians in jobs.

It was a win-win for Territorians because it also enabled Territory homeowners to get started on the improvements they had been meaning to do. The Home Improvement Scheme demonstrated that the previous Country Liberal government understood wealth creation and aspiration. It showed that we believed in and supported small business. We know small business is the backbone of our economy and we are making sure we look after them. I am glad to see it is back.

Speaking of looking after, this Labor government has committed to 50% renewables by 2030. This madcap ideology will see Territorians pay more for their power bill; 400% is what some economic analyses say. You have to take your shoes and socks off for that one. Power bills are already high enough. A 50% renewables target is just a road to less affordable and less secure power. Move to South Australia if you want to do it. Slavish adherence to ideology will drive down our standard of living.

In this debate it is important to hear the voice of real Territorians and listen to what they have to say. The Country Liberals are listening. I could go on and on but neither the Territory nor I have the luxury of time. Our Territory is running on a road to a jobs cliff. The Country Liberals put jobs and growth as a key priority. Country Liberals in government have always been about jobs, jobs and more jobs.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition has been but we had a ministerial statement on jobs in the October sittings. We have been talking about jobs for a while. Whoever is reading that speech might need to do a little bit of history, not too

far back. I know they have some new blokes over there, but in October we had a ministerial statement led by the Chief Minister. We will continue to talk about jobs and that is what I will do today.

I would like to first of all—probably number three right now because I have had a bit of a crack at the opposition. I would like to thank the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for her informative and motivating statement in relation to jobs and infrastructure. I am proud to be a part of the Gunner government because we do walk the talk.

Members interjecting.

Mr VOWLES: I will repeat that because, while I like the interjections, I just want to make sure they understood what I said. We walk the talk.

As my colleague just said, we have a plan. That plan was prepared after listening to Territorians. We will keep asking, listening and delivering. We are implementing that plan calmly and methodically. Jobs are the key to any plan in the Northern Territory.

I said in parliament last year that having a job is important on many levels. I recognise some of the comments the Leader of the Opposition made. It is important that everybody has the opportunity to have a job. It is about having a way to support your family. It is about the multiplying effect of money that is earned here and spent in the local economy at local businesses. Having a job gives a sense of purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Having a job promotes self-esteem and allows you to hold your head up high. In some places it allows you to become a role model for your community and some of your friends.

Jobs are essential to my portfolio as the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. It is an industry that makes up 20% of the Northern Territory economy. Everything I do in this portfolio, from focusing on Tennant Creek as an election commitment—as our mining services hub of the Territory—I will speak on that a bit later ...

Mr Wood: Will you support commercial fishing?

Mr VOWLES: ... to researching trials in garlic ...

Mr Wood: Not recreational; commercial.

Mr VOWLES: There are no commercial fishermen in Tennant Creek. Sorry for digressing. Researching trials of garlic, passionfruit ...

Mr Wood: Gerry fishes on the dam.

Mr VOWLES: ... soybeans or asparagus. You raise a good point, Member for Nelson. Maybe we can look at putting some barramundi in the pool down there or something like that.

It is important to invest in research, improve productivity in the cattle industry and develop the harvest management strategies for certain fisheries. It is about working with these industries—mining, oil, gas, agribusiness, fishing and livestock—to improve the competitiveness and sustainability so a diverse range of jobs are created and maintained. It is important to note that these industries create jobs in service industries as varied as transport, vehicle repairs, supplies, legal and accounting support, labour hire and catering.

One of this government's key initiatives in my portfolio is to support the development of Tennant Creek as the mining, minerals and gas services hub of the Northern Territory, something very dear to my colleague, the Member for Barkly. Tennant Creek will become even more vibrant with the creation of more jobs that will attract and retain more residents. We want more people to enjoy the joys of Tennant Creek and living there, with the Member for Barkly.

This initiative will stimulate the development of future mines by understanding what resources are in the ground and region. We will map that information using the latest in mapping technologies, including 3D geological models, and then make that information as widely available as possible. We recently announced that we put over 100 years of geological surveys online, which is a fantastic effort by the department.

This government will ensure that any future mining decisions are underpinned by sound environmental policies. Two additional ways we are doing this is by remediating legacy mines and working with tourism to develop heritage-type trails around old mine sites. I digress some, but I was fortunate enough to do some media about the use of drones in the legacy mine unit, and the time saving efficiency and ability of the drones to reach areas that we are unable to reach on foot to visit and map. The opportunity that the drones have given us with their footage is fantastic. The footage has clear pictures of places we cannot access, and sometimes it only takes the drone 15 minutes. The safety of workers means that sometimes they are unable to go into an old legacy mine and look around. It is interesting. You can attach geological mapping cameras on them as well. We are using technology to better and more efficiently use our time.

The key focus of these initiatives is that 70% of all projects are to go to local organisations, and there will be a 40% Aboriginal employment requirement for all contracts for legacy mine work. The estimated value of contracts around Tennant Creek over the next three to five years is between \$3m to \$5m. We have cleared a wide range of opportunities to ensure local businesses have a greater chance of winning work and therefore supporting local jobs. This will hopefully mean more people coming to Tennant Creek, staying there and spending money there.

Another key initiative is to develop Katherine as an inland port. The logistics of focusing on agro business—as the Chief Minister said recently, there is excitement in Katherine. Last week this was demonstrated by the Member for Katherine, who went to Katherine with the assistant minister and Member for Fong Lim, and me. We met with local businesses, and I can confirm there is excitement in Katherine because of this government's focus and plans for that region—not only Katherine, but also the surrounding regions.

I thank the Member for Katherine for looking after us and showing us around and meeting good people. It was a great day. It rained the whole three hours driving back, but it was a great day while we were there. Instead of reading and signing briefs in our offices all the time, it is important that as members we get outside, meet people and visit the areas we are reading about and making decisions about. An important part of our job is to see what our decisions are doing.

We want to work with industry to increase the product volume to be transported, creating transport demand. This may involve developing a new crop or expanding production of existing crops in response to national and international needs. Working with the Minister for Lands, Planning and Infrastructure, we are identifying new land that can be used for agribusiness after addressing water availability, land tenure, infrastructure and servicing issues.

We are leading research, development and communication of product-specific supply opportunities, identifying markets and ways to get products to market as quickly and cost-effectively as possible while ensuring quality is maintained throughout the process. We continue to provide information to inform and encourage investment in agribusiness and support infrastructure. Overarching this project, and all primary industries development, is ensuring appropriate biosecurity measures are in place to protect these industries.

The Territory government has just signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to, amongst other things, conduct soybean and asparagus trials in the Katherine region. We are going to develop a Japan/Northern Territory agribusiness infrastructure roadmap, including supply chain logistics. I was lucky enough to travel to Sydney to sign that memorandum of cooperation, which was also a fantastic opportunity to speak to the Japanese ministry about the outcomes we are going to get by working together.

The relationship built—not only since we came to government, but also from the former government who started these negotiations with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. I thank the previous government for their work in this area. I have said many times, governments and ministers come and go but we make sure we have a plan that benefits Territorians. This is a memorandum of a corporation that Territorians can be proud of because we have built relationships, and there is opportunity for us to see real economic benefits from this.

Japan imports all their soybean and Indonesia imports 98%, so you can see the scale of having a trial here and then farming it here; providing it all through Asia is hopefully something that will happen. We will develop more extensive Northern Territory based agriculture and aquaculture research projects, such as food processing or development of a food processing precinct, which may attract third party or commercial funding and investment.

I have two other major projects that have an immediate impact on jobs and will stimulate the economy. I am speaking about Territory Labor's commitment to invest \$50m in recreational fishing infrastructure over the next five years. This investment will provide many spin-offs for the Territory. It will be a great infrastructure that will enhance the Territory's great lifestyle, and it will provide the infrastructure that will attract more fishing folk as tourists to the Territory, which in itself will create more jobs.

The previous CLP government had far too many government contracts that went to either interstate businesses or those who had a sham shopfront under this government's Buy Local plan. Many of the contracts that plan and build this \$50m infrastructure will go to local contractors and local firms. Local contracts mean local jobs. Once contracts are awarded as part of the \$50m package, jobs will flow to the construction industry. Because the projects will be of very different sizes and natures, there will be great diversity in the size and nature of firms receiving contracts. This will spread to jobs across different Territory businesses; however, one thing that will be in common is the local contracts will require local people to do the work, which means jobs for Territorians.

The projects over the next six months will include upgrading the boat ramp at Channel Island, installation of CCTV cameras and toilets at Dinah Beach boat ramp, general upgrades including parking and amenities at Middle Arm boat ramp, putting in place artificial reefs and attraction devices to increase land-based fishing platforms around Darwin and Palmerston.

We will also be investing \$1m to upgrade and seal a section of the Corroboree access road. This project will utilise a wide range of contractors and local suppliers. Fifty million dollars of fishing infrastructure will support access to the Territory's great and iconic fishing spots, which will attract even more fishing-focused tourists to the Northern Territory. The spin-off is increased demand in tourism, hospitality and retail sectors. More demand in these sectors mean more jobs available to Territorians. Increasing the suite of quality lifestyle attractions and options for Territorians will mean that more Territorians will come here from other places and will stay longer. The bigger the population, the more jobs required to service them.

This government is committed to creating jobs and we are walking the talk. This government's commitment to invest \$50m in fishing infrastructure over the next five years is a great commitment, on so many levels, and will lead to jobs in the short term, the medium term and the long term.

Another project which has been accelerated is a \$4.1m grant to the NT Livestock Exporters Association to upgrade the Berrimah export yards. The grant agreement for this project was executed late last year and designs are being finalised prior to tenders occurring. Adherence to the Buy Local policy is one of the grant conditions. This means a much better chance, than previously existed, for Territory firms to get a slice of the action. The grant will provide two massive sheds of 168m by 46m.

I saw similar sheds when I was in Lampung in Sumatra, Indonesia last year before Christmas. They are huge structures. The primary material to be used is steel so the project will provide a great opportunity for local steel producers. The grant will also provide new yards and additional feed and water troughs. This will mean no scaling down in the wet season. Jobs will be generated for engineers, steel producers, steel workers and general construction.

I would like to finish with an area that is close to my heart and heritage, Indigenous employment. Tremendous work to improve Indigenous employment outcomes is occurring in the fishing industry. The Aboriginal aquaculture development, which will lead to jobs outcomes, is being supported through research projects, focusing on low technology sea-based methods and involving several communities across the Territory.

Sea cucumber ranching in the open sea is likely to offer a small annual income stream to communities and part-time job opportunities, especially for young community members. Rock oyster and giant clam farming has the potential to provide modest economic development opportunities as well as provide locally grown, fresh and affordable seafood to improve nutrition and food security.

The Territory government has a strong 12-month contract with Charles Darwin University to support a trial rock oyster project on the Tiwi Islands. This project employs an Indigenous technician who was previously an apprentice within the government. A revamped Aboriginal coastal licence is now available, and will assist Indigenous coastal communities to develop smaller-scale fisheries to supply local fresh seafood. Nineteen licences have been issued to date, 10 of which are current. An Indigenous marine training program has been established in Nhulunbuy. It has an Indigenous training coordinator, who is employed to lead with the high school and registered training organisations, to facilitate delivery of seafood industry business and marine training to Aboriginal Territorians.

Staff from my department have regularly visited Indigenous marine rangers to carry out extensive activities relating to fisheries compliance, monitoring research and, in many instances, engaging marine rangers on a fee-for-service agreement. Scientific measuring and analysis services is an emerging area for Indigenous marine rangers. Rangers are assisting fisheries to deliver produce of aqua culture, stock monitoring and data collecting.

Sixteen Indigenous marine rangers have completed this certificate, doing measuring and analysis. The course develops a scientific and technical capacity of ranger programs, which has led to contracts being offered for rangers to conduct a number of fishery research functions on behalf of the department. This training has led to two Indigenous rangers being employed as apprentices within the department to assist in overall research capacity. Marine ranger groups are involved in research on snapper and barramundi stock monitoring, swordfish survey and aquaculture projects.

From 1 January this year, appropriately trained and experienced marine rangers can be appointed as fisheries inspectors. This will lead to an increase in fisheries compliance capacity across the Territory. This development has been keenly anticipated by marine groups across the Northern Territory. As a member of this Gunner government, I am committed to creating and maintaining jobs in the Territory.

I have outlined some of the great work that is happening within my own portfolios, such as the exciting work on mining in Tennant Creek, innovative work around agro business in Katherine, Territory Labor's \$50m election commitment to fishing and infrastructure, Territory Labor's \$4.1m commitment to upgrade the Berrimah export yards and the great work regarding fisheries that will provide sustainable Indigenous employment opportunities. As the Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics said, in its first six months this government has built solid foundations for a solid economy and to grow jobs.

There is a strategy for today and tomorrow and the next generation to maintain, sustain and grow jobs across the Northern Territory in our urban centres and bush communities. I commend this statement to the House.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister for bringing the statement forward. We have had many statements throughout the time I have been in this parliament and will probably continue to have many more in the future. In response to the Minister for Primary Industry, you need to look at commercial fishing. I had people speak to me recently and they are just about to pull out of the industry.

Unfortunately, not only this government but other governments have a bias towards recreational fishing, as if that is the only form of employment they are worried about. Recreational fishing encourages people to come to the Northern Territory; it is a good industry. There are benefits from people having their own boats and going fishing, et cetera. It is a good for the Territory. On the other hand there is a group of people out there, and I must be one of them, who do not have boats. I do not want to buy farmed fish if I can help it. We have a good fish farm at Adelaide River, and that is fine, but I still prefer wild caught fish from the Northern Territory. Who is going to catch it? Our commercial fishing people.

I have not heard details in any of your speeches about the commercial fishing industry. I know it is relatively small compared to other industries, but it is an important industry that employs families. There are benefits from that industry, such as fuel, boat repairs and other things that are good for the economy. I thank you for at least speaking about Aboriginal employment. One of the problems I have is that we do not get down to the guts of these problems.

I looked up the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for 2014-15. For males between 15 and 34, the unemployment rate is 32%; this is for Aboriginal people. That is mainly in remote areas. Between 25 and 34 years of age, the rate is 18%. That is well above what it is in the Territory, an average of 3% or 4%. For too long we forget that. I have heard governments rave on about our unemployment rate being better than other states, and not looking a little further into the issue.

I get concerned not only because people do not have a job—people have told me that if you have a group of people in society that have no work, watch out in the future that you do not get angry people. We should realise that we have to make better efforts to create employment. Some of it may be artificial to an extent. I have said before that most of the things we talk about here, even the rangers in Arnhem Land—if the government decides to pull the pin on the GST we receive, those jobs are gone. We depend so much on the Commonwealth giving us money through GST.

I have been listening to the Western Australia election that is on at the moment. You can bet your bottom dollar that Colin Barnett is saying part of the problem with debt in Western Australia is that they do not

receive a fair proportion of the GST, even though they have created much of the wealth over many years. It is not unrealistic to say we need to start developing our own industries. What I would like to see in the statements is to get down to some of that nitty-gritty. What are the actual figures of unemployment in our communities—whether it is Bulman, Beswick, Yuendumu, Santa Teresa or whatever—and what can we do to overcome those issues?

As I have said before, time and time again, when I worked at Nguiu—I will never remember ...

Mr Guyula: Wurrumiyanga.

Mr WOOD: Wurrumiyanga—I will stick to Nguiu; it depends which side of the family you are on there. We employed every person, every male who wanted a job. We created jobs and people were happier. That is not to say we did not have problems, but we did not have the word 'suicide' in my time there because people had a job if they wanted it. When we have these statements we need to do some more micro-thinking. This is fairly broad; it talks about building houses from an Aboriginal's perspective. I worked out that it is about 100 houses a year. There will be extensions to some houses and government employees' houses will be built. That is all fine, but that is only a certain amount of work that will be done.

One of the big issues shown in the SIHIP and the NPARIH program has been that once you have finished those houses, what do you do with the people you have trained? How many times have Aboriginal people been employed and then found at the end of the program they have no job because there is no more work? Unless we have some sort of follow-up scheme, this is just having people lifted up and dropped down. Although that is difficult, we have to work through some of those issues. Housing is not going to employ all the people in those communities. We have to find other ways.

I have said time and time again that the Commonwealth—I was reading the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy; I took it off Senator Scullion's website. It is about getting more people working in the Commonwealth public service, but the reality is that if you live out bush, you cannot always become a member of the Commonwealth public service. Maybe a few people out there are employed by the Commonwealth, but not a lot of people.

We have to use local government as the key to creating employment and keeping people employed, by giving local government the money. We would not have Work for the Dole or the CDEP; we give local government the money and top it up so Aboriginal people have a reasonable hourly rate to pay for the high cost of living in those communities. We give those councils the ability to buy capital equipment to help employ people, and we let them, as the locals, find the work they need to do. There is plenty of work: patching and grading roads, fencing, erosion control, fire management, maintaining the houses and making sure houses are kept to a good standard.

My good friend, Member for Stuart, knows about maintaining houses. I have been to places like Santa Teresa and other places—the Member for Stuart was very involved in it through his previous business. There will always be a need for maintenance, so keep people either building or maintaining houses and you will have that workforce.

We need to promote the value of local government, which is made up of counsellors who know their own area. They are the ones who should be pushing the idea of trying to reduce unemployment. If we do not do this, we will have young, angry people who will blame us for not doing enough to make sure they had a decent livelihood in which they could raise a family with a reasonable income. It is not just about having a job; it is about the dignity of work. It may sound like a cliché, but work gives a person dignity, reason to live, and pride in their community.

When I go to communities I see rubbish all over the place, long grass and cars. I have two communities in my electorate, and I am ashamed. There are something like 20 cars in one of my communities at the moment, just lying around, smashed up and making the place look terrible. And yet, why? Someone could have the job of making sure they are picked up. That place has gone from a good place to a dump, and it disappoints me.

We have to look at some of the nitty-gritty detail of some of these communities and how we can help them, rather than a broad-picture approach, which this is. That is fine; you always need to look at the big picture, but I would like a report back saying how many people were not employed in that community.

I have stood here and raised the issue of Emu Point. We talk about the bigger communities. There are outstations where people live. They are not going to get new houses. I have asked, why can they not build

their own houses? Why can you not give them the ability to build their own houses? They can build them out of bush timber. They can buy the concrete and get the sand and gravel to mix. They used to do it. There is nothing wrong with doing it. This gives people employment. So instead of people cleaning a few leaves up around the place for half a day and then sitting around and having a bit of ganja, they actually have the skills—I know at Emu Point there are people with the skills—to go and build their own houses.

The houses are overcrowded because there has been no expansion of houses in that outstation for years. The population expands so more and more people go to Grandpa Terry Sam's place. Instead of him having a nice quiet life in retirement, he gets all the grandkids, so he does not get any peace and quiet. Why can we not think outside the square and help those people? It will solve some of the unemployment issues and housing issues, and will give people a reason to live out there, not just sit out there. Sometimes we need to be more definitive in what we are doing. Outstations are certainly an area that we need to look at.

There are a couple of other issues. We need to do a lot more to lower the unemployment rate. We hear about domestic violence, alcohol problems, kids not going to school and people dying before they should. You have to give people a reason to live; one of the ways to do that is to give them a reasonable job that they can see does something good for the community and for themselves. We have to work hard to make those changes.

We have a moratorium on gas, but I am not going to get into the argument on whether that is good or bad. What I will say is—and that is what I have looked at from when I went to Roma, I sent people a report there that said if we are to develop the Territory, and just for argument's sake we have gas, I would like to see the Territory benefit from that gas by being able to improve its infrastructure. You will not develop the Territory unless you have decent roads. If you are looking at tourism out bush, you want roads that the grey nomads can travel on without thinking their caravan is going to shake to bits. You want to ensure the cows get to the market without being bruised. You want to ensure that people can come to the footy without their vehicles falling apart. If you want to encourage and expand our economy, you need some basic infrastructure, good roads, water and electricity. That will drive your economy.

If you do not have the money then you need some other way of getting it. If we go down the path of having onshore gas, then we have to ensure that we benefit from the gas in the form of something that will last a lot longer than the gas will. I saw that, to some extent, in Roma. They have a brand new beautiful airport terminal and they used to have a little shed before that. They have had upgrades to roads in the community. I would not want to see some form of come in, construction, production and go home. I want to see something that benefits the people in the area and could improve the economy of the Territory.

The Sturt Plateau, for instance, does not necessarily have a large amount of water, but it could be a great area for developing horticulture. It could be that we harvest water and pump it into that area with money from the gas. We have to develop an economy; we cannot rely on the GST forever and a day. If we want to create real jobs then they have to be jobs that we actually produce, not artificial jobs. I do not mean artificial in a bad way; we need soldiers, teachers, police, and that comes from government funds. At the base of that, we still need to have an economy that grows and gives people jobs.

We are investing \$80m in the prawn farm at Legune station, yet I heard on the radio there is no guarantee that it is going ahead. I think there is still a bit of work to do, so I wonder what that \$80m is for. It is for one development—it is a big development, but what is it for? We are tight on money at the moment. I am not saying that we should not help invest.

What is the investment in that road from the company? If I am an investor, if I am a developer in the rural area, I do not get too much help from the local council building the road. I have to put that in myself. The council might contribute to some of the external works, but in general that would be the developer's requirements. It would be good to find out what the agreement was with the company in relation to putting out that much money for a particular road.

The last time I was in here, I remember I was like, 'Good on you, government. I agree with your tradie scheme.' Helping the community through bigger grants for the community is a good way to go. I did not think giving it to the individual was a good idea. Now the announcement is in reverse, so what do I do now? It is a great idea that you are giving the money to individual people now. I understand why you are doing it, but it seems like the government said one thing a few months ago and then another thing a few months later. I sometimes try to be positive and support the government, but then government changes its mind, which leaves me standing here.

Maybe I will take it up. I have a roof that leaks, which I found out about with all the rain. My ceiling is starting to collapse, so maybe my local plumber will have an opportunity to fix the roof before I have a big hole in the kitchen. It would be nice if that was your policy. Do not change it a few weeks later. It makes it difficult to be positive and help the government put forward good ideas.

I saw in today's paper that we are looking at GM bananas. I have a background in horticulture and one of the first trips I undertook was to Narrabri to look at GM cotton. We had cotton trials in Katherine for seven years, which were paid for partly by the government and partly by companies. That GM trial was regarded as a success; very little insecticide was used, and the crop was harvested and sent to Queensland. We have never seen anything since then.

There was a caution in the paper today about GM bananas. If we want to develop the economy of the Northern Territory when it comes to horticulture, we have to find a way to get over Panama disease. You will see the problems they have in Queensland. If the Panama disease gets any worse in Queensland, the banana industry in Australia is at risk of collapsing. That is the kind of threat that disease is.

People are scared of GM because they think we are going to cross tomatoes with salmon. I used to hear that because it would stop tomatoes from freezing. I would never support those sorts of weird experiments, but there are good reasons for using technology. If technology can help us grow bananas that are resistant to Panama disease in a way that is not harmful to human health, then we should support it because the banana industry is highly productive in the Northern Territory.

One reason it is highly productive is the climate. You can almost grow three bunches of bananas a year in the Northern Territory. When I was on Bathurst Island, in a good year we could produce three good bunches of bananas. You will not get that in many other places in the Northern Territory because of the high temperatures and humidity. So there was a bit of misunderstanding in today's paper about what this is all about. If we want to create jobs, we have to have the industries to do it, and sometimes we have to use the science to ensure that industry is viable and can continue.

Bananas are a good industry for the Northern Territory. It is a high employer because there is a lot of manual labour. A bunch of bananas on your shoulders or arms is a lot of work each day. It is tough work, but it is good work; and it is something that has, unfortunately, declined. People in Yirrkala would know; they had one of the biggest plantations in the Territory, and it collapsed because of Panama disease. It produced nearly all the bananas for that region.

What was in the paper today was more alarmist than scientific because it did not have a true understanding that you can use GM for beneficial uses that are not necessarily harmful. You have to be cautious and have a regulator for GM; you cannot just do these things in your backyard. They have to be regulated and monitored. That is a fairly strict regime.

I thank the minister for her statement. There is plenty in this document to talk about, but we have to get down to some of the nitty gritty, especially when it comes to unemployment in remote communities. Aboriginal people have a right to have a job, and we have the responsibility to try and ensure they have good, meaningful work in their communities.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Treasurer's statement on investing in Territory jobs. This Labor government has a cohesive, detailed strategy to support jobs and economic growth, encourage investment and create safe and vibrant communities in our urban, regional and remote areas. Territory Families is a vital part of this plan. Investing in social infrastructure is every bit as important as investing in physical infrastructure.

We need all members of our society to lead productive lives. We need to ensure our communities and businesses are safe. We need community cohesiveness to support diversity and include all Territorians. That is why I was delighted to share with the Chief Minister the announcement of the biggest investment in youth services the Territory has ever seen. We all want the same result, which is less youth crime. Crime affects business directly and expensively. It makes our business owners unwilling to invest back into their communities. It creates unease and fear in our towns and communities.

Early intervention and diversion initiatives provide the best outcomes for young people involved in the youth justice system, and are the most cost-effective approach for the long term. What we have been doing is not working. I was horrified to find that the budget I inherited was a whopping \$22m for running our detention centres with an average of 50 kids at any one time, and only \$2m for diversion programs across the whole of the NT.

It costs \$1000 more a day to keep young people in detention than in diversion programs. In their ideological zeal, the former CLP government failed to properly plan for a youth justice system that works. There was a lot of tough talk, but no cohesive action or plan. We now see significant increases in costs to establish, and in some cases re-establish, services that were already there before they were de-funded. These services should be in place and working with children on the streets right now.

This will provide challenges to the Territory budget, challenges the Labor government is prepared to tackle. No successful business person would invest in an expensive option that has proven not to work, yet that is what those on the other side of the Chamber continued to do. As a government minister I am responsible for spending taxpayer dollars to get results. This government takes that responsibility extremely seriously. We need to put public interest first and discontinue the ideological and continually lazy politics that drove the previous CLP government.

Our recently announced plan will ensure that the cycle of offending ends through early intervention and tough, fair and effective rehabilitation and diversion programs. Specifically, we will give victims a voice. Victims of crime deserve to be heard by the courts and by the offender. The government is significantly expanding victim and youth conferencing where young people can come face-to-face with those who have been impacted by their offending.

Jesuit Social Services will immediately commence the provision of victim conferencing with serious young offenders who are repeatedly offending in Palmerston, and a similar arrangement will roll out soon in other regions. We will stop kids from getting into trouble by ensuring regional centres have the youth services and activities they need to keep kids engaged, especially over high-risk times such as the school holiday periods. In this package we are doubling funds for non-government organisations, which will improve preventative activities all year at the places and times when they will really make a difference.

The first programs will be in place for the mid-year holiday period so evaluations and adjustments can be made for the full roll out, well in time for the next period. We are planning ahead—no thought bubbles. If youth get into trouble, we will intervene early. Fifty-two youth outreach workers in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs will work with kids and their families across the Territory to address the underlying causes of offending, and put strategies in place for getting them back on track. We will give judges options for sentencing so they can choose a sentence that has the greatest chance of getting the child back on track.

The government announced more than a doubling of ongoing funding to \$11m each year for NGOs to deliver evidence-based diversion programs that work. Consultations with the sector will commence shortly, prior to calling for expressions of interest from the non-government sector. We know our non-government sector has the ideas; we need to give it the scope to innovate in this space.

The youth outreach workers will give judges a plan, an individualised program that takes tough action on addressing the causes of offending. The offender will face up to what he or she has done through conferencing with victims and, where possible, making amends for the damage caused. They may be referred to a wilderness camp or other programs. These are not soft options. This is about challenging the young person to face up to the facts about where their life is going and who they want to be.

We will ensure the bail system is more accountable. If children are granted bail, we will have a system in place to ensure it works and kids do not just ignore their bail conditions and reoffend. For the first time in Territory history, young offenders on bail will be provided with individualised support and a comprehensive range of programs to stope reoffending and meet bail conditions. This support will be provided by youth outreach workers and the NGO sector, and will include options for accommodation while on bail.

If a child is sentenced to detention, we need to ensure that the time spent in detention works to break the cycle of repeat offending. We have been very clear, as asked by the Leader of the Opposition, that what was going on in Don Dale was not working. We are not saying we do not think detention needs to happen; we need to invest in detention systems that work.

The community deserves outcomes from this work. Each young person will leave detention with better skills and a greater ability to take responsibility for where he or she is going. They will also have support from youth outreach workers to keep them on track through those vulnerable few months after release. This is about a whole system of support that intervenes early, but when that does not work we will have the ability to respond flexibly to children's needs.

The result we are looking for is that more young people become productive members of our society and economy, and help build a positive future for the Northern Territory. It is about investing in the Northern Territory to make sure we have the right system in place for a strong, safe and connected community.

The Northern Territory has the highest rate per capita of young people in detention; it is four times the national average. Between 2006-07 and 2015-16 the annual average of youth in detention grew by 76%. These statistics point to a horrifying waste of lives. Imagine a Territory where these were the numbers of Aboriginal apprentices being trained. What a different prospect we would be facing. That is why this government is investing in a better youth detention system.

We need to do what we can to prevent young people from entering the youth justice system. If they do end up in detention centres, we need to treat that as an opportunity to develop skills and a different attitude towards life. We want to use this time to turn them from being angry, destructive and damaged children to young men and women with a future. They will be the next generation of parents, and we need to break the intergenerational cycle of crime and hopelessness.

A big part of this investment is in jobs. There will be 30 new youth outreach workers within Territory Families, and there will be new jobs created by the non-government sector with the \$11m a year investment. As someone who has worked in the NGO sector, I know that will be used very wisely.

I acknowledge that one of the biggest challenges facing my department, and in fact the whole social service sector, is recruiting talented energetic people to these positions and keeping them there. We do not want to poach from others, which is an all too common tactic in the Territory. We need to invest, as a government, in sector development. We need to invest in our people.

The Michael Gunner Labor government is investing in the capacity of the youth sector. Along with this financial investment there will be investment into the capacity of the NGO sector and Aboriginal organisations. For too long, funding has been short-term and piecemeal and the development of the sector has suffered accordingly.

As a former CEO I personally understand the challenges of recruiting when faced with financial instability, and the heartbreak of losing skilled workers because you cannot guarantee them a job. With five-year funding agreements and a 10-year Northern Territory Government strategic plan, the sector will have one of its best opportunities to increase its capacity and productiveness. The sector will be able to invest properly in its human resources: training; professional development; reflective learning; and continuous improvement.

This approach will strengthen governance and financial management. It will be able to test what business structures are most agile and adaptable to changing circumstances, joint ventures, partnerships and collaborations across and between sectors. This social infrastructure requires investment and time to develop. With greater capacity comes innovation in design and delivery. We have the opportunity to be national leaders in youth development practice and program delivery. Our investment in youth justice is a big first step along this path.

Buy Local applies just as much to the service industry as it does to goods and civil works. We need to value local knowledge and experience—especially Aboriginal knowledge and experience—and build this value into our criteria and procurement practices. We need to have procurement practices that allow for co-design and innovation. We need contract management that acknowledges that social innovation is not always a straight line, and must be accompanied by continuous learning and improvement. Fundamental to all of this is evaluation. From the very beginning there needs to be proper evaluation of programs so that over time we can confidently say what works and what does not. Our approach is one of taking a long-term strategy to long-term problems. We will take our time and do this right.

The \$22m Immediate Works Stimulus Package will also provide a much needed pool of funds to multicultural groups. This is another one of my portfolios, and I am very pleased to be responsible for multicultural affairs in the Northern Territory.

The immediate work stimulus package provides an opportunity for multicultural groups to develop their infrastructure. It will encourage our diverse community to grow and contribute to tourism and economy through cultural events and other activities. This package will sustain and help grow Territory businesses, create local jobs and stimulate the economy. It will also provide a much-needed avenue of funding to not-for-profit organisations which spend a great deal of time educating and increasing the wellbeing and connectedness of our broader community. Our multicultural community has a high participation rate in

employment, community activities and volunteering, which are the backbone to any community's social cohesion.

The value and diversity the multicultural community brings to the Territory cannot be underestimated. I have met with many multicultural groups since the immediate works package announcement, and they have provided my staff and me with the same feedback: multicultural communities are keen to grow their organisations and diversify their facilities in order to provide access to services, jobs and space for community events for Territorians.

A couple of organisations in Alice Springs are submitting their applications this week. They advised me that they have been waiting for an opportunity to apply for funding to expand their community facilities. They believe this will provide access to much-needed job opportunities that will benefit individuals and community organisations, and will subsequently drive economic growth.

During the election campaign and since being elected, our Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, has been clear that this Labor government respects the great contribution made to the Territory by senior Territorians. I am proud that he tasked me with the job of ensuring we deliver for senior Territorians, as the minister responsible for this vital policy area.

Last night, along with the Member for Port Darwin, I was delighted to present to the Association of Independent Retirees some of the key features of this government's support for seniors. I emphasised that seniors have always played, and continue to play, an important role in the future of the Northern Territory. Seniors contribute to strong and stable families, the economy and cultural life. They are our most active and worthy volunteers. Their wisdom and experience is needed in what is still a relatively young society.

With a falling population, we need to ensure we keep our seniors in the Territory. When seniors stay, their hard-earned savings stay, and so do their families. That is why this government is working to build a package that supports our senior Territorians. The key features of this package include bringing back concessions to reduce the cost of living for seniors.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I seek an extension of time for the member to complete her remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Ms WAKEFIELD: Mr Deputy Speaker, we will bring back concessions to reduce the cost of living for senior Territorians. Providing better housing options for seniors is important work I am doing with the Member for Barkly, because this side of politics can work together for better outcomes for Territorians.

I will also be working with the Member for Barkly to give senior Territorians the opportunity to work part-time in the public service. We need to keep intellectual property and capacity in our public service. We will also introduce more age-friendly planning, and develop a plan that acts against elder abuse. I am most passionate about this area; it is an area that we saw in the women's shelter in Alice Springs, but it needs work and has big concerns across the Territory.

The Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme public consultation starts next month with the release of a discussion paper. This is not a simple scheme to get right. We have had years of ad hoc policy making, as well as confusing and often contrary decisions in this area. We need to start again to build a fairer, more equitable and targeted scheme that meets the needs of all seniors and pensioners. We need to work with people, listen to their views and, together, come up with something that works.

It not only needs to work for seniors in cities and towns but across the whole Northern Territory—people who do not speak English well and those who have come to Australia more recently. One of the first things we did after the election was establish an expert reference group with membership from the Council of the Ageing Northern Territory, National Seniors, the NT Council of Social Services, Carers NT, Vietnam Vets, Somerville Community Services and the Association of Independent Retirees.

Since December 2016 the expert reference group has met twice to provide advice on the current scheme and opportunities for change, to establish terms of reference and principles for the review, to consider a draft discussion paper and to discuss public consultation. Once the draft discussion paper is released all Territorians will be able to provide feedback to government on concessions for seniors, pensioners and carers. No final decision will be made until the consultation period has finished, but there are some things the government is committed to.

We are working on restoring seniors' concessions for the 3000 senior Territorians who have been locked out since 2014. This is an investment of \$2.1m. People locked out of the current scheme, since 2014, will receive a total of \$700 in concessions every two years. What this looks like will be part of the public consultation process. We will bring back free public transport for seniors and pension card holders; the government is considering a couple of options for the delivery of free public transport services.

All of these measures in youth, youth justice, multicultural affairs and seniors are designed to improve the amenities of our towns and communities, and develop the social structure that underpins a robust economy. All of this is based on consultation and listening to Territorians, because it is Territorians who have the answers. It is up to a fair and trustworthy government to put these ideas into a plan, take decisive action to resource them and implement the plans systemically and fairly.

I commend this statement to the House.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the statement from the Deputy Chief Minister on how this government is investing in jobs. We have been consulting, listening, planning and delivering.

We are building on the jobs plan we took to the August election. I am proud to be a member of this government, a government that is putting people first by prioritising jobs to grow the economy and support families. We have not put the handbrake on the economy; we are working hard to grow the Territory economy. By investing in jobs and our children, this government is setting the blueprint for future success.

As education minister I know that a strong economy, where families have jobs and can afford their own home, contributes to good outcomes for children. It provides stability for families—that continuity and sense of community when attending your local school, and being able to stay at that local school because you have your own home.

This government recognises the importance of being able to buy your own home, to have a place where you can live and raise your family, where you can nurture your children and increase stability and security for children—an investment in their future. This government has made it possible and has made it easier for people and families to buy their own home, regardless of whether it is a new or established home. Seventy-one families in Palmerston have purchased their own home through the first home owners' scheme for existing dwellings. To date, that is 268 families that are benefiting, across the Territory, from this scheme.

This scheme is great for an electorate like Drysdale, which has ageing suburbs such as Gray, Driver and Moulden. It is wonderful for families to be able to buy in older suburbs with this first time owners' scheme for existing dwellings. That is what we want to see. We want to see younger families in those older suburbs where there are long-established, wonderful schools. Seeing those houses revitalised is beneficial to families and the community. This scheme gives families up to \$26 000 to buy a property as their first home. These funds not only help families set themselves up for the future, but also help to stimulate the housing market and contribute to the local workforce. It is wonderful to see houses that have had 'for sale' signs on them for a long time in Drysdale now being sold. Seventy-one families purchasing a home in the suburbs of Palmerston is a wonderful thing.

This government is helping families who purchase established homes by making it possible to receive a discount on their stamp duty. Under the first home owner's scheme, eligible families are able to apply for up to nearly \$24 000 on the initial value of their home, as well as apply for money for upgrades. Research has found that home ownership is associated with children performing better in literacy and numeracy, having lower dropout rates and higher levels of school completion. We know improved education outcomes lead to better employment opportunities, less reliance on welfare and a brighter future. It is a win/win all around.

With some of our most disadvantaged children in remote communities, this government is investing \$1.1bn in remote housing over the next 10 years. It is crucial for supporting improved outcomes for children in school as well. As the Deputy Chief Minister said in her statement, this is the biggest investment ever in remote housing. There will be \$500m for new remote housing under the new HomeBuild NT; \$200m for Room to Breathe; \$200m to expand government employee housing, including housing for local government employees; and \$200m for additional repairs and maintenance funding. I am very proud to be part of a government that is expanding government employee housing to include housing for local recruits who live in those communities. They have been in those communities long-term and should have the same access to housing as the recruits brought into those communities to work.

Investing in jobs is not just about investing in building and owning your own home; this government is also supporting local tradies and small businesses, which I know is important to the people living in my electorate of Drysdale. Like a lot of us, I have a large number of tradies living in my electorate. Families who purchase a newly-built home are able to apply for a grant to help them purchase much-needed household goods. The household goods grant is providing up to \$2000 for people to purchase things like fridges, washing machines and microwave ovens. When you buy a new house it is lovely to be able to replace your whitegoods.

Assistance is also available for families who purchase an established property to help renovate or repair them. There is \$10 000 under the home renovation grants, and families must use a local business, as we have talked about. Families who live in urban public housing are also being supported through a \$5m stimulus package to repair and upgrade public housing. This work includes roof repairs, fence repairs, disability modifications and upgrades to kitchens, bathrooms, security doors, windows, lighting and painting.

On the weekend I was visiting one of my constituents in Dillon Circuit, Gray and it was wonderful to see a beautiful fence going up at a block of 10 units which has a large number of elderly residents. It is wonderful to see a fence around their property to deter people wandering through, as there is a laneway attached to the unit block. That \$5m stimulus package for repairs and upgrades to public housing is already being rolled out and is hitting the mark in my electorate. I also have a large number of public houses in Gray and Moulden, so this is a great benefit to my electorate.

These investments improve the lives, safety and security of people and families, as well as create jobs for local business and tradies. This work will be carried out by local small business and tradies, and will support the construction industry across the Territory, not just in Palmerston, but also Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

This government has listened to the community, businesses and families and brought back the scheme bigger and better. People can now access up to \$4000, and these funds can go towards jobs of up to \$20 000. Families that previously received the voucher through the Home Improvement Scheme will be eligible to apply for a second voucher, with a total of up to \$2000. The Home Improvement Scheme is a much-needed addition, providing another \$15m stimulus to the Territory economy.

There are many community not-for-profit groups that do fantastic work, and we all have them in our electorates. They provide a range of services to people in our community. The ones I have in Palmerston, like the sporting clubs and childcare, provide support to the community. The government's \$10m available to community and not-for-profit groups will create work and support local jobs. Not-for-profit organisations, such as community-based early childhood services, can apply for up to \$100 000. This government will also match any renovation costs that exceed \$100 000, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to a maximum of \$200 000.

We will see things like improvements to fencing and playground equipment in not-for-profit and community organisations, including sporting groups. The benefit of this scheme is multifaceted; not only is it a requirement that local tradies and businesses are used, but it also provides much-needed support to non-government service providers and organisations. The people I have spoken to in the sporting clubs I am involved with are excited about this grant. By supporting not-for-profit early childhood services, we are improving early learning environments and learning outcomes.

As Minister for Education I am proud to outline how this government's re-investment in education is providing jobs and contributing to the Territory's economy. You have heard me talk about Families as First Teachers and the expansion of this program. Promoting good early childhood outcomes is also good for future jobs and the future economy of the NT. Early childhood is at the heart of this government's agenda, and the Families as First Teachers program is a key strategy.

Families as First Teachers is a quality, evidence-based early childhood program that improves lifelong education, health and wellbeing outcomes for young children, aged from birth to three years, and their families. It provides employment opportunities in remote and urban communities. Currently, FaFT is operating in 27 remote and very remote Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory. By the end of this year FaFT programs will be operating in 33 remote and very remote communities, and five urban sites in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Katherine. That is a total of 38 FaFT programs.

Each FaFT team includes one family educator and a family liaison officer. Over the next six months expansion of FaFT will see increased employment opportunities for locals in Jilkminggan, Miyerri,

Ampilatwatja, Warruwi, Pularumpi, Milikapiti and the Yirrkala homelands. Providing job opportunities in those communities and providing the training for them also provides benefits for children and families.

Expansion of FaFT has the dual benefit of supporting children's early learning and participation and attendance at school. It also provides parents as role models for children because they are working. Research has shown that parents who participate in meaningful employment develop self-esteem, new skills and improve their economic outlook. They provide important role models for their children by demonstrating positive work behaviours.

Supporting all members of our community to fully participate in the Territory's social and economic opportunities is something I am passionate about, and my colleagues are as well. As an educator I know how important it is for children to receive a quality education that equips them with the skills and capabilities they need to confidently engage in our economy.

As the Deputy Chief Minister said, we must ensure that more Territorians have a chance to work and have a real job. I was listening to what the Member for Nelson had to say, and we are all in agreement with that. We know the devastating impact of unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. We see this realised all too often in the health and education outcomes of children.

Economic prosperity for all is the way to break the cycle of disadvantage; we also heard the Member for Nelson speak about that, and it is something we are passionate about. We are investing an additional \$124m into education over the term of our government, and focusing our efforts so that every child will be a successful learner. That is \$31m per year in extra resources for NT Government schools from 2017. Twenty-million dollars is being rolled out now to schools for their 2017 budgets. We are delivering on our commitments.

All schools will benefit from the increased funding. Funds will be targeted to the areas of greatest student need as identified in consultation with education stakeholders, principals and through analysis of school's expenditure trends. Schools will choose how to spend the additional funds to best meet the needs of their students. With this additional funding schools will be able to employ additional teachers and support staff, as well as resources to deliver higher-quality teaching and learning programs to students.

Our re-investment in the education system will create more jobs for people in the education workforce. It will also provide funding stability for schools without the constant worry of funding cuts, which schools experienced for the last four years. Schools will be able to confidently plan their workforce requirements. This will result in more attractive employment opportunities, more permanent staff and better working conditions such as smaller class sizes, access to high-quality professional learning and better classroom resources and technology.

We know that teachers and people who work in the education system are good citizens. They are the people who, if they have a permanent job and have permanency, will buy homes and cars. They will go to restaurants and cafes, join clubs and be good community members. Putting an extra \$20m into the education budget gives that permanency, and will also increase the number of people in the Northern Territory. Whether they are recruits from Charles Darwin University, people who are already in our system but have been moving from contract employment to permanent employment, or new Territorians recruited from interstate—either way we will be building the workforce and putting good citizens into the Territory who will hopefully stay here long-term to raise their families, buy houses, commit to our community and increase the economy. Putting \$20m into education has a wonderful knock-on effect as well.

To support schools the Department of Education is implementing strategies to ensure principals can recruit and retain high-quality staff. As the Deputy Chief Minister said, a secure and rewarding job is the best to encourage people to stay in the Territory. We need that; we need to see the population increase in the Territory and have the flow-on effect with the GST as well.

This government is committed to building a prosperous economy for all Territorians, especially those in the bush. Our \$20m in direct funding to schools has also seen an increase in funding for secondary education in remote Northern Territory schools. The previous government took money out of education, and one of the areas that it particularly impacted was secondary education in remote schools, so that is where we are targeting some more dollars to go back into the school system.

It is so important that our young people have the option to complete school in their home community. Some will go to boarding school interstate. Some will be lucky to have scholarships to be able to attend school interstate. Some will attend boarding schools such as Kormilda, St John's, St Philip's, Urara College,

Callistemon or the new boarding school in Nhulunbuy, but we also need to provide the option for children to stay in their home community and get a secondary education.

Just like any family, there will be families in Darwin, Palmerston or Alice Springs who choose to go interstate for boarding, but there will be plenty of families who want their children to stay and complete their education in the Territory. We need to have those options, and we need to ensure they are funded as well. This means that the Employment Pathways program will be expanded from term two of this year.

Employment Pathways is a secondary education program, accredited by the Northern Territory Board of Studies, designed specifically for remote schools. It focuses on literacy and numeracy while developing life skills and job pathways relevant to each community. For the kids who are in secondary schools in communities, we need to design for the jobs in those communities. There is no point in kids completing training or certificate courses in things that do not lead to jobs. I call that rocking chair training; it feels good while you are doing it, but it is going nowhere. We need to ensure that we identify the jobs in those communities, and that the kids are on pathways to employment so they can have valuable lives and be part of their community.

This government has also committed \$8m per year to better support and educate children with challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental health challenges so there are improved outcomes for these children, their families and their communities. It is the right thing to do, to ensure that we are providing funding for some of our most vulnerable students. Those resources were cut under the previous government. To me, that is not fair. If you have a child with autism or hearing loss, you want your child to be able to achieve. We need those children to achieve in their schooling so they can go on to make valuable contributions.

This resourcing will create more jobs for allied health professionals and others who work with children and teachers. By putting \$8m into education, we will provide funding to occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists and those allied health professionals that we need to see more of in the Territory. This ongoing funding will give those professionals the opportunity to move to the Territory. They are good citizens and will buy houses and stay in the Territory long term.

We will also offer new disability teaching scholarships to government and non-government Territory teachers. This will grow the local capacity, as well as attract and retain teachers who are passionate about supporting these kids. In the special school setting we need to ensure we have teachers who are well-trained in those areas by providing scholarships to complete their masters or graduate certificate level courses.

Two-million dollars per year is being provided to the development of the Healthy Life, Creative Life program in the Katherine and Barkly regions. This investment will keep young people engaged in secondary schooling through access to arts, sports, social/emotional learning, culture, language and learning on country, as well as vocational learning and training. This will ensure they are job ready in their local community.

For Katherine and Barkly, where there are students who have dropped out of school or have not been attending regularly, we are putting more dollars back into those communities so we can get kids engaged in school. We are calling it Healthy Life, Creative Life. It will have a focus on the arts, music and sporting programs to lure the kids in and keep them at school.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms LAWLER: Thank you, Member for Brennan. I know how important education is to you.

I can talk about the big picture of employment and the additional \$31m going towards employment, but I can also talk about infrastructure and the direct benefits in jobs from the money going into education infrastructure. Our government has a cohesive, detailed strategy to support jobs and economic growth. This plan has been developed by working with and listening to Territorians. We are listening to key industry sectors and working with them to put in place the right measures to grow our economy.

Firstly, I point out that this government puts the best interests of Territorians first. We have honoured the previous government's commitments to capital works projects at schools. A number of the projects that had

yet to commence under the previous government will soon be publicly tendered, and construction will start boosting local jobs and supporting our economy.

One of the projects we have supported and progressed through the design stages is Taminmin College's new science, technology, engineering and maths centre, STEM, which is currently at tender. STEM is an area I am passionate about. We need our Territory kids to grow in that area, particularly girls and Indigenous kids. That is the area we need to focus on. We are building a STEM centre at Taminmin and in Darwin. That was a commitment from the previous government and we are happy to move ahead with it. Taminmin is a great college that is doing wonderful things in the rural area.

Other projects we are supporting include stage two of the new early childhood precinct at Braitling School; a multipurpose hall which will double as a community emergency cyclone centre at Ramininging School; an extension of the assembly area, which is about \$1m worth, at Ross Park Primary School; the much-needed assembly area upgrade, which will include a new sporting surface on the floor, at Wulagi Primary School; and Acacia School, which is a special school in Alice Springs, will have a new administration and reception area, new classrooms and some flood mitigation work. These were commitments under the previous government that we are more than happy to keep, and they will boost the economy as well.

Progress is also being made on the previous government's \$21.2m capital grant to the Catholic Education Office to build a primary school in Zuccoli. This will be a significant project in Palmerston and will provide a range of opportunities for construction jobs. Our government has increased investment in infrastructure across the Territory. This is what business has told us is needed. We have listened and are delivering.

Over \$100m is committed by this Labor government to new and improved school infrastructure projects. This will not only enhance the education of our students, but also provide jobs through a continuous stream of projects. With the buy local reforms introduced by the Chief Minister last week, every opportunity will be provided for local businesses, including small and medium-size businesses, to benefit from the building better schools initiatives.

A part of assessing tenders for these works will include consideration of Indigenous employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and other formal and informal training for local people. Investing in Territory business and in Territorians gives value to the Territory now and into the future.

Over the next four years every school in the Territory will receive \$300 000 for minor new works or repairs and maintenance as part of the building better schools initiative. That is for government and non-government schools, so all schools in the Territory over the next four years will receive \$300 000. You can imagine that will be well spent. Schools are very good at making five cents stretch to five dollars. These school communities will have a say in how they want that money to be spent. It will give them opportunities, and the flow-on effect is jobs for Territorians.

Starting in July, this \$56m initiative will kickstart building projects everywhere from Darwin and Palmerston to remote areas like Arnhem Land and the Barkly. About 50 schools have already submitted expressions of interest for the first year of this project, and I know from visiting schools that they want to be at the top of the list. Projects may include building renovations, new playgrounds and shade structures—any building-related works that enhance student learning, safety and their educational experience. Schools will be selected based on the proposed works identified and their readiness to commence the work. Priority will be given to projects that supplement existing approved works or commitments in progress, and enhance the value for Territory approach.

Complementing the building better schools investment is \$5m for a four-year program that will refurbish and upgrade the homelands, which will commence with much-needed works to improve facilities in the Yirrkala homelands school. I know the member for Nhulunbuy is keen to see these improvements. I was at Yirrkala homelands late last year and they are very excited about the improvements that \$5m will make to some of those schools.

The millions of dollars for infrastructure projects from this Labor government will see years of steady work for the construction industry at locations across the Territory. This allows schools to properly plan and maximises opportunities for local businesses to undertake work. This is great news for jobs, the economy, schools and students. The money that is flowing from education—that \$300 000 and the \$5m for the homelands—is not just about the big towns in the Territory, but also the remote areas. It will provide builders with work in those remote communities, which is great.

For the Member for Barkly and the Tennant Creek early childhood integrated learning centre—we know that investing in children and their education can create positive outcomes for whole communities, and this includes investing in quality facilities that support best-practice programs. Territorians have told us about the challenges facing so many families in Tennant Creek and the need to invest in both the economy and the social aspects of the community.

The AEDC, Australian Early Childhood Development Census, shows there is a large number of young children in Tennant Creek. We need to focus funding on building their early childhood integrated learning centre. I am pleased to say this government will bring forward \$6.5m for the early childhood integrated learning centre. It will be located on the site of the Tennant Creek preschool and will be a purpose-built facility that will provide preschool and early learning programs, health services and family support through the Families as First Teachers program.

In Palmerston there is a wonderful child and family centre that works in a similar way, but this one will have a preschool as well. The facility will include a new preschool, catering for up to 88 children. There will be meeting rooms and visiting specialist rooms, as well as amenities for food preparation and the delivery of nutrition programs. It will be wonderful, and I look forward to seeing that open.

Development of this centre will be good for local jobs and the local economy by providing opportunities for the construction industry during its development, and ongoing employment of early childhood educators in the region. It will also provide great services for local children and families who deserve it. Integrated services for children and families like this become central hubs in the community. They provide a soft entry point for families where there is no wrong door and all children and families are welcome. A tender for the design consultancy is scheduled to be advertised at the end of February, with construction expected to commence in August 2017. The target opening date for the new facility is February 2018.

I will talk more about science, technology, engineering and maths. As the Deputy Chief Minister said, this government is a strategic government. We do not just plan for right now; we invest in the future. The jobs of the future will be more complex than jobs today, and we will need a workforce with high levels of education and technical skills. Our schools need the facilities to be able to teach our young people these skills. This government is providing \$5m for the installation of rooftop solar systems for schools, which will be fitted with monitoring and measuring equipment to assist in educational projects to inspire our next generation of engineers and scientists to advance renewable energy solutions. Expressions of interest from schools will be called for in term one of this year.

Not only will this create work in the installation phase, but it will also reduce power costs for schools. This will free up funding to be directed to more teaching and support staff in the classroom. Our government has also committed \$39m over five years for infrastructure at Darwin High School, Darwin Middle School and the NT School of Distance Education, and the science, technology, engineering and arts centre at Bullocky Point. This will provide much-needed new classrooms and innovated teaching and learning spaces.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up, unfortunately.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): The Opposition Leader has clearly laid out why Territorians can rightly be disappointed in the priorities and performance of this government, especially when it comes to talking about jobs. The Gunner Labor government has shown they are scared to make a decision, and they are out of their depth on economic decision-making. The government has had six long months to get going. We have been promised all manner of measures, but we are still waiting to see delivery by this government.

Where is an outcome that is not an inquiry, committee or, as we have here today, a ministerial statement? I find it very interesting that so many members of the government have decided to contribute to this statement when last year, as we were debating many serious motions such as a bipartisan approach to alcohol policy, we heard crickets from the government; there was not a single contribution other than the one mandatory short contribution that had to be made. Yet, today, we have a ministerial puff piece of 46 pages and every government member has decided they need to have a chat about it.

People in Palmerston and the Narrows do not feel safer or better off under this Labor government. People in Spillett do not feel like the government understands their frustrations. The Gunner Labor government is too scared to make decisions and they are out of their depth. To make it look like the government is acting, they announce inquiries, committees, committees of inquiries, economic summits, surveys, advisory boards, consultation boards and feasibility reports. Announcing all these reports and studies has twin purposes. It not only makes the Gunner government look like it is doing something, but hopefully, if it is lucky, the outcomes of these inquiry may actually give the government some sort of agenda.

Turning to the ministerial statement, all we really see is the key theme of the Gunner Labor government; inaction, experienced time after time. The ministerial statement speaks of the many consultations and conversations the government has held. In fact the minister has devoted more words and pages to speaking about consultations, meetings, surveys and partisan politics than to describing real initiatives, programs or outcomes. There are no details, specifics or measurables. There is no new news in this statement. There is simply the rehashing of previous announcements, surrounded by words about consulting.

The ministerial statement encapsulates the Gunner Labor government's words about actions in place of actions. I asked the minister if the lack of business confidence was a topic raised during the many consultations; it must have been on the mind of all participants. The most recent objective survey of small business sentiment in the Sensis report detailed that 91% of small and medium enterprises in the fourth quarter of 2016 thought the economy had stalled or was going backwards. The reason for business' lack of confidence under your government is scarily obvious. The CommSec *State of the States* confirmed that the Northern Territory economy is slowing, having slipped from fourth to sixth in its latest quarterly report.

Other economic indicators back up CommSec, including the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation's own figures. On every forward-looking measurement we are either last or second to last in the country. The opposition is greatly concerned about the downward trend and the acceleration of that trend under this new government. Where is the plan to get us back on the right road?

It appears that the Gunner Labor government is too scared to make a decision and is out of its depth on its decisions relating to trade and the economy. Moreover, all we have to do is look at the facts to see that there is real trouble ahead. Other leading indicators or predictors of where the economy of the Northern Territory is heading are sales of new cars, housing finance for owner occupation and private business investment. All these key forward measures are down.

The one thing that declining retail sales, dropping new car sales and falling owner-occupier mortgages have in common is that they are all a measure of confidence. Unfortunately, the Gunner Labor government is ill-equipped to deal with these challenges because it is too scared to make a decision, and is out of its depth on decisions relating to trade and the economy. Due to the government's policy void, the very few decisions that it has made have been anti-jobs, because the government has listened to special interest groups in lieu of having its own agenda.

The hydraulic fracturing decision has let environmental activists set their energy policy. The two extra part-time public holidays have let the employment agenda be set by the unions, to the great detriment of small business. The 50% renewable energy target has let the federal Labor party set its energy policy, despite the very different energy generation mix here in the Northern Territory.

Maybe the worst example of the government doing nothing is the inquiry into fracking, in which a report by an eminent Australian, Alan Hawke, has already been done. According to the freedom of information request we received back today, your inquiry will take into account and base its research findings on the Hawke report; so why the delay?

We have an industry that is keen to expand, invest and hire people based on world-class regulations and solid scientific evidence through an independent scientific report, and what does the government do? It holds another inquiry, a very expensive one. Through that, they stop jobs and investment in the Territory.

Regarding the decision of the two new half-day public holidays, I ask the minister if this was an outcome or recommendation of the conversations they had with the hospitality sector? In the consultation we conducted, small businesses were distraught that the government had made this snap decision and the impact it had on their business.

We have also heard a lot from this Gunner Labor government about the need for a plan post-INPEX. Where is the plan? Consulting is not a plan. Bringing back the Arafura Games is not a jobs plan. Attracting private investment is a plan, and this is where the Gunner Labor government just does not get it. New construction investment is what is needed, not just for the tradies and builders, but because construction activity is well known as one of the best ways to get money immediately circulating in the economy. The government may be aware that Darwin International Airport advertised for builders on the weekend and received five immediate applications, including some from builders currently out of work.

Think about the fracking moratorium and the message that measure is having on potential investors, interstate and overseas. This Labor government fails to understand investment and how investment works.

The signals it is sending only drive jobs away from the Territory. It is the opposite of being open for business.

I thank the Treasurer for praising the roads infrastructure program where the Country Liberals invested a record \$605m in infrastructure, and for recognising the importance of that package. I remind the Gunner Labor government that at some point you will have to make your own decisions. It was okay for you to do nothing in opposition, but it is not okay to do nothing in government. The opposition strongly believes it is all about jobs, and the policy settings and signals sent to business should say we want to make it easy to create jobs in the Northern Territory.

The Gunner Labor opposition made bold promises and targets for its job creation, and we are still waiting to see what implementing those promises will look like. We continue to see more of the same. We see the inquiries, studies and reports, but we do not see action. This ministerial statement is more of the same. More words, 46 pages devoted to talking about talking rather than acting. The Gunner Labor government is scared to make the difficult decisions and cop the criticism, and is inexperienced and out of its depth on economic issues.

We in the opposition hope for Territorians' sake that the government recognises its shortcomings to deal with the upcoming economic challenges. They are real and Territorians deserve more than platitudes to deal with them.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in response to the Treasurer's statement, which clearly set out the Gunner government's cohesive strategy to support jobs and economic growth, to attract investment and to create safe and vibrant communities in our urban, regional and remote areas. I commend her for doing so, and keeping this House regularly informed. It is hard when we have the opposition saying they want to hear more about jobs and then saying we talk too much about jobs.

Regardless, it should be noted that last week the Chief Minister outlined his vision for the Northern Territory and it was well received by a very diverse audience. It was fantastic to be there and hear him deliver that speech, and to listen to industry representatives, from community services to ICT, about where they saw the future of the Territory and their place in what we were outlining.

We do not need to tell Territorians that we are in challenging financial times because everyone is feeling it, particularly our small businesses, which are the backbone of the Territory. The previous government had no plan for the economy beyond INPEX. I think there is a bit of amnesia here as the opposition was the government up until six months ago, and we were coming to a very different phase of that project, which they failed to plan for. They had no plan for economic development or for investing in jobs, and they left us with a significant budget deficit. Those are the facts and we know that for sure.

We went to the election with very strong plans in a range of areas. I distinctly remember the former Chief Minister having lots to say about how much policy we had in opposition, so it was an interesting time. I am proud to be part of a government that, in its first six months, has developed a strategic and cohesive path towards sustainable economic development and jobs for Territorians. It has a long-term plan for how we can address some of the ongoing issues that impact the most on Territory families.

I pick up on some of the things the Member for Drysdale raised about the home ownership scheme. It is brilliant and something people in my electorate were very keen to see—better incentives for home ownership on established homes, given there are not many new homes going up outside of Lyons. It was great to see that incentive returned, and fantastic to see initiatives to keep people here, employed and contributing to the Territory.

I will talk about some of the strategically important industries that fall under my portfolio, starting with tourism and culture. Territorians enjoy a unique way of life with breathtaking landscapes, incredible recreational fishing opportunities and easy access to unique iconic attractions. We are also proud to be home to the world's oldest living culture. It is this combination that makes the Territory a major tourism destination. The Gunner Labor government understands that our tourism and culture offer valuable assets that deliver significant social and economic benefits to Territorians, and generate direct and indirect employment for thousands of Territorians every year. Investment in our tourism industry is investment in one of the bedrock industries of our economy.

The Territory has always punched above its weight in terms of attracting national and international visitors, but it is crucial that we continue to nurture new markets and grow and evolve our tourism offerings to keep

our industry viable and strong. That is something I hear when I travel the Territory and meet tourism operators. That is why the Gunner government is investing in attracting more visitors from China and India, and providing new and unique cultural experiences that will draw in visitors from throughout the world. This includes an iconic and nationally significant Indigenous art gallery and an iconic national Indigenous cultural centre in Alice Springs.

We backed our commitment to boosting visitors from China and India with a \$5m commitment over two years, including the delivery of the grants program to assist business and the industry to be Asia ready and focused. A key focus of our investment is luring direct airline access into Darwin from a major aviation hub in China. It is a simple equation. Direct flights mean more feet on Territory soil. More visitors to the Territory mean more jobs and economic growth in this vital sector and related sectors. It is complex and I acknowledge the work of the former government in this area. It is work that we continue to build on behind the scenes with discussions with various airlines and aviation bodies in China. It is complex and important work.

There will be a number of representatives in Darwin for the Australian Tourism Awards later this month, which is a fantastic opportunity to continue to strengthen our partnerships with the Northern Territory and those stakeholders. Tourism NT has already undertaken research to better focus its marketing aimed at attracting more visitors directly from China, as well as those already visiting Australia. This research will inform Tourism NT's upcoming cooperative marketing campaign with airlines and trade partners in the first quarter of this year. The findings of the research have also shaped Tourism NT's marketing approach. Specifically, greater emphasis will be placed on using popular celebrities, targeting repeat Chinese visitors to Australia, and special interest groups such as photographers and self-drive tourists.

Some examples of those new marketing approaches are expanding the distribution of celebrity Lily Ji's *Catch the Sunset* documentary to include social media and digital platforms; working with China's leading online travel agent to feature Northern Territory tourism offerings daily on its website, which include a booking facility; and a new promotion using digital media and China's version of TripAdvisor to highlight how an air pass with Qantas and Virgin Airlines can be used to add the Northern Territory as a destination at a reasonable price.

These initiatives are all about getting more visitors here, which has such a great flow-on effect not only for tourism operators, but for a range of other businesses that also benefit from the tourism dollar. We have also launched the Territory's first marketing campaign in India, working with Singapore Airlines and SilkAir to promote Darwin and surrounds by print and digital media, which I am really excited about. We will continue to work with local tourist operators to get ready for more Chinese and Indian visitors. I look forward to announcing more details of our grants program. It will assist the tourism industry to prepare for and tap into these market opportunities in the near future.

The cruise ship industry has grown in popularity globally, and is crucial to the Northern Territory economy with a record 50 cruise ship visits to four ports, generating more than \$30m in expenditure last year. The current cruise ship season kicked off in October last year with the *Celebrity Solstice*, which docked at Fort Hill Wharf, bringing a welcome boost to the economy during the off-peak season.

This year we are expecting 46 cruise ships to visit, which is one more than last year. Almost half of all cruise ship visits this season will arrive on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays, and I am strongly encouraging retailers, tour operators, cafes and restaurants to open their doors to take advantage of the economic boosts these visits can bring. I am sure my colleagues are doing the same.

Throughout February we will welcome more than 13 000 tourists arriving on eight cruise ships. This is an exciting time for business because the Wet Season is traditionally a quiet time for tourism. I do not know why; it is absolutely beautiful. This is a great opportunity to boost trade and showcase what Darwin has to offer. I commend the joint efforts of the Darwin City and Waterfront Retailers Association, Tourism Top End, Darwin Port Corporation and the City of Darwin for gearing up for the cruise season to make this a success for the Top End.

It is really important that we think about how we talk about the place we are promoting because it is beautiful. There are many opportunities and people are really making the most of them. On Tuesday 28 February the \$1bn state-of-the-art *Ovation of the Seas* will dock in Darwin, the last Australian stop on its way back to Asia. I encourage locals to get into the spirit and check that out, and all CBD retailers to open their doors and welcome the cruise ship visitors. I am sure the Member for Port Darwin will do that.

Investment in our vital, vibrant tourism industry is investment in jobs and growth. That is why we are investing in the new and emerging visitor markets around the world, as well as continuing to put effort into our valuable existing markets. We have some incredible natural attractions in the Territory. From the big icons of Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta, to our awesome awe-inspiring rock art and growing network of walking and biking paths—which I know many people here are passionate about—we have a lot to offer.

Given the importance of our tourism industry to our economy, we are not resting on our laurels. We need to keep our tourism offerings fresh and exciting, but grounded in what makes the Territory so special. That is why we are also investing in the creative and cultural economy. Our commitment in this space is significant. We are investing \$100m in an arts trail to showcase, celebrate and promote the significant cultural offerings and the world-class artwork being produced in the Territory. These are also real jobs for Territorians celebrating our stories, art and the vibrant arts community throughout the Territory. It is an exciting opportunity and project that will open up jobs and economic opportunities throughout regional and remote communities. I will talk more about that later.

The 10-year museums master plan for Darwin will identify and prioritise our investment in the infrastructure of arts and cultural facilities for our capital. We have unique and rich cultural collections, including the Territory's world-renowned Indigenous art, which are housed in ageing buildings and facilities that lack suitable storage and exhibition space to fully promote and celebrate the Territory's rich culture.

We are working with cultural organisations in the community to develop a plan that maps out the future investment in museums, galleries and keeping places in Darwin. Contrary to the views of the opposition, that consultation is incredibly important; it ensures we are hearing the views of the community and our sectors. How we tell our stories is so incredibly important, and makes us more informed and our decisions much better for it.

This will also contribute to the growth and professionalism of the creative industries sector by providing jobs for local NT artists and art workers in the museum. The Chief Minister is very excited about this project; he mapped out some of his thoughts about it as part of his recent year ahead speech, and part of his vision for revitalising Darwin. It includes redeveloping State Square so it becomes an elegant space in one of the great capitals of the world with open and green space with paths, water features, statues of our heroes and stories of our past. I could not agree more. It also includes activating our city's laneways so they connect our beautiful city, from the new luxury hotel proposed for the harbour through to a redeveloped Myilly Point, a potential site for a new museum.

This is a brilliant demonstration of what could potentially be achieved for Darwin, and making the most out of the investment that is coming into Darwin. The Chief Minister also pointed out that we will listen to all voices on how we move forward to consolidate Darwin as the economic and cultural capital of the developing the north agenda.

This gives a lot of people confidence. Contrary to what we have heard from the other side, I have been really heartened by the amount of people who have stopped me to say they appreciate how this government is going about its decision-making, how we are listening to people and not going out there with policy on the run and thought bubbles. They can see that we are considering people first, and that we actually value Territorians at the heart of all our decisions. I get very positive feedback about that. It is a formula that works.

We will have detailed public discussion papers that will be published between June and October, canvassing issues such as liveability, heat sinks, proposals for the CBD, the State Square project and progress on the museum master plan. By November this year the Gunner Labor government will launch an agreed vision for this great city's CBD. You cannot provide more confidence than that.

It is an incredibly exciting vision that will mean more activity across the CBD, more visitors, more money in the hands of local businesses and more jobs in creative and tourism industries alike. Let us do this properly. Likewise, our \$100m investment into a major arts trail throughout the Territory will be a significant boost to those sectors in the Territory's regional centres, and will give expression to our unique way of life. The Territory's rich history of art and culture is already a major drawcard for national and international tourists, and a key economic driver.

The arts trail will showcase and celebrate our community of artists, who are producing culturally and internationally significant works. It will entice more visitors to the Territory and encourage them to spend more time here exploring and learning the stories, songlines and dances of the oldest living culture on earth. They will share a cultural exchange only found in the Territory.

To create this world-class arts trail, the Gunner Labor government has fast-tracked a \$10m commitment to enhance art galleries in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land. Thank you, Member for Katherine, for being part of those conversations to make sure that is moving along. There is \$6m over the next three years to enhance community galleries and link them to the arts trail, and \$2m for the tourism entrance statements in Tennant Creek, which I know the Member for Barkly is excited about.

I also thank the Member for Stuart for spending a day with me in his electorate at the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct not long ago, listening to locals about their aspirations for the future and their business ideas based on the stories of their families and their community.

Tourism is a key economic driver in the Red Centre, or the green centre as it has been over the last couple of months. This is a stunning time of year; you are very lucky, Central Australians. It is gorgeous there. People are coming from all over the world to experience its spectacular beauty, wide open spaces and diverse culture. It is a vital destination in our arts trails initiative.

The Gunner Labor government believes major investment in Alice Springs' artistic and cultural offerings is vital to support the local tourism industry and local economy. We are investing in ground-breaking cultural institutions which will see development of a \$50m nationally iconic Indigenous art gallery, and a further \$20m for the National Indigenous Cultural Centre, both in Alice Springs.

The building of these iconic facilities will deliver jobs and economic growth to communities throughout the Territory. With direct input from Indigenous cultural groups and creative industries, work has commenced on these projects. This will bring significant employment opportunities, particularly for Indigenous Territorians, in the construction phase and the ongoing operation and management.

The government will lead consultations on the national art gallery. A working group will be established to oversee the project development of the art gallery, and I will announce the makeup of that group in the near future. Work will begin in March on this exciting initiative. Preliminary consultation on the Indigenous cultural centre will be led by the (inaudible), who represent a dedicated and influential group with strong leadership in the Alice Springs region.

Our government is providing \$108 000 and departmental support for facilitating that process. My department will consult and work with the organisation to ensure a collaborative approach for consultation and positive outcomes for stakeholders. I am sorry because there is that word again, 'consultation.' It is important to major projects.

Mr McConnell: We like to tell people what we are doing.

Ms MOSS: Thank you, Member for Stuart; that is right. It was an election commitment made by the Chief Minister and it is one that we are already delivering on. This will be a major drawcard for tourists year round, and will be supported by other major cultural events, including the Beanie Festival, the Alice Desert Festival, the Alice Springs Masters Games, the Henley on Todd Regatta and the Paritjima Festival. The Territory continues to punch above its weight, but it is crucial that we continue to nurture new markets and evolve our tourism offerings.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms MOSS: We have ambitious plans and we are implementing them. The Gunner government knows what sport means to Territorians, and we will do what the CLP government failed to do, and we will deliver a new home for rugby league in Warren Park. The rugby league community was left perplexed by the failings of the last government that, despite its promises, failed to build the much-needed home for their sport. We are consulting closely with the rugby league community and we will deliver a new rugby league stadium at Warren Park two years early. We fast-tracked this project to boost the economy, and the new stadium will be built by Territorians for Territorians, creating jobs for locals.

We will build a stadium with female friendly facilities because we want more women and girls to participate and be celebrated in sport. We have convened a project design group that gives all the key stakeholders input into the design of this wonderful new stadium in the Member for Sanderson's electorate. This group has met three times and its valued input and feedback has allowed the project to progress on schedule.

With over 3000 participants and growing, there is no doubt that Territorians, and a few members of this Chamber, love their netball. I was delighted to recently announce that we are honouring yet another election commitment by fast-tracking the construction of a world-class netball facility at Marrara. We are delighted to be building a facility that will support the growth of this great game here and provide a much-needed infrastructure boost for the local economy. By fast-tracking this \$10m investment and moving towards the construction phase at pace, we are boosting the chances of Territorians playing for the Diamonds, and we are boosting the economy.

Mrs Worden: No chance.

Ms MOSS: Come on, Member for Sanderson; you have it in you. We have listened to the business community and we know that projects such as this are urgently needed to boost the economy. We are delighted that fast-tracking this wonderful stadium will benefit so many Territorians. Over 50 jobs for locals will be created during the construction phase, proving once again that we are committed to creating jobs and boosting the economy.

We will also be using these two key sports initiatives as flagship projects for the government's recently announced Buy Local initiative. We will be working with the successful tenderers for both projects to ensure all elements of the project are sourced locally. Interstate contractors will only be permitted to provide specialised materials or expertise if these are genuinely not available in the Territory.

Sporting infrastructure sometimes requires specialist expertise or materials to be sourced interstate, but we will ensure that all our exciting sporting infrastructure programs are flagship Buy Local projects. We are also boosting the economy, creating local jobs and helping local sports clubs improve their facilities with our \$22m Immediate Works Stimulus Package to support local jobs as part of the Labor government's infrastructure plan. This has been warmly received, and is a departure from the government of old—in our focus on grassroots community groups and giving them a helping hand.

The first program of this stimulus is a package of \$10m. Any not-for-profit sports club can apply for grants up to the value of \$100 000 for repairs and maintenance to their facilities and existing assets. Beyond the \$100 000 grant, we will match dollar-for-dollar up to another \$100 000 to help fund even bigger improvements for any local sports club that applies for and receives a grant for assistance. It is great for clubs, tradies, business and the sporting community. We are investing \$3m into upgrading, repairing and maintaining female friendly facilities at the Marrara Sporting Complex. All the sports at the complex need to continue to grow and develop their female participation; this investment will help them do this and present an opportunity for more jobs in the process.

Speaking of keeping young people meaningfully engaged, we need to acknowledge that the community oval is the focal point of many remote communities; it is a place where local games take place with intense rivalries, providing an atmosphere like no other for competing teams. Improved facilities converts to increased participation, and we want to increase participation so that youths have sport, a meaningful activity, to get involved in.

We are committed to upgrading remote ovals throughout the NT to ensure they have the amenities required to maintain functional sporting activities. We listen to Territorians in remote communities. A well-maintained oval with a good surface and suitable amenities enhances a community, promotes social cohesion and provides a great facility for kids, youths and adults to be proud of.

We have also fast-tracked the investment of \$5m to upgrade the Purkiss Reserve sporting facilities in Tennant Creek, which will support youth re-engagement programs and activities to create jobs for locals during the construction phase. Purkiss Reserve is an incredibly important part of the sporting DNA of Tennant Creek. We are delighted to be investing in its long-term future to ensure that it is a genuine community facility that will generate many positive outcomes for multiple youth re-engagement groups.

Employment opportunities need to be created in regional and remote NT to help reduce youth crime and boost the local economy to create long-term change. Our structured and targeted multimillion dollar investment in remote oval upgrades and regional lights, and our fast-tracked investment of \$5m in Purkiss Reserve, will create jobs for Territorians in each community where works take place. We will take advice from local service providers on the best ways to ensure the investment provides not only genuine jobs for Territorians, but also provides traineeships and apprenticeships for locals.

I want to make sure that I mention ICT as well. There is so much ground to cover today. There is just so much that we have put in this statement, so I really appreciate the opportunity to update the House on many of the things we are doing at the moment.

Obviously the environment is also an important topic, and we have a key election commitment to better protect and conserve our unique and beautiful environment. When it comes to investing in environmental initiatives in remote communities, it also means an investment in jobs and economic development.

Water in the Territory is a precious and finite resource. Under the former government there was a lack of process and transparency when it came to water allocation policy. The Gunner government is returning to certainty, transparency and fairness in water use policy, which is good for everyone. One of the ways that we are doing this is through the implementation of strategic Indigenous reserves which will provide Indigenous land owners with exclusive access to a reserve volume of water for economic development. This could include using water for their own commercial development project or temporarily trading with other partners. Both of these options will open up jobs and economic opportunities for communities on country. That is going to consultation with stakeholders very soon.

We have commitments regarding Indigenous rangers, which are incredibly important jobs on country, protecting country. That is why the government is providing new funding from 2017-18 to support Indigenous ranger groups. This includes the \$4.1m one-off capital grants of up to \$100 000 to help groups purchase essential items, and our land and sea conservation fund.

The Territory is a leader in innovative carbon emission abatement projects based on fire management. The Gunner government is leveraging and supporting knowledge, expertise and enterprise through the establishment of an Indigenous carbon unit and, in doing so, further expanding the employment and commercial opportunities available through the carbon farming industry. This unit will provide support and advice to ranger groups and Indigenous landholders seeking to create sustainable enterprises through carbon emission abatement and sequestration, as well as helping them to open up new enterprise opportunities. We have started these conversations around establishing the Indigenous carbon unit and intend to move quickly to have it set up by mid-year.

A global digital revolution is shaping our lives and the world in which we live. As the Chief Minister has quite rightly pointed out, ICT is underpinning so much of what we do, not only in the Territory and this country, but globally. I hope to have many more opportunities to speak about that. We have some significant commitments that the ministerial advisory council is already providing input for, which I am really pleased about. We are already moving along on open data policy and ensuring Territorians are not left behind in the digital economy. We want to ensure Territorians are prominent contributors and beneficiaries of the digital economy, and do not get left behind by a digital divide. We want to ensure our kids are properly equipped to make the best of what is coming in the future. It is a smart decision and the right decision for our future. I look forward to updating the House further on ICT.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, I stand to speak about the significant work undertaken by this government in a few short months. People are saying six months, but you lose a fair portion in December and January to the Wet Season and people taking off. It has been a challenging few months, but I am glad to say the government has made a lot of headway and put some long-term plans in place to grow jobs across the Territory.

As the assistant minister for Buy Local I have quickly caught up to speed with some of the pain that has been felt through different industries over the last few years. There are millions of dollars of work we have missed out on in the Territory, such as projects and job spin-offs from INPEX that we have not been able to secure. It has resulted in a lot of work leaking to our southern counterparts and many families leaving the Territory.

There was a crew of us, before the election in August, that was invited with the Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturer's Council to speak with local steel manufacturers. They are just one aspect of the industry, but they are at the pinnacle of the industry. If their work is not contributing to the Territory economy there are many businesses around and underneath them that struggle. It was a stark reminder that day when they pointed out half a dozen businesses and the number of employees who used to work there, the number of apprentices who had to be let go and the number of families who had left the Territory for good. Anybody on that trip with us would have been as shocked as we were. It was a stark reminder of the work we would have in front of us, should we be lucky enough to get into government. That is why we started on that program of works and announcements as soon as we got into government.

Growing real jobs is of vital importance to this government. It was at the forefront of discussions throughout the campaign and has been at the forefront of policy direction through our time in government. There have been some calculated decisions made right from the start with this government, specifically targeted at short-term and long-term solutions. We have talked about some of the short-term solutions we have re-enacted over the last week or so, but there have also been some long-term resolutions. Some business people got in touch with me last year and were almost in tears; they are now, thankfully, producing work and punching that out of the door because of some of the programs we instigated in the first few months in government.

These solutions have not been dreamed up overnight; they have not been thought bubbles or reactionary measures. They have been strategically put together in conjunction with, and through consultation with, all key stakeholders. They are well thought out, considered injections into the economy to ensure maximum gain throughout the Territory. In comparison, the previous government sold our public assets, making significant money from the sale of TIO, the Darwin Bus Service and leasing of the port for 99 years. Despite all of that, they managed to leave a large deficit behind as they cleared out.

Our economic summit discussions have already started, and helped to shape and evolve our thinking. We have provided certainty and stability, something the Territory was screaming out for. We immediately introduced an extension to the 30% Buy Local scheme, and I will be working closely with Cabinet on this to ensure we get the right mix of local work flowing through all our industry sectors.

That 30% must apply to the whole tender and the whole project, something that was not happening in the past. The improvements we have talked about in recent weeks about adding value to the Territory, not just fighting to the lowest dollar, will be a massive help to businesses across the Territory and Territorians as a whole. The Buy Local condition on all capital grants issued by the Territory government will also be a significant help.

The Chief Minister introduced even more extensive procurement reforms to ensure every opportunity is maximised for small and medium-sized Territory businesses. The value to the NT will be significantly improved because we are not just concentrating on a dollar figure. It is far too easy for people to price themselves out of the market when only the dollar figure is taken into account, instead of the long-term benefits or long-term affects to the Territory.

Just weeks into government we increased the stamp duty relief for first home buyers of an established home. That had a remarkable effect, and we have heard a number of people speak about that today. It is fantastic to see people able to purchase their own homes, stay in the Territory and plug some of those gaps where people have been leaking out to southern states and interstate counterparts. Other states have been picking up good Territory families that have been forced to leave. We all want that to stop, and it will under some of the long-term schemes we have.

The renovations and purchases under the scheme need to be sourced through local Territory businesses, and nearly \$1m has already been spent with tradies because of these overarching initiatives. We have listened to local businesses and tradies and brought back a bigger and better Home Improvement Scheme. Territorians who have not previously accessed these vouchers can now access one-off up to \$4000. Up to 50% of the voucher can be used towards the cost of goods and materials which reflect the nature of home renovations.

There have been estimations of around a \$15m stimulus to the NT economy. The Chamber of Commerce has been much more generous in its estimations; it believes it will be tens of millions of dollars that will be stimulated through the Territory economy. Just weeks into government we increased the stamp duty for first home buyers. Two-hundred-and-sixty-two Territorians have purchased homes for their own little slice of the Territory since that initiative.

We have also continued the \$26 000 first home owner grant for new homes, along with providing a few thousand dollars to assist in purchasing household goods. There is no greater incentive for staying in the Territory than owning your own home. In November last year, on top of the \$120m in new and brought-forward projects set to commence in this financial year, we put an additional \$22m into the economy.

This is another area where we have listened to the construction industry and we have acted. We are honouring our election commitments to Territorians. We also announced and brought forward projects worth over \$100m to support local jobs in the next 12 or 18 months. It has been reflected by industry and people commenting that they are now getting work at a time that is traditionally slow for Territory

businesses, the Wet Season. It has been a very traditional Wet Season, and a lot of businesses normally struggle through this time; so it is very heartening to know that, along with some of the short-term measures, the overarching measures are also starting to pay dividends.

Some of the projects include the money for the Palmerston police station, money to upgrade the Katherine police station and the multistorey car park at the hospital, which has been spoken about at length today. All these projects will have a remarkable effect through industries and trades, not just in Darwin but throughout the Territory.

The money brought forward for the PET scanner project will also commence in the next financial year. The rugby league works at Warren Park, new netball courts for Darwin to commence this year and \$10m spread through East Arnhem—some major investments by this government to make sure that we do get on the front foot.

In addition, this government will also deliver the long-planned Barneson Boulevard entrance into Darwin CBD, and complete the third and final stage of Tiger Brennan Drive. Being the Member for Port Darwin, that is something I am very much looking forward to—some stimulus around the city. I am looking forward to people's input over the next few months. The City of Darwin will consult extensively. There will be people in the mall that you can approach to find out what is going on with the project, such as timelines, and to have some input into the consultation regarding that.

The \$10m Immediate Works Stimulus Package will also benefit community and not-for-profit groups. It is designed to not only create work where it is needed, but also to create and improve assets for all Territorians. The response has been overwhelming regarding these community grants. Work starts this month, so local businesses are benefiting and we are protecting and creating local jobs.

The stimulus package also includes \$5m in urban Territory Housing upgrades. We heard a minister today explaining the broad-ranging benefits that has, not just for the trade-related groups, but also for the long lists of people on housing commission waiting lists—to make sure there are better homes for those people to move into sooner rather than later. It has a broad-ranging effect to make sure these stimulus packages are enacted as soon as possible.

The \$5m for repairs and upgrades will have a positive impact on living standards for public housing tenants, creating more jobs for Territorians and providing an immediate injection into the economy. Online registrations opened on 1 February with 72 registrations in the first few days; 28 fabricators and 16 businesses have expressed interest, and the department has formulated procurement plans and selected the tender list.

We have continued the \$1.7bn infrastructure program of the previous government to ensure spending and support for local government continues at these extremely high levels. Central to this is investing in our roads and logistics for capability for the long-term. There will be some conversations about the damage the Wet Season has done and where those funds need to be diverted to if there is repair work, which I am sure will be done as soon as possible. We need a strong civil construction sector because it will deliver the critical infrastructure that will see increased economic development opportunities, and Barneson Boulevard is at the forefront of this. The forecast expenditure for the 2016-17 financial year is \$293m, and to date \$183m has been spent.

This government is also delivering an unprecedented over \$1bn investment into remote housing. It is one of the most significant investments that has ever been made into remote housing in the Territory's history. Over the next 10 years the government will invest \$1bn: \$500m for remote housing under the HomeBuild scheme; \$200m for Room to Breathe; and \$200m to expand government employee housing, which includes local government employees. There are some fantastic initiatives in remote areas, and this is another sign of the government spreading finances and projects throughout the Northern Territory to ensure that everyone benefits.

We have delivered and considered responsible measures to stimulate our economy, grow jobs and improve the lives of Territorians. We will grow our police force by committing to deliver the numbers that were never delivered before. We are reversing cuts to education to ensure there are more teachers and support staff in classrooms across the Territory. We will be investing in youth justice, an area we have heard about today; we will continue to hear more about youth justice and the issues of youth crime, and the improvements this government is putting into place.

We are putting Territory businesses first. The development of this long-term economic framework, supported by a 10-year infrastructure plan and a logistics master plan, creates a blueprint for the future designed by, and designed for, Territorians. Buy Local rules are stronger than ever before, and I have vested interest in ensuring they are followed through. There is more help for Territorians to buy their first home or to renovate their existing one. There are tens of millions of dollars in additional construction projects being rolled out. There is much more on the way.

We are delivering the economic stimulus that is needed to support jobs and businesses throughout the Territory. A record road-building program is creating jobs and quality linkages needed for our economic future. The Territory's biggest ever remote housing program is under way and will accelerate through the term of this government and beyond. This is a government that listens, consults and takes time to take action and make sure we have it right. It makes the tough decisions, and is working to stop the flood of Territorians who started heading south under the previous government. This government is considered and measured. It has a vision of a strong economy and building a social framework in a positive future for businesses and the broader community right across the Territory.

Mr COSTA (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I rise to support the Treasurer's statement on investing in jobs for the Northern Territory. As my parliamentary colleagues before me have said in the House today, this government is committed to creating jobs, which it started doing from day one. This challenge is crucial to the Territory's economy, and is urgently needed to build a more sustainable economy for the Territory in regard to closing the gap for Indigenous Australians. Creating jobs in Darwin, regional towns and remote communities—each have their own challenges in regard to empowering individuals to participate in the Territory economy.

My electorate covers the Tiwi Islands, Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Minjilang, Waruwi and many outstations and homelands. Each electorate in the Territory is different and a one-size-fits-all approach does not always work. Jobs in the bush are important for the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. Jobs provide security and hubs to reduce issues regarding drugs, alcohol, depression and domestic violence. They provide Indigenous people with opportunities, and assists them with re-engaging with family to build a strong community and a sense of pride.

The Michael Gunner Labor government, in six months, has instigated and strengthened programs, announced changes and delivered investment to encourage and stimulate the economy. I congratulate the Chief Minister on strengthening the Buy Local procurement process. For my electorate it is all about buying local and keeping it local. Creating jobs in the bush is about empowering the bush—maximising local involvement, a plan to create and sustain jobs managed by local people.

As the Chief Minister said in his year ahead address last week, this government wants to see traditional owners at the beginning of discussions and decision-making, and wants to give power back to the Aboriginal people.

We need to be part of managing the creation of and sustaining jobs and opportunities in our back yard. We need to continue to work in partnership with sustainable businesses in our community to provide education and training, and develop employment pathways. We need to invest time and resources into creating these opportunities for our young ones, opportunities to learn and develop skills to get jobs today, tomorrow and in the future.

During my time as the CEO and Director of Community Development and Engagement with the Tiwi Islands local government, we had close to 80% Indigenous employment across both islands. We had real jobs for Tiwi people by supporting locals, and encouraging them to work by awarding incentives to those who wanted full-time jobs.

We introduced policies on succession planning. We would identify a Tiwi person and train and mentor that person to eventually take up a more senior management position, whether it was in administration, civil construction, housing or even within night patrols. We had road crews and housing crews. Our road crews constantly maintained all roads across the Tiwi Islands. Our housing crews worked tirelessly doing repairs and maintenance on our houses. We had our mob gain certificates in construction and civil operations by utilising our local RTO Tiwi Islands Employment Board.

Last year the Minister for Housing and Community Development announced the government's commitment to the investment of an additional \$5m to increase repairs and maintenance for remote housing, and an additional \$10m for the Room to Breathe program for this financial year. Not only will this provide families with the opportunity to live together, it will also create jobs.

The communities of Maningrida, Milikapiti, Wurrumiyanga and Warrawi, within my electorate, have been identified for early works under the Room to Breathe program. These communities have been selected because they have existing Indigenous businesses with the capacity to undertake the work within the time frame. This is fantastic news for my electorate. It will create jobs, boost the economy and provide social wellbeing in these communities for the next generation.

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Remote Housing, there are 10 new builds in Gunbalanya, 15 in Maningrida and five under way in Wurrumiyanga. Over the past six weeks I have travelled my electorate and have seen firsthand that this government is delivering in the bush in regard to jobs. I look ahead and imagine the outcomes we will have with the Chief Minister's job plan and the government's investment in jobs. In closing, creating jobs, investing in jobs and investing in our children will result in a more economical and sustainable Territory.

Debate adjourned.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE **Crime in the Northern Territory**

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a proposal for discussion of the following matter of public importance:

Dear Madam Speaker,

The Territory has experienced a crime wave over recent months with increases in break-ins, and in many locations there are reports for strong community concern. The government's youth crime overhaul fails to adequately deal with these problems and must go further to deal with all aspects of offending.

The letter is signed by the Member for Daly.

Is the discussion supported? It is supported.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I would like to call attention to the distressing state of law and order in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt that crime rates have reached crisis level and the community has had enough. We have seen an increase in crime across the Territory to a degree where people no longer feel safe in their own homes.

Police statistics show that in the three months following the Gunner Labor government coming to power, commercial break-ins were already up 16% compared to the same three-month period the year before. In Darwin, the increase was 70% and in Alice Springs it was 47%. Home break-ins Territory-wide saw an increase of 32%. When we look at these numbers for our cities, they are just devastating. In Darwin home break-ins are up 81% during the same period. In Alice Springs they are up 31%. In Palmerston, where I live as well as the majority of my constituents, home break-ins for that period increased by a staggering 127%; that is more than double.

I do not need these statistics to tell me that crime is a problem. My constituents are some of the worst affected by these numbers, and they are very distraught. They are fearful in their own homes. They are angered by the slow response and lack of urgency they have seen from this government. Some of them are prepared to take matters into their own hands. They want their concerns heard and acted on quickly, and they are certainly letting me know about it.

The latest crime spree has had an alarming impact on Territorians, businesses, charities and schools. Lately it seems every day we are waking up, opening up the newspaper or turning on the news and seeing reports of yet another break-in, another stolen vehicle, another business being vandalised and robbed. In the last month alone we have seen a crime spree unrivalled by anything seen in the Territory before. In a single weekend, Darwin criminals went on a rampage breaking into 37 homes, trashing 14 businesses and stealing 11 cars. I personally paid a visit to the Darwin Clay Target Club, and the level of damage that had been done there was absolutely devastating.

As if to prove that no one is immune, criminals even broke into a church. These are extreme crime numbers from a single weekend. In Alice Springs a motorcycle business was broken into four times over the course of six days. Two motorbikes were stolen, as was the owner's son's scooter. The business power

box and alarm system were torn to bits. The owner told the *NT News* about the exhaustion and stress he was under from the constant threat of crime. He said, 'I was tired, I was run down, I was hurt, just broken'.

Three Jape Homemaker Village shops have also been victims, one of which had only been operating for two months before the front window was shamelessly smashed in and the interior ransacked in the search for goods. That same weekend a 12-year-old and 13-year-old tried to break into a Red Cross charity shop in Gray, three cars were stolen in Palmerston and somebody smashed the glass door of a childcare centre in Nightcliff. We have seen seven teenagers break into Wulagi Primary School, damaging computers and letting off fire extinguishers.

We have seen a violent and terrifying fight in the Casuarina food court, one that was joined in by nearly 50 school children. It was a disgusting display of violence in front of families, with young children, who were just trying to do their shopping.

These crimes are all just in the past month and they are taking their toll on people, business, charity and our schools. One Bakewell resident had his car stolen and crashed. He is now unable to drive his daughter to school and is unable to drive to work. His wallet was also stolen and hundreds of dollars spent. The last I heard, the perpetrator was still at large. Crime is rampant, and this gentleman has paid with his and his daughter's sense of safety, and with their hard-earned money and belongings.

Businesses are paying with their pockets as well, and it is a major threat to the future of business in the Northern Territory. An Alice Spring's company's car yard has been repeatedly hit by rock-throwers to the point where they are having difficulty getting properly insured. The owner says he has never seen crime this bad, and they may have to leave town with a business that has been operating since the 1950s. An Indian restaurant in Alawa is dishing out dollars because someone broke in, pursuing a few bottles of coke. Two hit and runs this month have resulted in the tragic death of a Ti Tree man and the hospitalisation of a Katherine woman.

The community is sick of this. No one seems to be untouched. There is violence in our schools; the *NT News* reported that assault was the most common reason leading to suspension from school, and that assaults leading to suspension have risen dramatically, especially in Darwin and Palmerston. Businesses are paying the price of the constant break-ins. The Chamber of Commerce survey of small to medium businesses showed that they are frustrated with the state of law and order in the Territory, and they want more to be done. Until then, they are taking it upon themselves, with some business owners sleeping on their premises. Although I commend the business owners for their dedication, this puts them in a stressful and dangerous situation. Ultimately, they should not have to take these measures.

Following a week in crime sprees, one business owner was calling for more surveillance and more people on the beat. It is time this government started listening to Territorians' ideas. The frustration felt by the community was most sharply evidenced by the community meeting held in Driver last week, which had 100 strong attendants. The Leader of the Opposition was able to attend, and was saddened by the hardships some of the attendees have been subjected to. To the Palmerston community's credit, he was also greatly moved by the passion, urgency for action and resilience they have shown in the face of a frightening situation. I hope that, soon, I will see this kind of attitude reflected in the government, especially the sense of urgency.

We need to be resilient. The perpetrators of these crimes have shown themselves to be brazen, unapologetic and immune to the devastation this is causing the community. They know they can get away with it. This is demonstrated by the teen giving the finger to the CCTV camera in the business he had just smashed at Jape Homemaker Village, by the man who set off fireworks under the police CCTV camera in Nightcliff, and by the attitude of our very own *Territory Cops* celebrity as she celebrated her release from custody last Friday. It is evidenced by the continuous breaches of bail and the continuous reoffending of the same people time and time again. These repeat offenders and criminals need to be watched. They need to be held accountable. The community has had enough of the disrespect, and they want to see the government act quickly with measures that will work.

The Gunner Labor government's response to the crime wave that has swept the Territory has, to date, been inconsistent at best. On a number of occasions the Chief Minister has quoted with pride the number of youth being held in detention at Don Dale—quoting a figure of 42 young people compared to 25 in August—in an effort to appear tough on crime. This is despite pre-election calls by the Chief Minister for Don Dale to be closed as soon as possible, and an acknowledgement that locking more kids away was not the answer.

The Chief Minister also stated last week that we should not simply be singing *Kumbaya* with youth offenders, but has failed to put in place practical measures to prevent youth offending in the short-term, such as increased use of electronic monitoring for recidivist youth offenders and those who continually breach bail.

There is no doubt the youth crime overhaul announced by the Gunner government last week is a welcome step in the right direction. Youth diversion officers, if properly trained and given the resources to do their jobs effectively, should have the capacity to help youth offenders access treatment and programs that will help them make positive changes in their lives. It is also encouraging to see additional funding set aside for wilderness programs and boot camps run by NGOs. These programs, if premised on proven research-based methods of decreasing criminal behaviour, may prove valuable in the long run to address crime in the Territory.

Nonetheless, the youth crime overhaul seems to fall short in some important respects. First, it does very little to address the current, imminent, ongoing crime crisis we are experiencing now. Secondly, it utilises some outmoded forms of restorative justice, such as expanded victim conferencing, which was shown in a 2012 NSW government study to be ineffective in reducing recidivism. Finally, it does little to address the underlying causes of youth crime in the NT, such as ice addiction, lack of job training and addressing the needs of at-risk youths before they enter the criminal justice system.

The overhaul lacks the urgency the community is demanding regarding youth crime in the Territory. The Chief Minister's press release made clear that the implementation of the youth diversion workers plan would take three months to become operational, and another six months to see if the program is working at all. That is too long to wait when, during this time, escalating patterns of crime will continue unabated.

The ram raids, the ice-fuelled crime sprees, the break-ins and gang activity will go on, as it has been, without more targeted interventions. There are measures available that could have been taken to address the immediate situation. Increased police presence on the street, targeted at hotspot crime areas, is just one example. Research has consistently shown that focusing police efforts on hotspots, areas where crime rates are high or increasing, can decrease crime by 33% or more.

As a national research council review revealed:

Studies that focused police resources on crime hotspots provided the strongest collective evidence of police effectiveness that is now available.

While adding 18 new officers to a behind-the-scenes task force may sound very clever, those resources would be better deployed in the community in the short term, walking a beat or conspicuously patrolling areas where crime has dramatically increased. We know where the hotspots are. For example, when recent crimes in the Darwin area are plotted on a map the hotspots are visible to even the untrained eye, and include parts of Palmerston, the northern suburbs and the outskirts of the Darwin CBD.

The second important change that could be made in the short term, and should have already been made, is increasing the application of electronic monitoring in the Territory, as it applies to those on bail, community-based orders and parole. Electronic monitoring reduces recidivism, deters crime and makes the community safer, full stop. One UK study found that the utilisation of electronic monitoring to enforce bail curfews reduced the risk of non-compliance by over 50%, with only 5% of individuals being electronically monitored breaching their bail conditions.

Similarly, a 2006 study showed that electronic monitoring significantly reduces the risk to public safety from offenders living in the community. It reduces the likelihood of individuals committing a new offence and acts as a deterrent in relation to absconding from a curfew. These types of results should not be overlooked or dismissed by the Gunner Labor government.

Legislation amending the *Bail Act* should be introduced to require the court to at least consider electronic monitoring in conjunction with curfews for repeat offenders. In addition, a presumption against bail could be added for those who breach the conditions of their bail, tamper with an electronic monitoring device or are alleged to have committed another offence whilst on bail. It is simply unacceptable that offenders, either youth or adult, be allowed to breach their bail conditions time and time again with impunity.

In order to verify an exercise performed by a community member and presented at the Palmerston community meeting on crime held last week, I pulled the daily court list from the Darwin Local Court for 9 February 2017. On just a single day there were 19 people appearing for breach of bail or failure to

appear. That was just a normal day. The strain that this complete and utter disregard for the law is putting on our justice system and our community is simply too great to continue.

It is no surprise that Territorians who are victimised by crime are angry, perplexed even, that the person who broke into their house and threatened their family or stole their hard-earned property was on bail at the time or was let out a few hours later, without restriction, to victimise someone down the street.

The assignment of 52 youth diversion workers who will be operational within three months to support enforcement of bail conditions is a step in the right direction, but it is half a measure at best. At the very least, electronic monitoring, which is a cheap and effective tool, should be employed to supplement these case workers. After all, case workers cannot be with you 24/7, unlike electronic monitoring which incorporates GPS tracking and is constantly connected to a monitoring centre.

As for long-term solutions, the announcement of \$6m in additional funding for diversionary programs, including wilderness courses and boot camps, is also a very good start; however, to date there has been a lack of detail concerning the content of these programs, for example, details regarding the way funding decisions will be made and the monitoring that will ensure KPIs, such as reducing recidivism, are achieved.

Some aspects of youth offending and the long-term causes of that offending seem to have been completely ignored by the government, such as addiction and its impact on crime. Chief amongst these addictions is the ice addiction that is currently having a devastating impact on our families and children. According to the Department of Corrections, 90% to 100% of youth offenders self-report using ice, or exhibit signs of addiction. Banyan House has reported a 125% increase in people seeking treatment for ice addiction over the past year alone, yet we do not even test offenders for ice or other drugs when they are taken into custody.

The overhaul announced last week makes no provision for testing, assessment or treatment of ice or drug and alcohol addiction for youth in custody; it has no strategies for preventing ice use by youth in the Territory. This is a glaring omission that should be remedied by the government immediately. It would be reckless at worst and counterproductive at best, to place youth offenders in the care of NGOs running a newly-announced wilderness program or boot camp without addressing ice and the serious problems, including psychosis, that can arise from addiction and withdrawal.

In addition to dealing with addiction issues, in order to be effective and reduce the chance of reoffending in the long term, programs must include a VET training or work experience component. The research is unambiguous. VET training, coupled with mentoring and work experience, dramatically lower the risk of reoffending.

As a study commissioned in 2007 by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research stated:

When we look at the relationship between vocational training and post release employment, we found that individuals who participated in vocational training programs had odds of obtaining post release employment that were 28% higher than individuals that had not participated.

A 2013 study by the United States Department of Justice puts that figure higher, citing reduced recidivism rates at 43% with an increase in post-release employment of 28%. These peer-reviewed scholarly findings should not be ignored. Unemployment and disadvantage is a major driver when it comes to offending. This is particularly true when it comes to Indigenous Australians, who are 30% to 42% more likely to suffer from long-term unemployment, depending on where they live.

Simply lowering the unemployment rate alone has the potential to decrease property crime by as much as 20%, according to research conducted by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and the Australian National University. Providing youth offenders with VET training and work experience also creates enhanced restorative justice opportunities, which have been proven here in the Territory.

For example, many adult offenders who have been provided with VET training by the Department of Correctional Services are subsequently employed by local businesses. The work experience they undertake earns them money which is then used to pay rent to Corrections for their housing, as well as satisfy any fines, court costs or restitution payments to victims. We utilise this successful program with adults but not youth, and that simply does not make sense.

Finally, much has been made of victim offender conferencing. While such conferencing is useful and already takes place in the Territory, it is not a cure for youth offending and will not reduce offending if not accompanied by the measures I have outlined above.

As a comprehensive study undertaken by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research concluded, after adjusting for other factors no significant differences were found between youth who participated or did not participate in the proportion of reoffending, the seriousness of reoffending or the number of re-offences. In other words, there is no statistically significant effect on reoffending as the result of victim-offender conferencing in NSW, according to researchers.

The youth crime overhaul announcement by the Gunner Labor government has its good points, but despite having six months in power to come up with a comprehensive plan to combat crime in the Territory, it appears to be extremely reactionary and incomplete. I urge the government to take the points I have made on board, consult further if need be, and present a revised youth crime strategy that will actually achieve the goal we all seek; that is decreased crime on our streets, brighter futures for at-risk youth and a vast reduction in the 96% recidivism rate we currently have for youth offenders in the Northern Territory.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward this matter of public importance for discussion today. Of course every Territorian has the right to feel safe in their home, workplace and community. They are also entitled to enjoy safe and vibrant communities and cities. I acknowledge the frustration felt within our community; every member in here does. It is something I have felt in my community and as I have travelled across the Northern Territory.

We need to take a moment to acknowledge that this government is tackling crime and antisocial behaviour through a number of categories. We also need to acknowledge the cuts from the CLP government. In my own community our police station was closed. I think the member just called to increase police presence to focus on hotspots. Those additional 120 police that you did not deliver—our police force is on the front line every day doing an amazing job but it needs more resources, which is why this government has committed to training police. We have the police training academy at capacity.

It is an important issue we need to raise and speak about it, but to pull on the number of police resources and say, 'We need to increase police presence'—we need to look at the situation we have been handed. We are committed to delivering those police officers and making sure we have the resources for Territorians, but we need to look at what we were left.

I would also like to point out that the task force that was announced is not a behind-the-scenes task force; they are highly trained, experienced professionals particularly targeting this issue and what we need to solve. We need to take a moment to reflect on the four years of the CLP. Amongst the chaos and 18 Cabinet reshuffles and three-and-a-half Chief Ministers—or two-and-a-half, I cannot quite remember—we had services cut.

In 2013-14, \$1m was cut to youth diversion and rehabilitation. We had defunding of programs such as Balunu; it is these types of programs that are easy pickings in Budget Cabinet, but it has a long-term impact on the community. We had youth outreach services in Alice Springs and education cut. It is the culmination of all of these things that we are now trying to piece back together and build capacity in the non-government sector. The Minister for Territory Families will speak in a moment about the work being undertaken there. We certainly have been left with huge challenges, so I want to remind the opposition, when it wants to call us to account, exactly what we were left with and what we are doing.

We are seeing the effects of the CLP and some of its failed commitments, such as not delivering police officers and closing police stations. The member was just speaking about vocational training and highlighting statistics. We can highlight all the statistics we want, but we know there were cuts at Owen Springs. It is these types of programs that have been cut, but this government is committed to Territorians. We feel the frustration. We are working as quickly as we can to put measures in place so we can deal with the acute end right now and make sure we have generational change. The previous CLP government's failure to make our community safer and invest in our children and appropriate rehabilitation means we are now facing enormous challenges.

The government has started work on this by delivering on the commitments regarding recruiting 120 new police officers; bringing forward our election commitments for a new police station for Palmerston and Katherine; bringing forward funding for CCTV cameras; reforming our youth justice and corrections systems so we can break this cycle of reoffending; having rehabilitation which needs to be tough so people

understand the consequences of their behaviour; and bringing back the Banned Drinker Register to tackle the issue of alcohol.

The member spoke about ice and I have some comments I will raise regarding that, but we know alcohol abuse is one of the biggest issues we are facing in the Northern Territory. It is a huge issue and it costs us dearly in terms of police resources, health resources and in terms of our community. We need to address the issue of alcohol abuse so we can start to see that change. We all have stories from our communities regarding the impact of alcohol abuse.

In terms of police numbers, the situation we find ourselves in now is a result of the failures of the previous CLP government that let Territorians down by failing to meet those police recruitment numbers. They have left us a police force without resources, contemporary systems or capabilities. The Chief Minister, as the Minister for Police, has made that firm commitment of 120, and has the training program going through the academy. It is something we are committed to achieving over the next four years.

There are 18 experienced officers on the front line, focusing on youth crime right now. We also have a new squad starting in May. Throughout 2017 the police college will be working to capacity, recruiting and training constables, auxiliaries and Aboriginal community police officers. We are moving quickly to amend the mistakes of the CLP government. Since we have provided confidence in police numbers, police have become more agile and are able to plan forward. They are now able to have agility in their rostering so they can work in new ways to target crime and antisocial behaviour across the Northern Territory.

We are committed to providing Palmerston with the facilities for a new police station, which will take forward for decades to come. The \$15m stage one investment has been brought forward and a public tender date is planned for mid this year. The Katherine police station—which the Member for Katherine is very passionate about—has been brought forward, and \$5m has been allocated as part of our infrastructure stimulus which was announced late last year. It is an important commitment, not just here in Darwin and Alice Springs, but in all regions.

In addition, the government has brought forward our investment in CCTV technology to help tackle the issues of crime and antisocial behaviour. There is \$2m in additional recurrent funding for fixed and mobile units, and enhanced coverage in monitoring, available from July 2017. The issues in my community have been in regard to antisocial behaviour. I had a briefing from police about their ability with mobile CCTV, and the permanent locations to watch hotspots and be able to predict behaviour so police can respond. This is an important part of the strategy. It is something this government is committed to.

We are giving police the best tools to do their job. We are giving them funding, resource stability and certainty so they can get on with the job of serving our community and keeping it safe. This is something the CLP failed to deliver. Our funding commitments will focus on re-opening the Casuarina police beat and shop front, as well as the Nightcliff police station, which is something I am particularly passionate about. The Member for Brailling will speak in detail, outlining our historic reforms in youth justice that will provide services where the former government did nothing and left us with a revolving door of kids in detention.

We know the strong correlations between the early years of a child's life, and children who come into contact with the child protection system and then end up in contact with the youth justice system and youth detention. The cuts we saw under the CLP—it was just investing in the pointy end of child protection; it was just investing in the mandatory stuff. It was not investing in our young people. We are seeing the effects of that in our community.

Experts, families, young people, NGOs and providers are all telling us the same thing, that the former government's approach to youth justice just did not work. Ninety percent of the youth justice budget was spent on detention facilities, and youth crime was rising, so it was obvious the approach was not working. The former government ignored and refused to investigate the Children's Commissioner's 61-page censure of the former government's handling of the youth justice system. We saw controversial legislation passed, as well as funding cuts and the winding down of family responsibility agreement programs.

We saw the Vita review and other important bodies of work ignored. Community supervision was at its lowest in years. We have painted a picture of a defunded youth sector, lacking the important early intervention of family supports. It was cut by more than \$5m in the first mini-budget. The government dropped the review by its own former member, the Carney review, into the youth justice sector—and the Board of Inquiry. Key pieces of work were done and then scrapped. It feels like it is a decade later and we are still having the same conversations.

It is not only these policies, but the disastrous policies of removing hundreds of teachers. We saw teachers and program numbers scrapped, and important re-engagement centres went by the wayside. Support staff were scrapped.

Just to outline some statistics—we heard a lot from the member opposite about figures. The average age of youth arrested during 2015–16 was 14.6 years old. That is down a year from a decade earlier. In 2006–07 the average age of an arrested youth was 15.6 years old. Youth arrests were three-and-a-half times higher in 2015–16 than a decade earlier. The number of youths apprehended and charged was twice as high as a decade earlier. These are the statistics of a system that was in crisis before this government was in place. We have acknowledged the work ahead of us, and we are committed to that in conjunction with the NGO sector and the community.

Since we have come to government, I have outlined a number of measures. I will let my colleague, the Member for Brainting, outline the youth justice space. We have Strike Force Trident in Darwin and Strike Force Winx in Alice Springs, which were boosted during the school holidays. They are really focusing on policing youth crime, including property and youth offending.

We have announced 18 new dedicated youth crime police who are on the front line, unlike what the Member for Spillett would like to have you believe. The police have started the Youth Task Force Sonoma, a Territory-wide team working strategically on youth crime and effective ways to deal with young offenders. Strategies include innovative approaches to intelligence gathering and analysis, options for diversion activities, and youth conferencing that involves victims, offenders, families, communities, stakeholders and community members.

I know that the Member for Spillett was quoting figures that say that youth conferencing does not work. I have seen strong evidence that it does work. As a government we need to ensure that we use every option available to us. Youth conferencing work is very important, and the figures I have seen certainly show that investment pays off.

In Darwin alcohol remains a major cause of crime and antisocial behaviour, with an increase in property crime against commercial premises. There have been increased efforts to improve community engagement; the patrolling police have patrolled hotspots linked to antisocial behaviour. Police are also working in partnership with other agencies such as the Public Housing Safety Officers, the transit safety officers and Larrakia Night Patrol. The City of Darwin's Assertive Outreach is another program I have seen communicating in my community.

As a government we are working cooperatively with major stakeholders like Casuarina Square. The Member for Spillett raised the nasty incident that was caught on a mobile phone camera at Casuarina Square. I know, through the Minister for Education, that the schools responded swiftly in dealing with it. We are working with Casuarina Square and the Member for Casuarina engages with them regularly.

In Palmerston, Strike Force Trident members are treating property crime with a focus on unlawful entry of homes and businesses, and the theft of motor vehicles. They are particularly targeting action on repeat property crime offenders. Investigators are working day, evening and night, to ensure we have a proactive presence. They are conducting patrols of hotspots to prevent crime, and at the same time have a strong investigative response to any offences that occur.

The implementation of electronic monitoring devices by the Northern Territory Police Force is an issue the Member for Spillett raised. It is something the police force has used to increase its capacity to monitor and locate offenders. I can give the House an update regarding that technology, which has been successfully expanded in Darwin and Alice Springs, and has now been expanded for use in Jabiru, Groote Eylandt and Nhulunbuy. Additional probation and parole officers have been recruited to assist with the monitoring. As of 16 January there were 121 community-based offenders and 98 prisoners monitored through electronic monitoring, which is a significant increase from one year ago. It is an option, as is alcohol monitoring.

It is important we embrace technology, particularly when looking at the makeup of the Northern Territory and its remote locations. There needs to be resources to support it, but we will continue to utilise and expand electronic monitoring.

In Alice Springs, community and youth engagement patrols have been established to address these issues. We acknowledge there has been increased antisocial behaviour, such as rock throwing and break-ins. Organisations such as Congress, Tangentyere, the Department of the Chief Minister, Territory Families and

the Alice Springs Town Council are working together to identify youth at risk and engage them so we can see a reduction in crime.

Police are also working with the local community to identify and address alcohol-related offences and youth related antisocial behaviour offending in the CBD. In response to crime, Strike Force Winx is focusing on reducing volume crime, particularly unlawful entries, through targeted enforcement action on reoffending property crime offenders.

The Member for Braitingling will outline the key interventions of the youth justice policy, but one issue I want to touch on is alcohol, which continues to be a common factor in crime and antisocial behaviour across the Northern Territory. We will be re-introducing the Banned Drinker Register, a tool that helps prevent the supply of alcohol to those who abuse it. There were 2500 banned drinkers when the CLP scrapped that register in 2012, and I know the Banned Drinker Register will help us tackle antisocial issues and associated crime. We have retailers who are responsibly serving, but we need that tool back in place. It was simple and effective.

In re-introducing the Banned Drinker Register—I look forward to bringing legislation to the House in May—we will not make the mistake of cutting off existing measures. That was one of the biggest issues under the previous government; measures were stopped before other measures were put in place. We acknowledge that Alcohol Mandatory Treatment will be changing, but it will stay in place until the BDR is in place, and then we will transition to our own rehabilitation programs.

In regard to the temporary beat locations, or POSIs—that is a question that is often asked—they will not be scrapped. They were introduced when Labor was last in government. I think we all acknowledge that this is an important police resource, and police should decide where and when that resource is used, not politicians in Darwin.

We have moved quickly to put a cap on takeaway licences. I think the figure is 530 licences across the NT. There is one takeaway alcohol outlet for every 350 adult Territorians. To compare that figure, California will not allow takeaway licences less than one for every 2500 people, so that is a huge figure. We need to tackle the amount of alcohol in our community.

We will ensure licensing is reviewed so it is in line with government policies. We saw decisions made under the CLP that we were not comfortable with. We support the implementation of volumetric tax based on alcohol content, and we will work with the federal government around that issue. The long-standing bipartisan agreement regarding Sunday trading is an important aspect we will not be changing. We are strong on that.

There are a number of health initiatives that I could go on about regarding giving children the opportunity to have the best chance at life. There are a number of issues I would like to go into more detail on, such as ice and FASD. There are some huge issues, but the government is committed to the community; we feel its frustration. We are working as quickly as we can to implement a broad range of measures. When you look at what was cut over four years in some spaces, such as the lack of police resources, there is a long road ahead of us, but we are working as hard as we can.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, I thank the Deputy Opposition Leader for bringing on this MPI this evening. It reads:

The Territory has experienced a crime wave over recent months with increases in break-ins, and in many locations there are reports for strong community concern. The government's youth crime overhaul fails to adequately deal with these problems and must go further to deal with all aspects of offending.

My position on this is total agreement. There has been a crime wave, particularly in my part of the NT, in Central Australia, over recent months. I am not critical of the package the government has put forward, which it announced last week, regarding youth justice and crime strategies. What it has put forward is a long-term package to try to address a very long-term, entrenched problem in the Northern Territory.

What I am critical of, which I alluded to today in Question Time, is the fact that this summer we have not seen any short-term strategies of an adequate nature to address the crime spree. We need services and action on the ground now in most urban settings across the Northern Territory, particularly in Alice Springs. I can really only speak about Alice Springs because that is my neck of the woods. There has not been the

planning, strategy and policy put in place to address the annual summer crime wave we can anticipate every year.

To some extent I understand why there has been a deficit from the new government. It is a new government. We have three new members of parliament in Central Australia. They would not be aware, to any great extent, of the planning that usually goes into how the government will respond to crime and antisocial behaviour in Alice Springs.

I remember, a little over four years ago when the CLP came to government, ensuring our summer crime strategy was in place. It was at the top of my list as the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Central Australia. Talking of the Minister for Central Australia, that is precisely what we need. We need a minister dedicated to the business of what happens in Central Australia. That is one lesson that should be learned from the experience over the last five months of this new government. That alone is a deficit. We need representation within Cabinet talking about Central Australia at every opportunity. The Member for Braitling is the obvious choice of the person best positioned to take on that role. I would love to see the Member for Braitling be the Minister for Central Australia.

I do not think this government really jumped on the fact that you cannot take your eye off the ball when it comes to government strategy and policy during summer—managing the crime and antisocial behaviour right across the Territory, and very much so in Alice Springs. As a consequence we have seen an inadequate response on the ground; it has been slow and it has been lacking leadership. I must pay tribute to the Member for Braitling because she has been the only member of Cabinet who has really stood up and tried to show leadership on this very critical issue.

People in Alice Springs and Central Australia look to government for leadership. They look to government and their Chief Minister, primarily, for direction and reassurance that the serious matters affecting their lives every day, usually in a very negative way, are under control and being managed. They want to know that there is a strategy and a policy. From the experience of Central Australia over the last three months, that has been seriously lacking.

I do not know if this government truly has a policy on managing crime and antisocial behaviour in the Northern Territory. What we heard last week was a response to a Royal Commission that is under way, as well as a crisis that has emerged on our streets over the last couple of months that the new government was not prepared for. There has been a kneejerk reaction. The government has had to gather together and come up with a comprehensive and exciting way forward in the long term, but in regard to the short term, there is a deficit of strategies.

What we saw in Alice Springs, which is the most curious thing I can remember, is that during our hot summer months we had an announcement from the police saying they intended to close the Alice Springs police station 50% of the time, from 7 pm to 7 am, seven days a week, as though that would in some way lead to greater outcomes and a better service for the community. This was met with fury, a very strong reaction from the community. It completely objected to what was an absurd notion.

Even more absurd was the fact that the government—which is in charge of all government departments including the police force—shunned its responsibility and said, ‘No, this is an operational issue. It has nothing to do with us.’ People did not buy that, nor should they. A government is a government. The Cabinet and the Chief Minister, who happens to be the minister for police, is in charge of what happens within government. That includes major policy decisions like this that have a profound impact on the community, and the perception of people within the community regarding their safety and security.

We had a government that was represented by the new Member for Braitling, who is also a new member of Cabinet and a new minister, who struggled under adverse circumstances to represent the interests of her government. She was unable to articulate the position of her government in regard to the proposed closure of the police station. She was put in a very awkward situation, which was unenviable for any of us who have been in a similar position in the past in which we had to take responsibility for things we should not need to, but she did her best.

The outcome of that was to close the police station on 9 January, which curiously coincided with the day the Chief Minister commenced his three-week European vacation. The police force in Alice Springs made the announcement to close the station and within 24 hours changed their mind. Instead, they would do community consultation. I was on holiday, enjoying my break since I am not a minister, member of Cabinet or the government—been there, done that. I was having a lovely vacation on the beach in northern NSW, but keeping a close eye on what was happening. A few days later there was a public meeting held by the

police force to which 200 residents of Alice Springs turned up, most in a state of high emotion, to express their dissatisfaction with the proposal to close their police station 50% of the time.

The Member for Braintree attended that meeting, but did not participate in answering questions. She did not deliver leadership or a policy framework regarding what was happening in Alice Springs with the proposal to close the station or to respond to a spike in crime, which was happening during those hot summer months. A week later the police made the sensible announcement that they would not close the police station.

To put the Alice Springs community through a long 10 days of suffering, anguish and fear during the summer weeks of January was completely unnecessary, bizarre and difficult to comprehend, but that is what happened. Yes, I am critical of this government and the way it handled summer in Alice Springs. I feel like the government has shown no leadership on this issue; it has been very disappointing.

Instead we have heard stories of long holidays where people have been unavailable. The Deputy Chief Minister and the Chief Minister were unavailable for two weeks. All that says to the community is, 'You are not important'. You are not steering this ship; you are not providing leadership and it begs the question, who is leading the show if the Deputy Chief Minister and the Chief Minister can be absent from their duties for two weeks during our peak season of crime?

It has been a rather confusing and disappointing time for most Territorians who had very high expectations of this new Territory government. Yes, it has come up with some long-term strategies, but we are still yet to hear what the short-term plan is to combat antisocial behaviour and crime throughout our community. I am very impressed with their youth justice and crime package. I am very impressed with the allocation of a huge amount of money towards this exercise, with \$18m per annum quoted and \$74m over the forward estimates. I am curious to know where this money is coming from.

When you put it together with the other big spends announced last week by the Chief Minister is his address to the local business community, one has to question just how the finances of the Northern Territory are being managed. In lieu of the fact that this government has also not provided us with any sort of mini-budget prior to its big budget announcements in May. It is very concerning. It is all very well to talk words and numbers, but if you do not give people facts and figures regarding exactly what you are doing—how much you are spending, time frames, clear and detailed commitments—it is not particularly meaningful.

That is what I am looking forward to. We have to wait until May to get the details on a lot of these words being spoken, commitments and promises, regarding how this government will steer us out of this crime wave and the economic slump we are in. I do not want to be completely negative because there are some very positive ideas that have been put to us over the last couple of weeks. It is encouraging that the full Cabinet is back on deck, apart from the Chief Minister, who is absent today.

It is encouraging that we are hearing some indication of direction and policy, but I have yet to hear what this government's short-term policy is regarding how it will manage law and order on the streets of my town, Alice Springs. It is still a major concern for the residents of Alice Springs. The Chief Minister, the minister for police, needs to come to Alice Springs like the Member for Braintree has done across the Northern Territory. He needs to face these people, talk to them about their concerns and give them some direction and leadership.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank those on the other side of the Chamber for bringing this motion forward because it is an important issue. As the Member for Araluen has pointed out, I have spent the summer in Alice Springs, hearing the frustration of the electorate.

The Member for Spillett spoke about the experiences of some people who live in my electorate, in Alice Springs. I too have listened to their frustration and despair around what has been happening to their businesses. We know how frustrated people are, and we are frustrated as well because we have a huge mess to clean up.

I thank the Attorney-General for so clearly outlining the depths of that mess. I respond to the Member for Araluen's point about Alice Springs because the mess was pretty deep there as well. We came into government and discovered the previous government had not put any provision going forward into after-hours services in Alice Springs. We had to act very quickly to ensure that the Alice Springs Town Council, who work in partnership with Congress, could continue to deliver its vital after-hours service over the Christmas period.

We committed another \$800 000 to ensure that will happen until September, so we have the right amount of time to create a solid plan for Alice Springs. We also committed \$107 000 in funding so the Alice Springs Youth and Community Centre can continue to have activities. The CLP left us with nothing in place and we had to scramble to get some things together. Those activities went well over the summer. That was keeping the level of service similar to what happened over previous summers. We worked on some increase in service delivery as well security patrols in difficult areas.

Business owners were very happy to have the Deputy Chief Minister come down in January to talk to them about their difficulties. She had a number of face-to-face meetings with businesses which are struggling with this issue. The Attorney-General also came down and talked to a number of people on issues relating to alcohol, and caught up with the Members for Stuart and Namatjira and me about what we were hearing on the ground.

In general, we had a minister a month because we also had the Member for Casuarina come down. So this fantasy—well, she might have missed it because she was on holiday, as she said. I will ensure that we inform her of when the ministers are in town so if she has any questions she can ask them. Minister McCarthy caught up with her last week in regard to housing and antisocial behaviour issues. We will continue to talk to everyone about these issues across the whole of the Territory. I will continue to be a strong voice for Alice Springs.

Ms Lawler: I was in Alice Springs.

Ms WAKEFIELD: I am sorry, Minister for Education. I forgot you were there. You opened Braitley School, which is a beautiful facility in my electorate. The people of Braitley are excited about those services. That really shows that a wide range of ministers are taking responsibility for this area. This is not us working in silos; we are working together to have better outcomes for Territorians, which is something the other side could not do.

The plan we have put together for youth justice is about tackling the causes of crime and tackling social injustice that drives crime. If we do not tackle those underlying causes then we are going to end up having these conversations again in four or five years. Territorians are sick of this problem and they want government to act in ways that will actually work.

We are listening. I have spent a lot of time—the Member for Araluen spoke about the meeting in Alice Springs, and I sat there and listened because I thought that was what I needed to do, to really hear the views of the people at the meeting. From that meeting I had about 20 meetings with people who had attended. I did follow-up one-on-one meetings, which was really important. One of the biggest risks you can have in government is that you are not listening, and you do not listen to people who may disagree with you.

I sat down and spoke to everyone. I spoke to people who are on the other side of politics, but the common interest we all have is the best interests of Alice Springs, and making sure we come up with a solution that works for every Territorian. We know that a government that relies on policing and punishment as the only tools for addressing youth crime is a government without vision. That lack of vision is something that came up again and again through the election campaign. The previous government had no vision in this area.

One of the most interesting things about the meetings I had with a broad range of people from across the political spectrum was that they all talked about the same things. They talked about how we need children to take responsibility for their behaviour and we need a better sense of community. We need to really focus on community because that is why people live in small towns. They want a sense of safety, they want a sense of security and they want to be part of a community.

I thank the Member for Araluen for her comments regarding budgets. The reality is that when the Members for Araluen and Blain were in charge of the CLP, they cut youth services. Businesses and the community are paying the price for those cuts today and we are all paying the price for that failed approach. We have a Royal Commission to show it was a failed approach, so we need to do things differently. We are hearing that loud and clear and we need to do that properly and thoughtfully, and bring the community with us. This is something the previous government could not do.

One of the other great things that happened over this period was that I had a lot of contact with my fellow parliamentarians regarding what is happening in their electorates. We have come up with a plan for the whole of the Territory, not just the parts with the loudest voices. We have made sure this is a

comprehensive plan for everyone. We see this as a very big first step, but there is much more work to do, especially with our federal colleagues and looking at the outcomes of the Royal Commission.

I think we are in mad agreement on this, if we can only get past the politics of it. The Leader of the Opposition was quoted in the *Alice Springs News* as saying that the biggest need to tackle youth crime is diversion. He identified that it takes time. He also said CLP members were annoyed that offenders were reoffending on bail. The Labor Party members are annoyed about that as well, and we have come up with a plan to deal with it.

I have already talked about this today, but one of the things raised in this matter is about making sure we are addressing the breadth of offending. One of the good things about this plan is that it is tackling offending at all levels. Specifically, we are giving victims a voice. The Member for Spillett has been quoting, perhaps cherry picking, some research regarding victim conferencing. I am happy to provide the research we have. I understand when you have a very small team it must be challenging to keep up with the latest research.

Victorian and New Zealand research shows that 80% of young offenders who participated in victim conferencing did not reoffend within a two-year period. That is an extraordinary outcome. I will provide those on the other side of the Chamber with that research. The Member for Blain has been a big advocate for victim conferencing as well. Youth conferencing has also been shown to have a high satisfaction rating with victims. This research has also shown that victims who participate experience reduced feelings of anger, fear, vengeance and anxiety, and increased feelings of forgiveness and a greater faith in procedural justice. This is what we need. We need to bring back these feelings of community and people feeling safe.

Victim conferencing also pulls the community together. It gives opportunities for everyone involved to have a say in what happens to move forward positively. The young person is involved, their family, the victim, community members, the school and other significant people, such as football coaches or other people who are important in their life.

We look forward to seeing the results of this. I know people are keen to get involved. When I was having those meetings in Alice Springs people were saying, 'I am more than happy to have a kid on community service in my business. We are more than happy to look at this. We want to be part of the solution.'

One of things that came up in these meetings was how dispiriting this has been for volunteers of sporting clubs and such, where there has been damage to the clubs. It is devastating when you volunteer time to be part of the community, and then see it so wilfully and carelessly undone, particularly in small towns where that type of volunteering is what keeps our sporting and community clubs going.

One of the other great things about youth conferencing is that it allows much more flexibility in community service orders. Plus our youth workers can support kids to work where they offended. This brings together the link of people feeling disconnected. It means that youth have to contribute, through their own hard work, to righting the wrongs they have caused. We want to see kids taking responsibility for their behaviour.

We also need to work really hard with our very skilled NGO sector at the early stage of this. We need to stop kids getting in trouble. We need to make sure there are youth services and activities to keep kids meaningfully engaged. I am not just talking about a disco on a Saturday night, which is fine; it does keep kids busy on a Saturday night, which is what we want to do. We also want to make sure there is health and fitness and a range of things in place to help kids with their direction and goal setting, and feeling like they are contributing as part of the community.

This is really important, and doubling the funds in this area has been vital in making sure this plan works. I am really looking to going through an expression of interest process so we can draw on the innovation from our very skilled NGO sector. We have worked very hard on extending what is in existence already, although we know it is not enough. We know we need to do more, but we have at least tried to keep that base in place which has been so badly eroded after years of cuts.

When children get into trouble, we will be intervening early. Let us do all the work we can the first time a child turns up in the justice system, rather than waiting until they have offended hundreds of times. Let us intervene early. This is where our youth workforce will be essential. It is there to provide intensive case management and outreach support to young people at risk. We will ensure that bail works, they understand and comply with their conditions of bail and they understand the consequences if they breach those conditions. We will also make sure they do not reoffend while they are on bail.

This workforce will provide judges and police with advice on a young person's circumstances, and provide a plan. This is what we have been missing. We want all the pieces of the puzzle to join, rather than the disjointed system we had.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Brainting, your time has expired.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution about this matter and the way it is being conducted in this Chamber. I noted the reference made by the previous speaker about getting past the politics, and I heard a few 'hear hears' from the other side and people were nodding. At the same time there was reference to the atrocious behaviour of the last administration, so it was contradictory.

When you play that out in front of a community meeting, such as I saw in Palmerston, in which you cannot help but refer to 'we inherited a broken system', you almost immediately encounter a problem. There is a large group of fair-minded, ordinary people who are seeking some understanding of how they feel and that they will be responded to. That kind of language might serve your purposes, but it does not interest them in the slightest. You lose your capacity to engage the very resource you need to deal with the problem.

I also note the references to the Member for Blain being the former Chief Minister responsible for cutting services, and therefore were those services not cut we would not have the problems we have today. I will not defend for one moment the behaviours of the previous government. I accept that I was there for some time. We required a certain level of deep intervention to deal with the internal dysfunction and the poor behaviour, which was a bad example for running any serious law and order agenda in the Northern Territory. That is a fact, and that is one of the reasons I chose to come back.

Let us put that aside for a second. As someone who has been here for a long time, I note that we have these conversations time and time again. Fortunately in your case, or perhaps unfortunately, I have the requirement to remind honourable members that there was a four-year period—and I have just spoken about that four-year period—and there was a 12-year period prior to that. Do not think for one moment that in those 12 years it was a time of wonder and delight in the Northern Territory.

There were programs that were cut, crime forums, gatherings and protests in the streets about law and order. It is not a new problem and it might serve your short-term interests and your ego to think that it only happened in the last four years and now it will be fixed because we have a whole new era with money to throw at it.

What the community actually want is a completely different approach. There will be an opportunity at the next forum in Palmerston, for example. We have been thinking about how this should work. My role has explicitly been behind the scenes to provide support to the community, because that is where the responses will be best received, understood and applied to make a real difference.

A lot of good people want to be able to engage in this. How will that funding translate into real terms, to real programs that actually make a difference to the problems people live with day and night? The story I told today in Question Time is one of significance and it must be dealt with.

When that next meeting occurs—I understand it is 6 March—it would be ripe for the plans that are being described by the government—large amounts of money and words being spoken—to be presented to that community group in a manner in which they understand, and they can learn how they can be involved, be engaged and support this initiative. I will be there to assist. It will not be at that meeting, but I will be there supporting the community and assisting the government wherever necessary to bring it down to the grass roots where it will begin to make a difference.

I want to point to a couple of practical matters. One is that the application of a desire to effect change is problematic in some regards. If you spend a lot of money you can solve a political problem because you have created the impression instantly that you have responded. The response is not a response until it occurs in reality. There are so many agencies at work across our community. There are programs running within schools and in support of schools.

There are many resources to address issues that are related to public housing. The police have resources and access to different means to deal with problems, such as intelligence and intervention. There are diversionary programs and a range of other things, like Somerville Community Services and Mission Australia. All of them are running fine programs. The problem is that they are not coordinated.

Mr Paech: The CLP cut their funding.

Mr MILLS: You missed something, buggerlugs. That is totally unhelpful. Get over yourself.

Those programs need to be coordinated at the community level so the maximum benefit can be derived at the point of impact. The community knows the names and addresses of these kids. They live with them day and night. Some of these young people are tough as, and any manner of excuse giving or allocation of blame to other administrations, will not make one jot of difference or impress anyone who has concerns of living on that street.

It will be difficult to effect behavioural change in some of those tough kids, and it is not for the faint hearted or broad brush rhetoric and big talk. It will be sharp, hard talk that understands the real problem. I reckon there are people in our community who are not recognised by agencies who can go into places where no expert can go, but they need to be supported.

Mr Paech: And resourced.

Mr MILLS: I have just congratulated you on that. Get over yourself. I invite you to the public meeting so you can get up and talk about it ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 31: disorderly words. I ask you to draw that to the attention of the Member for Blain.

Mr MILLS: I withdraw all disorderly words so we can continue.

You need the capacity to recognise that those who may not be validated by the current systems need to be able to reach those kids who are tougher and need to be reached—not necessarily by the experts, but supported by the experts. That will make the difference. There are not that many of them, but you need a very sophisticated approach to be able to reach them. This is not just for Palmerston; it is Karama, Katherine, Alice Springs and most of our communities. These are very difficult social and cultural matters to deal with, but there are resources. This is why it is very important to engage the community.

I urge members to consider thinking past the paradigm of the last four years because you will raise the spectre of the previous 12 years, and that will not make any difference to anybody. As we saw at the community meeting that people cannot tolerate that kind of talk. They are over it. They want the resources that have been put on the table, which are Territory resources, implemented in a way that makes maximum benefit with direct engagement of the community. I support the MPI.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I do not think we should start patting ourselves on the back until we show that we have actually made a difference. I have also stood in this parliament for many years. I remember one time, when parliament used to sit in Alice Springs, I walked out of the convention centre and the then-Chief Minister, Clare Martin, also walked out in front of a large crowd protesting against the state of Alice Springs crime. For a new person like myself it was fairly scary because it was a noisy demonstration and the government knew it had problems in Alice Springs that it needed to tackle.

We stand here today saying, to some extent, the same things. There are some things that have changed. It is easy to stand here and condemn the previous government, not that I was a friend to that government, but if you just throw out everything it did simply because it was the previous government, then you are ignoring some of the facts. I do not say you cannot criticise it, but if you ignore some of the things it did which had good intention, then you are ignoring the facts.

One of those things I was going to talk about tonight was the Loves Creek boot camp. Has anyone read the independent report on that boot camp? It is not saying it is perfect, but it is saying it is a good thing if it is done in a certain way and if certain things are done.

A member interjecting.

Mr WOOD: I am not saying that it is not funding that. What I am trying to say—and I am not here for a brawl—is that it is a good thing. It was not brought in by your government; it was brought in by the previous government. I am emphasising that there were some good things that the previous government tried to do. I have seen Owen Springs, Hamilton Downs and Mount Theo. I did see Wildman River, and your government at that time scrapped it. I stood in this parliament a number of times pleading with the minister, Minister Toyne, not to scrap it. It was a youth diversion centre and it is gone. As far as I know most of the buildings have been removed.

We can go back in history and criticise this, that and the other, but we have to look forward. At the same time, please do not pat yourselves on the back yet. You have been here for six months. We have some serious issues.

Ms Fyles: We are not; we have a huge job ahead of us.

Mr WOOD: I hear the platitudes sometimes between one another as though you have solved the problems. The problems are there. Let us not criticise too much of what has happened and move forward. I am saying that if you are looking at these issues then do not go back to the past as though nothing good happened; there were some good things that happened. You are putting forward things which I think will also help.

We have to keep our feet on the ground and work together to try to solve very difficult issues. They have been around for a long time. People have gotten up in this parliament and said that this is the solution. Well, the solutions have not always worked, and some of the solutions that we thought were working were seen on ABC television.

Would you believe there was a good side to some of that Don Dale work? The trouble is that we saw some bad things, but there were also some good things. Was that ever publicised by the ABC? It was not. There were good people working in there, doing their best. How many kids came out of that centre and never reoffended.

The point is that sometimes we get lost looking at all the things that have failed. Sometimes we emphasise them for political purposes, whereas we should be looking at the good things that both sides of parliament have put forward. If those ideas can still be used to go forward then we should do that. I have been to Love Creek and read the report. It is not saying it is the panacea of fixing everything, but it is one of the good things we should continue with.

We have BushMob. I have visited them and they do a fantastic job. I hope miracles can occur for people like Mr Voller who are going through BushMob, and they turn their lives around and do good things. We should look on that positive side even though a lot of people out there would be hoping otherwise. We have some good initiatives. There is an initiative the previous Labor government looked at but never went too far with, and that was the Family Responsibilities Commission used in Queensland.

When Malarndirri McCarthy was a minister here, I had a lot to do with some of the issues in relation to child protection. I was not personally involved in establishing that, but in discussing that with Malarndirri McCarthy this was one of the ideas put forward. Labor was looking at it, but for some reason it was not willing to go forward with it. I am not saying this is a perfect thing either, but it works in a number of communities where the community's elders are participants and commissioners who work together to solve problems in the community.

I am not saying it would fit into the Territory because what happens in a Queensland community may not fit a Northern Territory community, but we should seriously look at the principles behind it. It has a track record and has been reviewed by the Queensland Government. It is expensive, but it involves people in the community to address issues from domestic violence to not sending their kids to school, and a range of other things. I would say to the ministers who are involved in what we are dealing with tonight that this is something we should look at because it is a good process. It has been tried in five communities. The last one, in (inaudible), has only just been implemented, so it will take a while before they know if it is successful or not.

I spent some time in Alice Springs, both when Labor and the CLP were in power. One of the areas that always concerned me was the lack of continual funding for youth services in Alice Springs. I have been to the Gap a number of times. It is a great place. It probably would be better if it was bigger. One of the concerns they had was that they knew they were getting funding for a year. How can you run a program and how can people feel they have a long-term job?

That other place was Anzac Hill, which had a fair bit of money poured into it. Most of that money was money the CLP took from an agreement I had with Mr Henderson to help Freds Pass. I looked at the gym and said, 'Thank you very much. That money came from the rural area.' Tangentyere has a youth centre as well, and the YMCA has one.

Those facilities need to be improved because if you have problems in summer—I ask why the kids do not have something to do. Kids get into trouble in summer because they are bored and they think, 'Let's go and bash a few windows'. That is not new. There is not a huge amount of crime in my area, at least not juvenile

crime. There may be more hoons and ATVs running around. You notice graffiti picks up all of a sudden in the holidays because the kids have nothing to do.

You must have those facilities. I went to a school where during school holidays there were camps. You could go swimming and they would take you on hikes. At night there was a singalong and a big get together. It was designed to give you something to do during the holidays.

We need to put more emphasis and money into that. I went to the youth facility at Casuarina many years ago with the Chief Minister at the time. I thought it was miserable. It was small. It was not really an inviting place. I visited a place in St Mary's in Sydney that had trampolines, outdoor soccer, pool tables, table tennis and all sorts of things. The kids helped run it. They could select what sort of sports to have. It had a cafe, which was hired out to other groups during the day. It became a centre for youth, and older people could use it as well since it was not specifically for youth.

When kids came home from school—it finished at 8 pm and you had to get home. They did a little trick where they turned the clocks so they were a bit ahead. When it hit 8 pm they asked if they could stay a bit longer, so by the time they left it was 8 pm. It was a youth facility that got kids doing things to keep fit and stay out of trouble. We need a greater emphasis on helping. It would be great if the YMCA in Palmerston had a bigger area for facilities, both outdoor and indoor. We can focus on that.

The minister spoke about alcohol, which is an issue with young people and with older people. I always wondered if we are really serious about changing our attitudes towards alcohol. It is still well and truly advertised, especially within sport. There is a connection between sport and alcohol, and nobody seems to want to tackle that. We did it with tobacco once, but I have never heard of anyone crashing a car because of smoking. I have heard of many people smashing a car from drinking alcohol. I do not think I have heard of anyone causing domestic violence by smoking, but I have seen domestic violence caused by alcohol. Which one do we advertise? Alcohol. Which one do we not advertise? Tobacco. Who has the power over the government?

I have asked about lockout laws. The minister said on Mix 104.9 that we might look at it in the alcohol review, then the Chief Minister says we are not. I think we should be. If we are looking at harm minimisation and a reduction in crime, all things should be on the table.

I got a note in Bushranger about my comments at the public meeting I went to. I looked around and saw at the back of the stage at the school—respect. We have to get back to some grass roots. We have a slack society that says, 'Oh well, who cares if you say please or thank you?' It might sound tiny and old fashioned, but the principle is that I have respect for the other person. When you lose that respect, it leads to other things in life, like, 'Who cares if I kick a hole in a person's car as I walk past? Who cares if I walk all over the garden? Who cares if I smash a window?'

If you do not have respect when you are young, it is hard to pick up when you are older. From an education point of view, we should encourage that respect to come back. Schools cannot only encourage it, but they can tell kids to say 'thank you' and 'please' and to open the door for the teacher. Call her 'Miss'. I am not saying kids are bad, but some of those rudimentary things we learned as kids are part of learning respect. We do not throw rubbish on the ground. In our case, if we threw rubbish on the ground we had half of lunchtime because the other half was spent doing an emu parade. Sorry, emus; I might have upset somebody by saying an emu parade, but we had an emu parade and had to pick up all the rubbish.

I sometimes think our school system has let that drop to some extent. They concentrate on lots of things, but sometimes those little things are just as important as the big things. Maybe in the big picture, people say there are lots of other issues we should concentrate on. That may be the case, but I think you have to start at the early stages in life, which the minister mentioned before. We have to learn respect and we can do more to teach kids respect. It might help. It might not be the be-all-end-all of what we are trying to do today, but it could at least help to turn things around to some extent.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I had a motion very early in this 13th parliament in which I said we need to have a bit of cooperation in regard to alcohol. That did not get the support of the people opposite, and it was a shame because alcohol is an ongoing problem.

This issue with law and order is the same issue because it is an ongoing problem. If people have listened to what I have said in the media in regard to law and order and what the government has attempted to do in its first steps—I have said they are good first steps. The thing is, there are other things that need to be done. I stand by that and I will come back to that.

One of the things I have noticed is Territorians are very much over people in this House wanting to just dump on people on the opposite side. The Member for Blain made a valid point, and people made it clear at the meeting at Palmerston. As soon as government members started trying to finger point at the previous government, people made it clear they were not happy with that response. They did not say it was true or false.

When people spoke to me afterwards I said, and I have said it on radio, 'For everything the previous government may have done wrong, you can point to the government beforehand'. To emphasise that without being specific, and the Member for Blain was making this point, the previous government was there for four years, but this problem did not happen over four years. The Labor government was there for 12 years before that. I am not saying it happened in that 12 years, but the people in this House have to get over it. You have to say, 'We have a problem. Let us work together and solve that problem.'

To emphasise that this problem did not occur in the previous government, when I was elected Wadeye was the community with the worst name in the Territory. In the last four years its crime rate has gone down by over 35%. So we did not cause a problem there; we fixed a problem. That is the issue this parliament has to start to look at. Places like Wadeye are different to everywhere else. Palmerston is different to the northern suburbs and it is different to Alice Springs.

When I was in Alice Springs the week before last we were talking about crime, and the police made an interesting observation that the spike in crime in Alice Springs did not start until January. I will not say the previous government was doing a great job and you people have caused the problem in Alice Springs, but I could. You were in government for six months so obviously you have caused the problem. But it does not achieve anything by saying that. We have to work together and come up with solutions. What the government is doing now is a good first step, but there is more we can do. I am hearing from people that they want action now.

'We have planned something and will spend \$18m. We are re-investing money in some of the NGOs.' All of that is terrific. But they want something now. The people who have been broken into in the last couple of days, the Deck Bar and Chow, want protection. The government made its announcement before that. Did it help them? No, it did not. They want something done now. One of the suggestions I have made is, why not get all the police out. We can say the police are an operational issue because they are driven by budget; they have to control their budget. It simply takes government to come along and say, 'Look, there is a problem. If you need money to get more police out on the streets as a short-term measure, then we will make the money available.'

The other thing that is missing is that there is nothing addressing the drug problem. Ice is one of the scourges we have to deal with at the moment. Drugs are associated with almost every crime being committed. You are looking at figures around 80%. When we talk about the victims conferencing facility you want to set up—it is a good idea, but look at some of the reports. New South Wales, in 2012, said that it made zip difference.

One of the reports that came out makes a comparison and says it made a terrific difference because 80% of the people did not reoffend, back to 2003. Ice did not become available until 2010 or 2011. If you want to look at figures, then look at accurate figures. New South Wales in 2012 said it made no difference. Why did it not make a difference? The reason is ice and drugs. People do not care about the impact because when they get the urge to get drugs and require money; nothing else counts.

There are multiple solutions that need to be investigated. Diversion is well and good after you have committed the crime, but we also need to look at diversion before the crimes are committed. As the Member for Nelson said, we need to do a lot of work in that area. That was one of the things that we did at Wadeye. We said to the people there, 'What do you want to keep these people occupied, and what is going to engage the youth?' So we put football there. Football will not impact people in Palmerston because they already have football teams, but we need to be thinking broader about what we do, rather than just blaming the previous government or the one before that.

The other thing we need to do when we are spending all this money—I have not heard any comments about how we will measure the success of it. We are spending all of this taxpayers' money, but how will we measure that it is effective, and how often will we review it? The Member for Nelson asked how long will we fund these organisations? We have been elected for four years, we have security for four years, but some of these people are getting security for 12 months, two years or three years. We need longer programs.

We talk about the budget cycle. We have a government that says it will spend all this money on housing, and that is terrific, but they have said 10 years. They are planning ahead for 10 years, so why are we not doing that for these sorts of programs? How will we measure the success of those programs?

Members interjecting.

Mr HIGGINS: To the people who want to interject, if you have something to say why do you not stand up for your constituents? Stand up and have something to say. Make a speech.

We do not want to get bogged down in a lot of the stuff that goes on in this parliament; we want to go out and really listen to the people out on the street. The point I really want to make about this is that people in here need to get over pointing the finger at previous people. If there is valid proof and evidence then by all means, but when you look at the alcohol problems and crime, they are not something the previous government started or committed. It is not something the government before that did either. It is a total period that this has happened in. There is nothing you can pinpoint that directly caused this problem. There will not be anything simple that will solve the problem. Let us open our eyes.

That is all I want to say. Obviously some of the people on the other side really have something to say, so I will be interested to see what constructive things they have to say. I think it is an important issue that should cross the party lines. It is an issue that all of us need to work on. In the media, over the last couple of weeks since the announcement, I have been supportive of the things the government has initiated.

I have also called for more. I have not pointed the finger at the stuff-ups of the previous Labor government. I do not see that as productive in this space, and the people on the other side ought to realise the same thing. The people of Palmerston made it clear to the people there. They made it very clear that they are over it. It is about time the people on the other side grew up and got over it as well.

PAPER TABLED

Travel Reports – Members for Nelson and Katherine

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table travel reports from the Members for Nelson and Katherine, both dated 4 January 2017.

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

Madam SPEAKER: Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's Report to the Legislative Assembly November 2016—consideration deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr VOWLES (Johnston): Madam Speaker, consistent with Territory Labor's commitment to restore trust and be open and transparent, I am pleased to report on my trip to Indonesia and Singapore. My trip was in December 2016. As part of that commitment, I put on the public record that the travel and accommodation for my chief of staff and me to undertake the seven day trip, which included eight flights and accommodation, totalled \$8907. The cost of the two departmental staff was \$10 063.

We took this trip to establish key relationships with Indonesian government officials to learn firsthand about the complexities of the live export trade. It was an extremely important thing to do. We all know how important face-to-face relationships are when doing business in Asia. This is why representatives from the NT Cattlemen's Association and NT Livestock Exporters Association attended the cattle export component of the trip with me. Their presence and involvement added tremendous value, and I personally thank Rohan Sullivan from the NT Cattlemen's Association and Stuart Kemp from NT Livestock Exporters Association for their experience and input in the relationships over there.

The NT Government continues to see Indonesia as a key trade partner, and wants to continue to grow our trade. We also made it clear to Indonesian government officials that we are there to help when we can. A good example of this is the breeder program in East Kalimantan where my portfolio, Primary Industry and Resources, is located.

Anyone who thinks these trips are glamorous has not been on one. I did eight flights in seven days. My meetings included an excellent briefing from the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia. He went through the context of Indonesian economy and livestock, and agricultural policy directions. I also had a detailed discussion with the Director-General of Livestock and Animal Health. I met with the Ministry of Agriculture and senior staff of the Minister of Trade; a key topic of discussion in our meeting was the requirement for breeder quoters and improved processes for the issuing of import permits, which is an important discussion. We want continuity and supply.

I also had a discussion with East Kalimantan government officials to discuss the breeder program being managed by NT Government staff. I had a site visit to import feed in Sumatra, a short one-hour flight from Jakarta. It was a fantastic site visit. Our commitment to the \$4.1m Berrimah export yards matches the feed lock that I saw in Sumatra. I also had a meeting with the Australian Embassy and trade staff in Singapore to gain a better understanding of Singapore's primary industry needs, and to further develop the Territory's relationship with key overseas-based Australian Government representatives.

This government's initiatives include travel, particularly international travel. We do not want a repeat of situations where ministers are flying here or there and sometimes meeting the same people only weeks later. For this reason while I was in Indonesia I also represented the member for sport at the Brunei, Indonesian, Malaysian, Philippine and East Asian Growth Area games, BIMP-EAGA, in Samarinda.

After an hour flight from Jakarta and a three hour dodgy but interesting drive through beautiful country, I was very happy when I arrived safely at Samarinda. It was very interesting and beneficial. BIMP-EAGA is a primary trade based organisation, and the previous government recognised the benefits of re-engaging the BIMP-EAGA; as a consequence it arranged for Territory athletes to be involved in the BIMP-EAGA sporting games, which was set up when we took over government. The Territory sent a contingent of 30 athletes and nine coaches. I was able to not only support the team, but also promote the re-establishment of the Arafura Games while I was there.

I represented the Northern Territory Government at the formal opening ceremony. I attended dinner as the guest of the governor of East Kalimantan and, importantly, secured a speaking agenda item at the heads of delegation meeting. The meeting was attended by the organising committee and the head of delegation of the 14 provinces from the four countries I mentioned earlier.

When addressing the heads of delegation, aside from confirming the Territory's commitment to BIMP-EAGA, I announced the return of the Arafura Games, which was extremely well received. I can inform the House that we still have support from our friends in Asia to bring the games back. In Jakarta, prior to travelling to Samarinda, I also met with the Deputy Minister for Performance Development and Minister for Youth and Sport—the Indonesian equivalent of the head of Australian Institute of Sport—to tell him of our commitment to recommence the Arafura Games and to seek Indonesia's involvement.

While trips are always busy, a great deal was achieved. The Indonesian government and industry officials were particularly pleased I had chosen their country for my first overseas trip, and this bids well for our ongoing trade relationship. I look forward to ongoing relations with Indonesia and our other important trade partners like Vietnam and Cambodia.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about the Free Family Fun Day held at the YMCA Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre, hosted by the Palmerston Australia Day Committee. The family fun day has been held every year for the last 20-odd years. It was held from 9 am to 12 pm, and I am reliably informed that around 330 Palmerston residents attended the fun day, which is a large number given the forecast for the day was very rainy.

Three-hundred families from Palmerston decided to brave the weather, and it was a really fantastic morning. It is a tribute to the volunteers who made the day possible. There were a wide range of activities for families to enjoy. The activities included water rackety, which is put on by the YMCA every year; the rock climbing wall; face painting; a jumping castle; the classic and mandatory thong throwing competition; a free sausage sizzle and fruit cups for the kids; the eat your way around Australia SAO biscuit competition; a colouring competition, and of course, Australia Day removable tattoos.

This year we had a lot of volunteers come and support the family fun day, which helped make it a very smooth and well-run event. The volunteers were hard at work from around 8 am, setting up tents and making sure everything was organised, cranking up the barbecue so that when people arrived at 9 am they could grab a sausage straight away, which was appreciated by all.

I would like to specifically mention the volunteers because it is really important that we recognise volunteering. It is such an important part of our community. If we had to pay volunteers for the hours they put in, the books would be looking pretty bad and our Treasurer would be pulling her hair out.

The Australia Day committee members for this year included Maurie Johnson, a stalwart president of the committee, as well as Maggie Seanfish and Cath Cockcroft, who are long-term members of the Palmerston Australia Day committee. They dedicated their time and energy to apply for grant monies from the City of Palmerston and organise all the other stakeholders and events to ensure Territory families could enjoy a free and fun morning.

The Palmerston RSL had a lot of volunteers including Billy Matchett, Bob Craven and his daughter, John Dowd, Peter Griggs, Gary and Judy Markwell, Brett and Angie Butler, Bill Simpkins and Colin Cole and his daughter.

The Palmerston Lions were also at the Australia Day fun day, and they brought their fantastic barbecue trailer. Coralie Brannelly, as always, was manning the barbecue and cooking up a storm. President of Lions, Connell Brannelly, was also there, along with Tinan Garret, Diane Hussy and Vivienne Morris. They did a wonderful job getting the barbecue going. There was no shortage of food for the entire time. It was fantastic to have the Palmerston Lions there.

We hope it was a way to generate additional members and interest in the Lions club. Palmerston Lions is a relatively new club. It has been around for a couple of years and is always looking for new members, so it was a great public relations exercise for it. You will see Palmerston Lions at just about everything, and the core group of volunteers put their shoulder to the wheel and do a tremendous job around Palmerston, including raising much-needed money for organisations.

Spud was there with his sound system. He gets it all ready for me in the morning. I am fortunate to be asked back each year to be the master of ceremonies for the event, and Spud always hooks me up with his sound system, so thank you to Spud.

The YMCA lifeguards were being horrible as usual. They had a giant fire hose and tried to blast kids off the water rackety, which they get way too much pleasure out of, but secretly so did the children so it worked out well. This year lots of the dads got involved on the water rackety with the kids to help them get past the cheeky life guards who were trying to blast them off with the fire hose, but I think secretly the dads wanted to have a go and needed a way to justify it.

It was a fun day had by all. There was a lot of participation this year in the thong throwing. We had new world records in thong throwing, particularly by the younger kids. There was some really great engagement by the little ones who were highly competitive, particularly when we had the final round where all the winners from each category competed against each other. We do not make it easy for the little kids; they do not get a handicap for being little when they have to compete with the big kids and the adults at the end. They are tough because we grow them tough out at Palmerston. They are future thong throwing champions in the making.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make that event as spectacular as it was. This year was the first year we did not have Bev Johnson, Maurie's wife, with us. She sadly passed away last year. She made an enormous contribution to the Palmerston community over a very, very long time. We all reflected on the loss of not having her around on Australia Day, and she continues to be sadly missed, but I am sure she was smiling down on Maurie and her fellow colleagues on the Palmerston Australia Day committee for running another very successful event. It is a tribute to all of them. I commend them for their volunteer efforts and the hard work they do. I know that next year's Australia Day family fun day will be bigger and better than ever before.

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I would like to spend some time this evening talking about the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club, which is marking its centenary this year. You better be listening carefully, Steven Stokes. I am very proud to be patron of this wonderful NTFL club.

As most members know, Buffs are one of the three AFL NT teams celebrating their 100 year anniversary in 2017. The other two clubs which have been features of Top End football for 100 years are Wanderers and Waratahs. I acknowledge all three clubs for managing to stay the course for 100 years. There certainly are not too many other institutions which can lay claim to having been around for 100 years.

Darwin first entered the competition in 1917 when they were known as the Warriors. At the time, most of the team's players came from the infamous Kahlin Compound, the government operated facility for those Aboriginal people officially classified as half-caste. Darwin changed its name to Vestey's the following year when it gained sponsorship from the meatworks of the same name, which was located at Bullocky Point on the current site of Darwin High School. The meatworks were owned by the Vestey brothers of England, who pioneered refrigeration storage and owned meat processing works in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

It did not take long for Vestey's to win their first premiership; that happened in the 1921-22 season. Vestey's went on to win flags in the 1924-25 season and again in the 1925-26 season. While football seemed to allow Aboriginal people to compete with white people on an equal playing field, even the football league of the day added race to the equation when in 1926-27 it introduced a policy called 'the colour bar', which remained in place for three years. This had the effect of seeing players of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Chinese, Filipino, or mixed race descent eventually lining up with the Buffaloes, as Vestey's had become known.

The Buffaloes soon established themselves as a genuine force in the competition, winning flags in 1933, 1934 and 1935. Buffs finally changed their name to the Darwin Football Club in 1963. In many ways it was the Buffaloes' origins at Kahlin, along with the league's so-called colour bar, that established them as the football club they became, which is a reflection of the multicultural community that is Darwin. In fact, the Darwin Football Club was multicultural long before the phrase even came into common use.

As Darwin president, John Patterson, Patto, said about the clubs multicultural heritage at the 100th anniversary dinner at Skycity casino on 4 February, 'The Darwin Buffaloes Football Club has played a very significant role in the makeup and social fabric of the Darwin community. We are a club that welcomes people from all nationalities to play for the club.'

At the heart of the Buffaloes there have always been the many Aboriginal families who have played for and supported the double blues. These include family names like Ahmat, Bonson, Stokes, McGuinness, Butler, Cooper, Abala, Ah Kit, Tye, Briston, Anderson, Muir, Damaso, Quall, Lew Fatt, Hagan, Snape, Rotumah, Clarke, Angeles, Patterson, Cardona, Baban, Wills, Kurnoth, Williams, Roman, Cummings, Castillion, Raymond and Christophersen. I am nervous about naming families as I do not want to miss anyone, and if I have I apologise because it was not deliberate. I keep checking my speech to make sure I have thought of everyone, but all of those old families ...

Madam SPEAKER: You said the Coopers?

Ms LAWLER: I have the Coopers, yes. I also have the Stokes.

John Patterson also noted that the team at one stage included some of the first Chinese to ever play football in Australia. Brothers Ted and Harry Moo, who were from a family of 14, along with Jack Lee, lined up for the Vestey's team in the 1920s. The Moo and Lee families are now very much a part of the fabric of Darwin. There are now other well established Darwin families like the Chins and the Liverises who, as Patto said, also saw Darwin Football Club as a family friendly, multicultural football club.

In all, the club won 23 premiership league flags, eight reserve grade competitions and 28 junior titles, including an under 18s premiership. My husband played in two of those flags, in the 1979-80 and 1988-89 seasons. For more than two decades the record books show there were two dominate forces in the NTFL; the Buffs, along with St Mary's, won 17 of the 24 first grade premierships decided from the 1950s until the early 1970s.

John Patterson also noted that the club has a very proud record of players moving onto competitions, like the AFL/VFL, WAFL and SANFL. This include the likes of the famous Bill Dempsey, MBE, who played 343 league games for West Perth; Reuben Cooper, who played for South Melbourne; Andrew McLeod, 340 games for Adelaide and who is also a dual Norm Smith medalist; Matthew Whelan, 150 games for Melbourne; Darryl White, 268 games for Brisbane; Corey Ahchee, who I taught when he was four years old, played 206 games for Port Adelaide; Robbie Ahmat, 67 games with Collingwood and Sydney Swans; Matty Campbell, 82 games with North Melbourne; Joe Anderson, 17 games with Carlton and 84 with SANFL clubs; Cameron Stokes, 20 games with Hawthorn; and Jed Anderson, 20 games with Hawthorn and North Melbourne.

I had the great pleasure of attending the 100th anniversary dinner at the casino. My husband played for Buffs and it was wonderful to have the chance to catch up with so many people I have known most of my

life. The gala dinner brought together many old faces, not just footy players but people associated with the club and footy in the Northern Territory in many different ways.

I congratulate the 22 players, including Steven Stokes, who works in Parliament House, for the wonderful honour of being named in the team of the century, as well as the two coaches, Aldo Rossetto and George Liveris. That is an indication of the multiculturalness of Buffaloes; Aldo Rossetto has Italian heritage and George Liveris has Greek heritage, and they are named as the coaches of the century team. Andrew McLeod was announced as captain on the night.

I also congratulate John Patterson, the president of the Buffaloes, and his organising committee for bringing things together on the night. Patto was ably assisted by members of the Darwin Football Club committee: Cindy Patterson, Sonia and Naomi Briston, Mandela Yu, Muki Muir, Alison Brien, Geoff Dupuy, Darren Kwong, Samantha Fry, Marijana Tadic and Donald Christophersen.

Big events like this are probably 18 months to two years in the planning. A lot of work went into the night. It was wonderful. Patto and his team did a magnificent job. It was very special for everyone there and everyone had a wonderful time. I am sure you agree, Steven.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I start by acknowledging my appreciation of being here for the first sittings of 2017. I look forward to working with my colleagues to achieve good outcomes for Territorians. I wish to use my first adjournment speech of 2017 to highlight a matter of significance to me, my people, my parliamentary colleagues and the broader community. The matter I raise tonight is the matter of treaties. I like to refer to them as giving the community their voice and self-determination.

For me, 2017 started with a milestone moment, having been invited to attend my first ministerial meeting on behalf of the Chief Minister, as the assistant minister for Indigenous affairs, in South Australia, with the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Kyam Maher, and the Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Natalie Hutchins.

I was fortunate to hear about the steps South Australia and Victoria are taking on the road to treaty, as we in the NT are commencing our journey to ensure that treaty is a productive and positive outcome for Territorians. In addition to the talks on treaty, I was also able to discuss other topics, such as economic development and cross-border collaboration, which are especially important to me as my electorate borders SA.

Both SA and Victoria have outstanding Indigenous affairs ministers, whom I am looking forward to continuing to work with to build strong relationships. Both these states are well on their way to ensuring that adequate treaties and forms of agreements are formulated to be reached with our First Nations people from those states. I can confidently say that the government will also reach a time where we will be in a position to enter into treaties with our first Territorians to ensure the road to self-determination, reconciliation and inclusive economic development is achieved.

By 'treaty' I mean nothing more and nothing less than agreements between government and Aboriginal peoples. Agreements could involve things such as:

- a starting point of acknowledgement of our First Nations people and their rich and deep connection to this ancient land, as well as the significant contributions our First Nations people make to society both socially and economically
- a process of negotiation in which we are able to better unpack and understand the way in which First Nations people see the future for themselves and their future generations, remaining strong and having a voice that is heard
- outcomes in the forms of rights, obligations, opportunities and involvement in economic development and continued stewardship of the land and culture, as well as real input into policy relating to Aboriginal people

While some people may stand on a soap box and profess that little is being done to overcome disadvantage and that a treaty will do nothing, I challenge them to articulate a plan and a way forward that ensures our First Nations people are equally invested and involved. I am a long-term advocate for treaties and constitutional recognition. That is why I will continue to be a strong advocate in my Labor team, a team with passionate views and a passionate advocacy role for treaties.

A treaty process could allow or be a means of negotiating redress for grievances. It could strengthen a path forward based upon mutual goals, rather than ones imposed on Aboriginal people without allowing them to have a say. Our government will ensure that a new forum and conversations are held across the Northern Territory at all levels to discuss strategic issues, service delivery agencies and the wider Aboriginal community.

For the future of Aboriginal people to remain strong and to overcome disadvantage, mechanisms such as treaties—potential agreements at regional levels—are vital. They will need to be discussed and negotiated through a process that is based on mutual respect, and that recognises the sovereignty of Aboriginal people. Listening to Aboriginal people is, by itself, insufficient. To bring about real change, change must be built on partnership between our First Nations people, our organisations and government that can rise through the making of a treaty.

Aboriginal people need to be heard and listened to so that they have the power to make decisions that affect them. They must have the opportunity to be responsible for the programs designed to meet their needs. We must be accountable for the successes and failures that follow. This sits neatly with our Chief Minister's strong focus on more local decision-making and involvement in setting priorities, as well as the design of government programs involving housing, health services, education, community safety and families.

Positive change in Australia depends on Aboriginal people having more control of their lives. Improvements in education, employment and quality of life must be achieved by policies and programs which are owned and developed by the people who are affected—my people.

Success cannot be imposed on people; it requires partnerships, capacity building and hard work by everyone. We cannot wait for the Australian Liberal government to catch up with contemporary Australia's view and make laws necessary to create a positive change for Aboriginal people. The Territory Labor government will act. Our government has begun establishing a Cabinet subcommittee of Indigenous affairs, of which I am proud to play a leading role in as a co-chair.

Our subcommittee will focus on delivering Labor's plans to guarantee local decision-making, ensuring land and sea ownership delivers on the economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians, and progressing public discussions about treaties with Indigenous Territorians. The committee will investigate, review and advise government regarding treaty discussions and the best way forward for reconciliation, building and strengthening Aboriginal governance.

All bush MLAs and Indigenous MLAs will sit on the subcommittee, as will all senior leaders from across the Territory. This will ensure Indigenous Territorians have a permanent voice in Labor's Cabinet, and that the views and cultural perspectives of Aboriginal people are heard. As an Aboriginal person and a member of Territory Labor, I want not only what is best for Aboriginal people, but all Territorians. I see treaty as an important mark in our history and our political and constitutional systems. It may have been ignored for decades, which has only magnified the views of Aboriginal people and reinforced their feelings of powerlessness.

A treaty will give rise to stronger and more capable institutions of Aboriginal governance, and will pave the way to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. I thank you for the opportunity to speak on such an important matter. I look forward to working with my Territory colleagues to ensure we deliver and allow Aboriginal people's voices to be strong, not only in the Labor team and in government, but across the Territory.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, in November 2016 I launched an art competition in my electorate. The competition is the first of many I will be holding over the next four years. It is part of a series called Local Art by Local People. Each quarter there will be a different theme. There are three categories in this competition. Category 1 is for children under the age of 13. Category 2 is for young adults aged 13 to 25. Category 3 is for adults aged 25 and older.

The first of this series, which was held last year in November, was titled 'What Katherine means to me'. The objective was for local artists to depict a typical Katherine scene that showed what Katherine meant to them and that they believed was truly representative of Katherine. Our iconic Katherine Gorge was featured many times in the artwork that was submitted in November and December.

For this first competition we had 18 submissions. Each submission showed the amazing talent and creativity we have in Katherine, and it was difficult to choose just one from each category. In fact it was so difficult we selected two winners for Category 1 and Category 3.

Mary Abbott and Lilly Cairns both won in Category 1 for their paintings. Mary submitted two pieces depicting the Katherine Gorge. Mary is 12 years old and this is the first time Mary had shown her creativity and participated in a competition. She used several disciplines in her artwork: watercolour, pencil and ink. Mary's family was pleasantly surprised and so proud that when they saw her artwork they immediately purchased art supplies so she can continue to create art.

Lilly Cairns is 9 years old, and she used several methods to create her depiction of a crocodile. Lilly's mother tells me that she painstakingly drew and coloured the crocodile using both watercolours and pencil. Jaimie Bryant was the sole winner in Category 2. Jaimie submitted a watercolour painting of the Katherine Gorge. Jaimie is 13 years old. She is incredibly creative and a lovely young woman.

Prerna Ramawot and Kim Scott won in Category 3. Prerna is a new resident to Katherine, having moved there less than six months ago. She is Nepalese. She painstakingly drew every iconic and recognisable landmark in Katherine in intricate detail. She said she really enjoyed the competition because it gave her an opportunity to get out in the community and get to know it a little bit better. Kim Scott is a born and raised Katherine resident, and she submitted an oil painting that depicted a woman resting in leaves.

I once again congratulate all the people who submitted artwork in this competition, and I look forward to seeing more of it over the next four years. The winners each received \$100, and their artwork is now displayed in my office here in parliament. I invite all members of parliament to stop by my office to view the artwork. I am so proud of this group of winners, and I hope you all take the time to enjoy the artwork that is displayed.

It is my intention to open the Katherine electorate office to the people of Katherine. This is something I spoke about during my maiden speech. I will be create opportunities for Katherine residents to reconnect to the electorate office, government and parliament so they can truly feel that it is theirs after all. It is easy for people to get caught up in feeling negative when we are all inundated with reports of crime, domestic violence and unemployment.

My hope is that people will use this opportunity to create art and highlight the positive aspects of Katherine. I have also started inviting schools to submit artwork by young children to be placed on the electorate office walls. I love that the kids draw pictures of what they see in Katherine. There is not one smashed car window drawn, or any of those things. They draw birds flying, trees, parks, games and crocodiles. It is wonderful to have that positive reinforcement in the office.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, tonight I rise to place on the *Parliamentary Record* the achievements of two of my youngest constituents, Alyssa and Bella Perkins. I first met these two lovely ladies when they walked into my office seeking financial support as part of their being in the Top End Indigenous All Stars netball team. They wanted to attend the Australian Budgies Netball Indigenous competition, which oddly used to be called the Charlie Perkins Indigenous netball competition. That was held in Sydney in January this year.

They must have known I have a soft spot for this particular netball competition, having previously been a Northern Territory team coach, and both my eldest daughters competed in that competition. In 2004, one of my daughters made the National Budgies School Girls Team that went on to play in an international Indigenous netball competition.

So, here were two girls with a fire in their bellies to represent the Territory in a sport that I love and I could not say no to them. Instead of providing a financial donation we discussed providing a different sort of donation, so that they could then collect other donations and conduct a fundraising raffle to leverage donations for more funds. To say they embraced that idea is an understatement because during the Christmas holidays, every day for a week, these two young entrepreneurs and their supportive families—including their patient mum Melissa—sat outside my electorate office and sold raffle tickets. It added to the vibrancy of the centre and we could clearly see that people passing by were positively engaging with these two young ladies.

In addition, the girls also ran Club 50 fundraisers. I understand they raised plenty of money towards their trip including getting my colleague, the Member for Karama, to open up her wallet and contribute. I think

there is some family relationship there as well—a lot of pressure upon her to do that. Both the girls travelled to Sydney and competed for the Territory between 10 and 16 January.

Young Alyssa is only 12 years old and played in the Top End under 13s team. She is a very versatile player, and during the competition she played in every position across the court. That is a very unique talent for any netballer, but her main positions are that of goal attack and goal shooter. Given my own height and lack of court speed, they are positions that I really do not enjoy, so good on her.

Shooters can make or break a team's success in most sports and that is a lot of responsibility, particularly for a young person. I am told that she took on that responsibility with a great level of maturity. Whilst Alyssa did not make the national team this year, she was selected as a reserve, which is a massive achievement for any aspiring netballer or sportsperson in any code.

Her sister, Bella, is only 11 years old and played in the under 11s Top End team. Again, she is a very versatile player and played in every position at the competition. Like her big sister, Bella enjoys playing in the shooter roles, but she also really likes playing centre court, which is a position I can understand. Unfortunately, Bella sprained her ankle during the competition and had to spend some time resting, but she was very sensible in managing her injury and was later allowed to trial for the Budgies under 11s team. I am pleased to put on the record that she was successful in those endeavours. Congratulations to both girls.

They will now travel to the Gold Coast in July for further competition. Bella will be trialling to make it into the under 12s Australian Indigenous Schoolgirls Team, which will compete at the Pacific School Games in Adelaide in December this year. I know every member here will wish the girls well.

Both girls reported that the competition was awesome and they got to see a lot of other talented players in action, network with other competitors and make new friends. Both my daughters have been away to nationals and to this day, in their 20s, maintain the friendships they made at the national competitions. It is really important for girls; it broadens their horizons and circle of friendships.

We really need to keep our eyes on these girls because we know sport often builds strong leadership skills in young people, and from my early observations, these two will go far. I offered them both my sincere congratulations and I look forward to watching them grow on and off the court.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Madam Speaker, musically the Territory has always batted above its weight. From the fabulous strings of the Rondella Band straight out of Parap Camp, the early rock and roll of the Mystics and the sublime harmonies of the Mills sisters, Territory musicians have contributed mightily to the Territory's rich musical history. I am sure I do not have to remind you of the contributions of Yothu Yindi with their worldwide dance hit, *Treaty*, or the desert rock of the Warumpi Band, whose classic song *My Island Home* is considered by many Oz Rock aficionados as an alternative national anthem.

More recently, the stunning success of Jessica Mauboy has demonstrated that in the Territory we love music—from the heart and soul of this great land. All these great artists, and many more besides, shared one essential characteristic: they all began with family singalongs around a back yard somewhere, be it Parap, Papunya, Yirrkala or Wulagi.

Another family has produced another great Territory music act, born out of the back yard singalongs in the small community of Marlinja near Newcastle Waters, half way between Darwin and Alice Springs. They are Rayella, a father and daughter duo, Raymond and Eleanor Dixon. Raymond began his musical career with the seminal Barkly outfit, Kulumindini Band, from the nearby Elliott township in the late 1980s.

Kulumindini produced three great, independently-released albums on their own Marlinja musica label. They were inducted into the NT Aboriginal Music Hall of Fame some years ago. Kulumindini gigged around the Territory and Queensland for years, until the ravages of kidney failure and the unfortunate passing of Raymond's sister, Elisabeth, forced them to stop touring.

Elisabeth Dixon was an important role model for Eleanor. She was one of the first Aboriginal women to be recorded singing her own songs, including the much-loved, *Oh, My Home Marlinja*. Sitting around the back yard as a young girl, Eleanor watched her aunty and her dad, and knew what she wanted to do. She wanted to sing. Trained at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in music in Adelaide, she returned home and soon teamed up with her dad and other family members to form Rayella.

Mentored through the Desert Divas program—an initiative of Music NT—and with the support of Barkly Arts and the Winanjikari Music Centre in Tennant Creek, Eleanor's voice has been described by one rock critic as 'like angels whispering in my ear', and 'guaranteed to send shivers up your spine'. Raymond's love of country and family has enabled him to write and sing songs that celebrate Mudburra culture and history, while Eleanor's material explores matters of concern like domestic violence and the importance of having a go, giving it a crack and not being held back by gender, race or language.

Rayella has supported me as the Member for Barkly—including Leash and the Dusty Boots in a memorable gig in the township of Elliott. It was a great occasion. I thank them for their support. Important gigs followed, including appearances at the famous Bush Bands Bash in Alice, tours to Victoria and Western Australia for festivals, to Tasmania to play at the MOFO festival at the world famous Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, as well as shows in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek; and of course, there were many much-loved shows on the Elliott basketball court.

In the same year, 2015, Rayella played with Papunya's Tjintu Desert Band on the three-week Sand Tracks tour to remote South and Western Australian communities, including Amata, Warakuna and Warburton, among many others. Rayella has also established links with the Opera Australia Chamber Orchestra and has played with them at the last two Desert Harmony festivals in Tennant Creek, and in Melbourne as well. They have recorded an EP together.

Rayella's mix of country, rock and reggae is sung in English, and their first language, Mudburra, caught the ear of Violent Femmes guitarist Brian Richie. Early last year Rayella and the Violent Femmes were both touring Western Australia at the same time. They teamed up and played a special concert together at the United States consulate in Perth. So successful was the collaboration that the Violent Femmes have booked Rayella to support them on their Australia All Over tour next March and April.

The tour has gigs in Melbourne, Geelong, Albury, Newcastle, Penrith, Wollongong, Tweed Heads, the Sunshine Coast and Darwin. The Femmes and Rayella play at the Darwin Entertainment Centre on 27 March. Tickets are available now, so get in quick because this show will sell out.

A big shout out to Mr Alan James, the General Manager of the Darwin Entertainment Centre, who now conducts a world-class venue. It really does reflect Darwin as the capital of Northern Australia with a superb program that just keeps on giving. From little things in Territory back yards, big things can grow. Best wishes, Rayella, and may you long continue to make the Territory proud.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.