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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Moulden Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 5/6 students from Moulden Park Primary School accompanied by their teachers, Julie Craighead, Vicky McDonald, and Laura Morgan. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Terror Attacks in London

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, with the news coming in this morning of the death of four innocent people and more than 40 injured at the gates of the Houses of Parliament in London, our thoughts go to our friends and colleagues in the United Kingdom.

In my role on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I have been privileged to walk over the Westminster Bridge to meetings at the parliament in Westminster Palace and Portcullis House. Along with many of you, I know how busy the pedestrian area is outside near Big Ben as people are getting to work, and tourists are taking photos and enjoying the history of the location.

At home we must remain vigilant, and I am receiving advice from law enforcement authorities. We will not give in to fear or allow those who want to destroy our way of life to prevail.

On behalf of all members, I express our condolences and support to the UK from their parliamentary colleagues in the Northern Territory.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory woke this morning to the tragic news of the terrorist strike on our oldest friend. We know many from our local community, visitors and local residents have their hearts in London, and I say to them that our hearts are in London today as well.

We must always be vigilant so the Northern Territory remains a strong, vibrant, diverse and safe community. We stand strong with the UK.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, thank you very much for those words. I thank the Chief Minister and accept that he is speaking on behalf of all of us in this Chamber and the Northern Territory population in general.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, when we hear news of and see an assault such as this against an institution and what it represents—the mother of all parliaments, the cornerstone of the freedoms we enjoy and are able to thrive in as a result—we see this as an attack on the very foundations of our society, civilisation and the values which we hold dear, which undergird everything we say in this parliament.

For those who may be intimidated or who seek to harm or to challenge the things we hold dear, which are the foundations of modern civilisation, we stand strong and say that the attack will make us stronger.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Deputy Chief Minister

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

Motion agreed to.

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 Children and Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics should be directed to me, and any other questions normally directed to the Treasurer should be directed to the Chief Minister.

I note that the Deputy Chief Minister advised the opposition and Independents yesterday at Question Time yesterday that she would be absent today on government business.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Supporting Territory Women

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Sessional Order 7, I make a ministerial statement on supporting Territory women, as circulated yesterday.

Today I wish to talk about my vision for women and achieving gender equality in the Northern Territory. The Territory has a history of embracing strong women. Thousands of generations of Aboriginal women have fed their families and brought up their children on this land in some of the toughest environments in the world.

I also think of the early pioneers, like Olive Pink and Frieda Strehlow, in their heavy brown skirts, venturing into country few non-Aboriginal men would go, bringing with them a curiosity and passion for forging relationships with Aboriginal women.

I love hearing stories of our older women on the land, such as Josie Petrick, Jan Hayes or Jan Heaslip, who had incredibly tough lives by today's standards, but who all have such a strong sense of community and respect for other women.

I also think of the incredibly strong Aboriginal women who taught me when I first came to the Territory—women from the Centre who had a wonderful mix of determination, courtesy and love, and who embraced me, supported me and taught me how to achieve in the tough environment in which they live.

Today so many Territorian women are leaders in their field, such as Tracey Hayes, who is the CEO of the NT Cattlemen's Association, and Andrea Mason, who is the CEO of the NPY Women's Council as well as NT Australian of the Year and NT Businesswoman of the Year.

I was delighted to hear from the Member for Port Darwin yesterday when he informed the House that a female apprentice electrician had been nominated to represent us in the national training awards. But we still have a long way to go and many challenges to overcome to achieve gender equity.

Last week we celebrated International Women's Day, a day that grew out of a struggle by women for better working conditions and the vote. It evolved into a movement that sought equality and justice for women. It seems fitting to reflect on how far we have come and what we need to do in the future to achieve equality for women.

Women make up about 47% of the population in the Northern Territory, with almost 40% of women being under the age of 25 years. Despite one in two Territorians being female, the gender gap is large, with women experiencing disadvantage in a range of areas, including domestic and family violence, equal pay and economic security.

We do not talk enough about what gender equality means. It means women, men, transgender and gender diverse people having access to opportunity, reaching their full potential and contributing fully to our community. The gap commences in childhood and continues across the life stages. It commences with attitudes and values we teach children around a girl's worth and a woman's place in society. Early childhood centres and schools have an important role in breaking down poor attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls.

We need to have a strong focus on leadership, workforce participation and financial security to empower women across all stages of their lives.

In 1995 Australia signed up to the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action and identified 12 key areas for government policy reform to achieve gender equity. More than 20 years later we are still struggling to meet these goals. In 2014 Australia was ranked 24 out of 142 nations by the UN World Economic Forum in its annual audit on progress of individual nations in achieving gender equality. We are going backwards. In 2016 we dropped to a ranking of 46.

The countries on top of the list—Iceland and the Scandinavian and Nordic countries—have been leaders in developing gender equity strategies. They are among the countries this week named as the happiest nations, where people express great satisfaction with their lifestyle and where they live.

The United Nations, the World Health Organization and the Australian Government all recognise gender inequality at the heart of violence against women. This is not a radical fringe movement; this is mainstream thought. Recent evidence-based research shows that the most effective way to address the gender divide is to develop a gender equity framework with targets. One has recently been developed in Victoria.

I am fortunate to be part of a government that strongly believes in and demonstrates a commitment to achieving gender equality. The United Nations' theme for this year's International Women's Day was Empower a woman, empower a nation. It specifically focused on women's economic and political empowerment.

The Northern Territory Cabinet has a female majority for the first time in the Territory and Australia's history. The Speaker, Treasurer and Attorney-General of the Legislative Assembly are women. Twelve of the 25 elected members of the Legislative Assembly are women, which is the highest number ever.

Territory Labor has led the way, with Clare Martin being the first female Chief Minister in the Northern Territory, in the first Labor government of the Northern Territory.

Our government has committed to enhancing Territory women's involvement across key advisory and decision-making boards through ensuring that by 2020 we have a minimum 50% membership of women on our boards, reflecting the Territory's diversity. This practical commitment includes government statutory bodies, ministerial advisory committees and the departmental external advisory committees.

We need 50/50 to ensure we have a more diverse decision-making process and, if a gender disparity exists in our policy planning, it is identified early and addressed. I was very pleased to make the announcement this week of five women and five men being selected as individual members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs.

In addition, the Northern Territory Chief Minister's Youth Round Table consists of 16 young Territorians, of which eight are female and eight are male. We have a Youth Round Table member who demonstrates the triple role that women have in productive, reproductive and community life. She is engaged on the Round Table, is a mother and works full-time. It cannot be easy for her, but what a wealth of experience she brings to the Youth Round Table.

Government has also committed to establishing a forum to get advice from Indigenous women to complement the advice we currently obtain from the Indigenous Males Advisory Council. Government recognises that gender equality is experienced differently and that Aboriginal women have greater levels of disadvantage to overcome.

Decision-making bodies have an important influence on how society functions, how resources are allocated, who benefits and who receives financial assistance. It is important that these decision-making bodies reflect the community that their decisions affect. To date, there has also been significant investment in developing and educating women for leadership, but very little investment in addressing systemic barriers that prevent women from obtaining leadership positions.

Our government has also made strong commitments to tackling domestic and family violence and sexual violence. This remains one of the Northern Territory's greatest challenges in addressing the gender divide. Although there is no single cause of violence against women, the latest international research shows there are certain factors that consistently drive higher levels of violence against women. These beliefs and behaviours reflect disrespect for women, low support for gender equality and adherence to rigid gender roles and relations.

Violence against women has been shown to be significantly and consistently lower in countries such as Iceland and Nordic countries, where women's economic and social rights are better protected and power and resources are more equally distributed between men and women.

Gender inequality is at the heart of the Northern Territory's horrendous statistics. In Australia in 2015, just over 800 women per 100 000 residents were victims of domestic violence assault. In the Northern Territory that figure is closer to 3000. In Australia, two women a week die from domestic and family violence. Territory women are the primary victims of assault, at 65% of all assaults, with 81% of all perpetrators being men, and the rate of sexual assault in the NT is the highest in Australia.

Women and children should be able to live their lives without fear of violence. Our government has moved quickly to introduce laws that will provide greater protection to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. In November we amended the domestic violence mutual recognition act, ensuring women will no longer have to go through the long and traumatic process of reapplying for a domestic violence order every time a woman crosses state borders. This means a DVO in place in one state or territory will be recognised in every other jurisdiction. It means women and children will not be placed in potentially unsafe situations while waiting for a domestic violence order to be put in place.

We have passed the body-worn video and domestic violence bill, enabling videos captured by police with body-worn cameras to be used as chief evidence in court in domestic and family violence cases. This will make women feel safer, give greater surety and reduce the level of trauma experienced by women by providing an alternative form of evidence in court.

Last week we amended the *Bail Act* to allow the use of electronic monitoring bracelets. These bracelets will enable domestic violence orders and bail conditions for perpetrators of domestic violence to be effectively policed and enforced, greatly increasing the sense of safety for women and potentially saving lives.

These amendments to legislation strengthen the suite of tools available on the ground to deal with domestic and family violence. This suite includes the highly successful Family Safety Framework, first introduced in Alice Springs by the previous Labor government. The Family Safety Framework has since been expanded to Tennant Creek, Yuendumu, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy. The framework brings government agencies and non-government organisations together at a local level. It has been highly successful at problem solving and putting in place action-based, integrated service delivery responses for individuals and families experiencing domestic and family violence, specifically those at high risk of severe injury or death.

To date, up until the end of 2016, 90% of victims referred into the framework had not been re-referred, indicating a likely reduction in the risk of homicide and further serious harm. The Northern Territory Government is committed to taking a holistic approach to the issue of domestic and family violence. This is clearly demonstrated through the formation of Territory Families, which brings together early childhood development, child protection, youth policy, youth justice, multicultural affairs, women's and men's policy, and domestic and family violence policy and services.

Work has commenced on the development of a new domestic and family violence and sexual violence reduction framework for the NT, and the government has committed to developing a sexual violence prevention and response framework. This framework will identify where services can be improved, and where opportunities are to work towards prevention and long-term recovery.

The government is also strengthening family violence services in remote communities through the national partnership agreement to build family safety teams, and to maintain the current safe houses and domestic violence outreach services in remote communities.

We made a commitment to build a safe house in Galiwinku. Earlier this month I visited Galiwinku, and it was a delight to meet with strong women and men and discuss the construction of the safe house. The women in this community have been arguing for this for many years. One of the women told me she had been advocating for it since the 1970s. I listened to their vision for reducing domestic and family violence using the tools available within their culture as well as our culture. The community is strongly committed to a safe house, one in which the community is intricately involved in designing the model and location.

In this House last week I tabled a petition with nearly 400 signatures of local people in Galiwinku. This was done entirely by the community and shows their commitment to reducing harm and resolving family violence.

Our government has committed \$6m to building a new women's shelter in Alice Springs. The new women's shelter will provide much-needed support to women and children from over 80 different communities across four states.

As I stated earlier, preventing domestic and family violence against women requires a holistic approach to addressing gender inequity. This includes changing attitudes, values and behaviour, and building equal and respectful relationships between and among men and women, and boys and girls. It means fostering positive personal identities, and challenging gender stereotypes and roles. It means promoting and normalising gender equity in public and private life. This starts in the early years and continues in the classroom and into adolescence.

Evidence shows that the greatest gains in life can be made in the early years, which is why this government has committed to developing an early years plan. In the early years the brain grows fastest and it is the best chance to build self-esteem, positive behaviours and relationships, and the skills needed in later life. At this point the ground work can be put in place for building equal and positive relationships and opportunity between boys and girls, and men and women.

Parenting programs and opportunities for young men and women to learn co-parenting skills and share the load can build self-esteem and play a role in changing behaviours. Young women's and men's behaviours, study choices, ambitions and views about relationships are all affected by gender norms. We need to introduce role models, mentoring and programs that challenge these norms and provide young women with opportunities to succeed in life.

This can have a very positive impact on men in our society. We have spoken in the House this week about the problems with not having enough men in the teaching profession. Encouraging men to take on non-traditional roles benefits everyone. Men as stay-at-home fathers, teachers, social workers and carers will have an opportunity to influence the next generation.

Young women are also less likely to participate in sport. Sport is a highly valued part of our culture and has the capacity to challenge gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes as well as promote core values of fairness and respect. Sport can change the way women and girls see themselves and the way communities perceive them. The recent creation and promotion of women's AFL teams is a good example of changing gender norms and providing role models to encourage women to play sport and live healthy lifestyles.

This Saturday we will see a number of Territory women playing at the highest level in the grand final when Adelaide Crows play the Brisbane Bears. Go the Crows! Last week record crowds came to Marrara to watch the finals of a number of Territory women's teams and the Adelaide Crows playing the Demons.

Gender is one of the most powerful determinants to health outcomes. Women make up 60% of reported cases of self-harm and attempted suicides in Australia. Gender inequalities in workforce participation, caring responsibilities and poor pay remuneration contribute to poor health outcomes for women.

Violence against women is one of the leading causes of preventable death, disability and illness for women aged between 15 and 44 years. There is also a trend of alcohol consumption and high-risk binge drinking on the rise amongst women, particularly young women.

Aboriginal mothers are more than thrice as likely as non-Indigenous women to report smoking during pregnancy. Our government has made a number of commitments to improving antenatal and maternal health services, which will improve the health and life chances of the mother and the child. These include expanding the Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting programs and improving outreach antenatal services, amongst others.

Women also require better access to reproductive and sexual health services. This week I was extraordinarily proud to be a member of the Labor government that had the courage to pass the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill, which will decriminalise abortion and legalise the use of drugs like RU486 for medical termination of pregnancy. This brings us into line with other states and will enable more women, no matter where they live, to have more choice and greater control of their bodies and health circumstances.

Gender inequality is important in enabling women to take opportunities and succeed on equal footing with men. Women still face barriers to workplace equality and economic security. Many women in remote areas have difficulty accessing education and training. Higher education and training offers great employment

options and has been linked to improvements in individual quality of life in regard to better access to healthcare, better dietary and health practices, and greater economic stability and security.

The Office of Women's Policy in Territory Families delivers the Minister for Women's scholarship each year through Charles Darwin University. One higher education scholarship of \$15 000 is provided each year, along with \$1200 for the purchase of a laptop, and two VET scholarships at \$2000. These scholarships are targeted at women who are socially, culturally or geographically disadvantaged. Encouragement is given to women who are applying to study in non-traditional trades or education streams.

Nationally, more women than men graduate from higher learning, but they receive a lower than average graduate wage.

The Global Gender Gap Report ranks Australia number one in educational attainment, but this is not being translated into wage equality; we are currently ranked number 60 on that measure. In women workforce participation we are ranked 55th.

On average, Territory women are paid 18.9% less than Territory men. This means every year Territory women would need to work an additional 69 days a year to be paid the same rate as their male colleagues for the same work. This figure is higher than the national pay gap at 18.2%. Women are more likely to be in lower paid employment jobs, part-time employment and unpaid work, and they often have interrupted work patterns due to caring for family or a lack of access to stable employment.

Women undertake nearly twice as many hours of unpaid work and care, especially for children, making it more difficult to remain in the workforce. They often take on the carer role for aged parents and people with disabilities. Variable access to flexible working conditions, paid parental and carer leave, poor childcare options and workplace discrimination all contribute to this problem.

Making changes to work policies to allow men to have a greater role in sharing the family load would help women. While many men want to take more equal responsibility for caring for their children, workplace practices often prevent or discourage them from taking extended parental leave or working flexibly.

Generous parental leave in Nordic countries has had a significant impact on gender equality. Norway's gender wage gap fell from a substantial 20% in 1991 to 8% in 2010. This change was directly related to this parental leave policy. In 2008, 97% of eligible fathers took parental leave. Changes in parental caring arrangements contribute to changes in gender role models and to perceptions of women's jobs and roles, with men having to take on more of the domestic and childcare arrangements.

Unstable employment arrangements and lower wages have a direct impact on women's retirement savings, leaving them vulnerable to poverty later in life. Lower wages impacts on the amount of superannuation women have access to in retirement. Women only hold 37% of super savings in Australia and, on average, have \$92 000 less than men at retirement age. Sixty per cent of women between 65 and 69 years of age have no superannuation at all.

For a small jurisdiction with high rents and limited services this is an area of concern, as this group of women may require government services, such as homelessness services, which could be prevented by adequate superannuation. There is a strong economic and business case for why we should commit to ensuring women participate equally in our community. Closing Australia's gender employment gap would boost GDP by around 11%—by 20% if the productivity gap was addressed.

While women are now achieving high levels of education, this has not translated to equal workforce engagement or earnings. The Australian economy would benefit by \$8bn if women transitioned into the workforce at the same rate as men. Workforce security and stability is an enormous issue in the Northern Territory for all employers, particularly along attracting and retaining skilled people.

Organisations encouraging diversity and enabling flexible work practices have been shown to increase both male and female work retention and to attract high achievers. By providing more flexible work practices for both men and women, Territory employers are better placed to attract and retain staff.

Gender equity in leadership positions increases business performance. Research by the Peterson Institute for International Economics into 21 980 firms from 91 countries shows that firms with at least 30% of women in leadership positions were 15% more profitable.

The disproportionate burden of unpaid care borne by women imposes major economic costs. In 2009–10, the unpaid care sector—estimated to be worth around \$650bn—was nearly six times larger than the paid care section of our economy, which is estimated to be around \$112.4bn.

There are also considerable savings to be realised by reducing violence against women and girls. Domestic violence constitutes about 60% of police work and considerable hours of hospital emergency department work, as well as the cost of operating women's shelters, safe houses and court costs.

One of the main reasons I entered into parliament was to do whatever I can to make the Territory a place where everyone can have a fair go. My passion is to address gender equity, to bring into our consciousness the actions—both subtle and strident—that serve to put women in their place and, in doing so, deny them the same access as men to health, education, well-paid jobs and life without the fear of violence.

Often in government decision-making we forget to put different lenses over our policies, whether it be an economic, social or environmental lens. The gender lens is one very important aspect of policy, and I am determined that it will not be underestimated. There are many grim stories and statistics to be told about gender inequality, but there are also stories of tenacity, achievement, leadership and passion of women doing amazing things as part of their everyday life.

To the women of Galiwinku, the staff of Alice Springs Women's Shelter, my parliamentary colleagues, and to countless others, I salute you and delight in your journey to achieving gender equality in our great Northern Territory society.

Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak to this statement today. I am very proud to be part of a government that values and respects women and the incredible contribution we make to the Territory. As Beyoncé said, 'Who run the world? Girls!'

I have spoken previously about what I see as one of the biggest achievements of this parliament—the best gender balance we have seen in this House. Overnight, the Territory went from having the voice of one woman in Cabinet to five, with women now making up the majority of this government's Cabinet. Out of the Gunner Labor government members, 50% are women who inspire and empower me to be the best I can, to be the best team we can be, and to do the best we can for all people in the Northern Territory. This week has been especially interesting—hearing the different stories of the women in this Chamber, all of which have been inspiring.

I am a huge believer that having representation that reflects the diversity of our community makes for more robust and equitable decision-making. I am proud to be part of a Legislative Assembly that in just eight months has passed multiple pieces of legislation that will improve the lives of many Territory women, addressing issues such as domestic and family violence and, as we have seen this week, access to health services. To echo the words of the Minister for Territory Families, that was a pinnacle moment this week. It has brought home to me, as someone who identifies as a feminist, the importance of the continued fight for equality in our community.

I have been surrounded by strong women my whole life. My mum had my brother and me by the time she was 21 and went to university while providing for us, maintaining the council home we lived in and working at the local co-op. She went on to be a teacher and many of her students still speak about her. As others said in debate yesterday, you do not forget your good teachers. She then went on to fight further for education in the NT Branch of the Australian Education Union. Social justice is in her blood, and that rubbed off on me as a child. I remember pulling down posters advertising circuses that used animals. Animal rights was a particular passion for my mother when I was a child.

My Auntie Nadia took after my grandfather, a transport worker, and has worked for many years in the transport network across Cheshire from her base in Crewe, in the United Kingdom. She has a gift with people unlike anyone I have ever seen and is one of the strongest women I will ever know. Her charismatic nature was captured in a book called *Crewe and Its People* a few years ago, as recognition of her standing in the community, and the incredible and sometimes weird stories she could tell you about helping people over many years to get wherever they were going.

Through the Young Social Pioneers program with the Foundation for Young Australians I have been very lucky to connect with incredible young women across this country, such as Felicity Furey—that is her real

name and she is a real-life super hero. She is an engineer behind the Power of Engineering, which is about getting more girls into STEM by actively promoting engineering and related careers as pathways for women.

Another personal hero of mine is Yassmin Abdel-Magied, someone else I have met through the Young Social Pioneers. She is an incredibly powerful, inspirational young woman who is not afraid to speak her truth, even when up against it from all corners in recent times. This young woman started Youth Without Borders. I think she was 16 when she started it. She is mad about Formula One and has worked in Formula One across the world. She works on an oil rig and has written a book about her experience as a young Muslim migrant woman, all at the age of 24 years. That is incredible.

Then, of course, there are young women like Miranda Tapsell, one of the Territory's own and an incredible Territorian who uses her platform—she is a wonderful actor who was in *The Sapphires* and *Love Child*—to raise her voice on behalf of her community. Many people would have seen her on the NT Stars float at the Sydney Mardi Gras over the last couple of years. She graduated from Darwin High School in 2004. We are very proud of our young Territory women who are using their platform to speak up for our community.

In this government Territorians can be assured that the responsibility for women's policy is carried by all of us. It is not just a standalone policy setting under the Minister for Territory Families, who is very capable in the area of women's policy. In my own portfolios, I can say with much delight, two-thirds of the chief executive officers providing leadership are women.

I am incredibly lucky to receive advice from Kathleen Robinson, the CE of the Department of Corporate and Information Services, and Jo Townsend, the acting CE of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources—two incredibly accomplished and sharp Territory women. I am also very lucky and proud to be a minister presiding over a number of important initiatives that will ensure women are better able to participate in and contribute to the Territory's community and economy.

These initiatives are traditionally male dominated areas, not because men are better equipped or more capable in this fields, but because women simply have not been given the same opportunity or afforded the same level of respect as men. It is exciting to imagine a world where women are given equal opportunity and equal recognition for their efforts and abilities. I believe it will make for a richer and more innovative world. The Minister for Territory Families has outlined many of the areas in which there is still much work to do.

The ICT industry is one area where it is important we support and recognise the contributions and limitless ability of women. It is one area where women are notoriously underrepresented. According to the Australian Computer Society's *Australia's Digital Pulse 2016* women made up only 20% of all ICT workers, compared to 43% across all professions.

According to *Australia's Digital Pulse 2015*, average earnings for women in ICT tend to be significantly lower than men, with an average pay gap of 20%. This is particularly perplexing given the history of extremely successful, effective, influential and powerful women in ICT—women like Ada Lovelace, who was acknowledged as the world's first computer programmer; the female human computers of the Harvard astronomy program; the 'hidden figures' women, who crunched the numbers for NASA to put man on the moon; and women like Marissa Mayer and Susan Kare, who helped Apple and Google get to where they are today.

There are many different theories as to why this disparity exists, but we know that sometime around the mid-1980s the historically strong role of women in ICT started to wane—the challenges to ensure we are building that number back up to a point where women are acknowledged and afforded opportunities on par with men in ICT. This is an industry that continues to grow at an incredibly rapid rate across the world. It is an issue we cannot waste any time in tackling. I have spoken previously about how important it is for us to be active contributors in the digital economy.

We need to grow the local ICT workforce in regard to staff numbers and expertise levels so local businesses are in a position to take advantage of the growing demand for ICT services, and local ICT professionals can take up the corresponding employment opportunities. We cannot do this with the current rates of engagement of women in the industry.

The Australian Computer Society released a report in 2015 called *The Promise of Diversity – Gender Equality in the ICT Profession* and it highlighted the importance of female role models, leadership, culture, mentoring, flexible work practices and improving female participation in ICT. The report also emphasised

that young women and girls need to be encouraged to study ICT and computer science at the primary and secondary level. I look forward to releasing this government's ICT strategy later this year, and ensuring that within the strategy we take measures to achieve a greater parity of women in ICT in the Territory.

I am also looking forward to working with our own female Territory role models in ICT to develop this aspect of the strategy. I was very pleased last International Women's Day to be part of a panel with some of those incredible role models in the technology field, one of whom is related to the Member for Port Darwin.

There are many incredible role models in the Territory, like the NT digital entrepreneur Mikaela Jade, who I spoke about recently in parliament, and others, including Sharmila Packiaraja, the branch chair for the Australian Information Security Association; Camille Fong Lim from local ICT company SRA; Katherine Doney from Simient; Barbara White from CDU; Karen Hawkes from Captovate; Magdaline Coleman from Coleman's Printing; Jude Ellen from Dolphin Software; Stacey Harris from Territory Technology Solutions; and Kathleen Robinson, the CE of the Department of Corporate and Information Services. They are terrific role models for women in ICT in the Territory, and we need more like them.

We need to look at how we can better bridge the gender divide in other associated digital industries. Australia leads the world in our diverse and innovative use of drone technology outside of their use for Defence purposes; however, less than 1% of pilots are women. Drones currently service a huge range of industries, including environmental conservation, retail delivery and, as stated by the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, mining. Drones have the potential to play a huge part in Australia's rural and regional environments, particularly northern Australia, where access is limited. Our region creates an ideal niche to develop diverse and high-value applications of rapidly emerging drone and other technologies in meaningful ways.

I am passionate about building the capacity of our young Territorians and young women to use technologically driven opportunities to develop the north of Australia. I am pleased to be able to provide support to get this off the ground with the She Flies program. She Flies is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary program that builds confidence in girls and women to engage in the wonderful world of flying drones. It offers young Territory women unique career path opportunities they may not have been otherwise exposed to. It builds diversity in an important sector of STEM. It is a partnership between James Cook University; Rust 490, which is a local company; Charles Darwin University, the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy; and the Office of the Supervising Scientist.

I am happy in my capacity as a local member to write in support of that program to take place and reach young women in schools in the Territory and across the north. I look forward to hearing more about it. We are in a unique position in the Territory to lead practice with this technology.

We need to introduce our young women to the power of STEM and drone technology developed and applied in their own backyards, along with the opportunity to create a career pathway. We need girls learning STEM because we need women working in STEM. We need our current NT women role models in STEM to continue to step up as mentors—as they are—to our girls to help ensure the next generation has a better representation of women in STEM professions. We need to do more to celebrate the women doing incredible things in STEM-related industries so that young women and girls can see what is possible for them.

There are exciting challenges this government is addressing for the first time as part of our innovation agenda. From STEM to sport—we are supporting women and girls to take their rightful claim for equal representation in sport. We know the important role sport plays in many young women's lives. We are the first government to understand the need to directly invest in infrastructure and sporting programs and concepts that will support more women and girls to participate in sports.

We are investing in facilities that will encourage women and girls in remote communities to get involved in sport as participants, volunteers or spectators. As we upgrade remote ovals throughout the NT, and as part of our commitment, we will ensure the upgrades take the needs of our female participants into account.

We are fast-tracking new female-friendly change room facilities at Tiwi Oval to cater for the explosion of interest in female football on the islands. It was great to be there with the Member for Arafura and the Chief Minister on the weekend. We watched a great game of footy and got to say hello and give all the best to the Tiwi Bombers Youth Girls who did incredibly well in the grand final.

The Tiwi girls are just as talented as their famously talented male counterparts.

Mr Vowles: More talented.

Ms MOSS: More talented; I will take that, Member for Johnston. I have no doubt the players from the Tiwi Islands will be drafted to the Adelaide Crows Women's AFL team in the near future.

The health benefits of participating in sport are well known, but the social ties created by participation and active involvement are also important. There is a great sense of comradery generated by women in sports, with many women and girls making friends for life from their involvement with their local sporting club.

We want to ensure that women throughout the NT are supported and encouraged to play sports not matter what code they choose. In my meetings with the national and local peak sporting bodies they have made it very clear that this government values equality in sport. They know that we, like them, are focused on promoting and increasing female participation.

For too long many major codes have neglected to invest in female participation, and I am proud to say the Gunner Labor government is working with Territory sports to reverse this trend. We have more than doubled the previous government's commitment to the NT Adelaide Crows female team. We have invested over \$400 000 over two years into supporting the Territory component of the team.

With nine Territory-based players and two games being played in the NT, we increased our level of sponsorship, as we know that Territory women need our support to play sport at the highest level. We are thrilled to see Territory girls playing such a pivotal role in this team's first season. We increased our investment to gain greater visibility for this wonderful concept and showcase the Northern Territory's female sporting talent to a huge national audience. I think we can all agree that that has been exceptionally successful with the likes of Ange Foley, Sally Riley and Lauren O'Shea.

I have said to them on multiple occasions how amazing it is to be able to turn on the TV and see those local players, faces that we know from around our community, playing interstate at the top of the game. They will pave the way for many more Territory girls to play in the new league. There is a clear pathway from the NT to the AFL Women's league for Territory girls, and that is the most important element of our investment.

No matter where a Territory girl kicks a football, no matter how remote the location, Territory girls now have a defined pathway to the AFL women's competition, and I wish them all the very best in the grand final—but I think we all know they will smash it—so good luck. They will take on the Gold Coast, as the minister said, next Sunday in the grand final, with the Territory flag proudly adorning the back of their playing guernsey. It is a stunning achievement; they have already done us proud and we will all be cheering them on.

We have also invested in a full-time coach to work with the Redtails in Alice Springs to ensure their very successful female program, the wonderful Pink Tails, continues to create opportunities for female Centralians to progress. I have already expressed that I plan to convene a women in sport advisory panel with representatives from across sports in the NT, as I want women to have a strong voice in the sporting community. This will help to guide and shape our women in sport policy.

Ms Purick: AFLW is on Saturday.

Ms MOSS: Sorry, AFLW is on Saturday.

What better way to demonstrate our total commitment to female participation than the fast-tracking of the much-needed indoor netball facility at Marrara. I was thrilled to announce last year that we are fast-tracking the construction of this wonderful stadium, which will be a huge boost for the Marrara sporting precinct and the legions of dedicated Territory women and girls who love their netball and want to play year-round in a purpose-built facility. Many members of this Chamber are very excited about that.

We are also investing \$25m into the new home for rugby league at Warren Park, incorporating female-friendly change facilities, as participation of women and girls in rugby league is growing and the new stadium will be able to cater for this growth. Under this government, sport will be more accessible than ever before for Territory women. Within my Tourism and Culture portfolio women are also playing an essential role, and I was pleased recently to appoint Hetti Perkins to oversee the project development of our iconic National Indigenous Art Gallery.

Hetti Perkins is a strong, highly regarded and well-respected art curator and writer, and she has been a senior cultural adviser on numerous national and international arts projects. Hetti's Arrernte heritage stems from her grandmother, namesake and matriarch, who, according to her biography, like many other Aboriginal women, learned to raise a large family unaided, ride horses and camels, skin a bullock, lay a fuse, and dig and assay gold-bearing ore. Hetti's grandmother has a nursing home for elderly Aboriginals named after her in Alice Springs.

I have also doubled the number of women on the Tourism NT board, appointing four local women, two of whom are Indigenous. Ms Helen Martin is the Business Director of Banubanu Wilderness Retreat on Bremer Island and the Chair of the NT Chief Minister's Indigenous Tourism Advisory Council; Ms Dale McIver is the Director of Alice Springs Event Management and Consultancy and Chair of Tourism Central Australia; Ms Rachael Beaumont-Smith is the Managing Director for Darwin Harbour Cruises and Deputy Chair of Tourism Top End; Ms Patricia Angus is the Director of Indigenous Business Australia and Careflight, member of the Top End Hospital Network Governing Council and the Charles Darwin University Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Advisory Council. Many women wear many hats.

I was also very pleased to visit the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. I acknowledge the women there for the incredible work they have done over a long period of time to ensure the stories of Territorian and Australian women are showcased for the trailblazing of women across a range of industries. I note that the Member for Namatjira has family members showcased in that exhibition for their role in Central Australia.

I am proud to call myself a Territory woman, and I am proud to be part of a government that is actively supporting Territory women to take their rightful place in every facet of our community and economy.

To quote Helen Reddy, we want all Territory women to say:

I am woman; hear me roar. I am strong; I am invincible; I am woman!

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank the Minister for Territory Families for her statement. It is wonderful, so early in our government, to hear statements supporting women. I acknowledge all the strong women in here today.

I thank the minister for talking about gender equality. Her passion for and commitment to creating a Territory where a fair go is available to everyone is very welcome.

Early childhood education and care services in schools, along with families, play an important role in teaching children about the value each of us has in our society, no matter our gender.

Last week International Women's Day was celebrated around the world. I thoroughly enjoyed the march. It was wonderful to see all the purple umbrellas, which made Darwin a vibrant city centre on that day. Whilst it is important to celebrate the many and varied achievements of women, such as the number of women in this parliament, it is also important to remember that more work needs to be done.

Unfortunately we still need to fight for equal pay and our rights to access health services. This was highlighted last week by the walk-off of early childhood educators in support of better wages and conditions. Of early childhood educators, 95% of them are women. Like many other women-dominated workforces, the work they do is often undervalued and the workers experience poor wages and conditions.

The Minister for Territory Families spoke about women and superannuation, and that is one of the cornerstones—as a leader in all my workplaces, I have always emphasised to the women I have worked with to not resign but to take options, such as leave without pay, if they need a break from their career. It is so hard to build up your superannuation. When I have spoken to my older friends, as they head into their late forties and fifties, I have encouraged them to put more money into their superannuation. You do not know what your life circumstances will be as you get older.

I have a very sad story of an older woman in my electorate who ended up divorced and is now in dire financial strife. She is in her seventies. It is a really important lesson. Whenever I speak to young women, older women and women in the workforce, I constantly talk about making sure their superannuation is well looked after. It is something we often think is a long way off, but old age ends up happening very quickly.

Early childhood educators earn about \$20 per hour. This means the educators who look after and educate our little ones are among some of the lowest-paid professionals in our community. They earn one-third less

than any other professionals educating and teaching our children. Educators and other low-paid workers find it difficult to own their own homes and provide for their families.

The Commonwealth Government should do more to ensure educators are rewarded for the work they do, without increasing the cost of care for working families. It is a fine balance between those two things—the cost of childcare and keeping that at a reasonable level for families, and making sure we look after the workers. We will work with educators and the Commonwealth Government to improve their wages and conditions and increase the recognition of the importance of their work.

We recently passed the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 after a long journey. Now women of the Territory have the same access to termination of pregnancy services as other women across Australia, but we had to argue and fight for the right for women to access modern medicine. This week has been an amazing and monumental week, and I thank the work of our Health minister, a strong Territory woman, who has had to keep her focus on that bill. It was another great thing to do early in our term of government, to recognise the importance of that.

VISITORS
Moulden Primary School

Madam ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the Year 5/6 class from Moulden Park Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Chet Dhaka and Jess McAusland. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms LAWLER: The Member for Blain and I are very lucky to have Moulden school in our electorate. What a great school. Hello, all you people from Moulden.

In 2017 nothing highlights the work our governments and institutions still have to do better than continuing to have to fight for the rights that women have supposedly had for decades. I was very pleased that a group of senior school students—boys and girls from Darwin High School—witnessed the debate on Tuesday on the rights for women to access contemporary medicines. My niece was one of those students. She is in Year 12 at Darwin High School and is doing Women's Studies. I was very proud to see young women and men who are interested in legislation and contemporary issues, but also in politics in the Territory. I strongly believe the future of the Territory will be in good hands. It is important that the school groups coming here to listen to parliament gain a great understanding of how legislation is formed and the importance of having good governance in the Northern Territory.

Evidence across the world is very clear that educating women is the key to addressing social and economic disadvantage. International research has found that children with educated mothers are twice as likely to go to school and are more likely to be healthy. Educated women support and grow the economic prosperity of their families and their communities.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, you know this from your work as well. This is important because we have discussed, over the last few days of sittings, improving the educational outcomes for all children. Boys and girls, trans and diverse people contribute to the development of a strong and productive economy and society. All children need extra support at times to succeed and achieve in all aspects of their learning. Some of these supports need to be specific to meet the needs of girls and women.

Programs like the Stars Foundation, which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and young women to achieve their full potential—the program operates in eight schools across the Northern Territory: Sanderson Middle School; Dripstone Middle School; Nightcliff Middle School; Casuarina Senior College; Katherine High School; Nhulunbuy High School; Tennant Creek High School; and Yirara College.

The Stars program provides a range of activities, tailored to meet the needs of individual young women, which are designed to foster resilience and wellbeing and increase social connection, community participation and self-confidence. The activities include sports and physical activity, arts, music and dance, and activities in the community. The program aims to support young people to complete Year 12 and successfully transition into a sustainable career. Last year, of the 39 Year 12 participants in the Stars program, 35 completed their NTCET. These 35 young women are now ready for their future.

These programs are vital in the Territory to make sure education and the support it provides does not stop at the end of Year 12. It is about moving kids into careers and further education. Having connections and programs like Stars and Clontarf do that; they provide wraparound support for children leaving school to move them into careers or further education.

To quote UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health ... No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation.

To quote Andrea Goddard, the Stars Foundation Executive Director, 'The gap between being a child and having a child is so important for young women's futures'.

Many of the female staff in the Stars Foundation and Clontarf—a similar program for boys—and other support roles also compete in professional sport. They are 24/7 role models for young people, especially young women. These include women like Stevie Lee-Thompson, who works as a teacher assistant at the Malak Re-Engagement Centre, and is playing for the Crows in the first AFL Women's Grand Final; and Ange Foley, who is a PE teacher at Essington School in Rapid Creek.

We also have amazing women in public service like Colleen Gwynne, the Children's Commissioner, who is also the assistant coach for the Adelaide Crows AFL Women's league. She is also what the Best and Fairest award for the women's premiere league is named after. I do not know how Colleen has enough time in a day to do everything she does. I hear her speaking on ABC radio on my way to work some days. She is working full-time as Children's Commissioner, which is one of the most difficult jobs in the public service. She is also coaching a successful AFL women's team. We have exceptional women in the Territory.

Being pregnant or having a baby at a young age should not limit your education and future life choices. Unfortunately young parents, especially young mothers who leave school early, are at greater risk of ongoing poverty, and face greater hardship than young people who complete their education. Pregnant and parenting young mums are less likely to finish their education, less likely to find a good job and more likely to end up as single parents raising their children in poverty.

We also know that supporting young mothers to complete their education is one of the most effective ways of minimising negative health and welfare outcomes and poor education achievement. Supporting young mums and dads also contributes to improving their parenting skills, as well as their children's health, safety, wellbeing and learning outcomes.

The Department of Education provides programs that support young pregnant or parenting mums to continue their education, as well as care for their children. Programs are provided through the NT School of Distance Education in which young mums study at home and receive ongoing face-to-face support; however, there are other programs which young mums can attend. In Alice Springs young mums are supported by the Young Mums Program, which is delivered by Alice Outcomes through Centralian Senior College.

Work is near completion on the new facility for this program. The new facility will provide a warm, welcoming and safe environment for young mums to receive a quality education while they have their children with them. This program has been around for a long time. It is a great program which does very important work.

Last year, at the Palmerston Child and Family Centre, 18 young mums and their children participated in the Young Mothers are Strong Mothers program. This program is a joint initiative of the Health and Education departments. The young mums receive parenting support, child health checks and access to childcare. That is up the top of Palmerston, as we say, near the health centre. It is a lovely facility, where the Families as First Teachers program runs. It has childcare and is a one-stop shop for all families in Palmerston. It is great to see the Young Mums Program there as well.

The young mums are supported to identify and achieve their learning goals. All the young mums studied their Certificate II in Community Services. Eleven of the 15 young mums completed their Certificate II in 2016. Many of these mums have expressed interest in continuing their studies in 2017 and gaining their Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. Eighteen young mums enrolled in Young Mothers are

Strong Mothers this year and I am looking forward to visiting them. I was there last year, but I look forward to visiting the group this year as well.

In April, the 2016 and 2017 young mums will be invited to attend a workshop delivered by the Australian Government Department of Human Services on Indigenous graduate apprenticeships at the Department of Human Services. Supporting girls' and women's education is about giving them the skills and desire to be whoever they want to be, have jobs or careers they want, and be happy and successful.

Traditionally girls have not been supported to pursue studies and careers in science, technology, engineering and maths. It was great to hear the Member for Casuarina speak about STEM in her response to the statement today. These STEM disciplines help us to understand the world we all live in, and this is where many of the future job opportunities will be. Currently, across Australia, there is a big gap between girls' and boys' participation and achievement in STEM in schools.

Outside of school, women are vastly underrepresented in STEM jobs and amongst STEM degree holders. Having half the population of women not participate in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics field also limits creativity and innovation for all of us. Our schools are working to address this. For example, Darwin High School has established a girls-only STEM class program in an effort to increase the number of female students enrolled in Year 11 and 12 science classes. Student feedback and reports on the program have been overwhelmingly positive. In 2014 and 2015 less than one-quarter of Year 12 female students studied physics. In 2017 the number of female students studying physics has almost doubled.

I want to speak about the work of Mark Monaghan from Engineers Australia in the Northern Territory. This is an area of work that Engineers Australia is partaking in to promote more girls in STEM subjects, because for the vitality of the Territory we need to make sure half the population—women—are participating in those fields as well.

Year 11 student Jacqueline Da Costa is studying an astounding four science subjects. In total, eight of the 23 girls from the program are studying three Year 11 science subjects, with 91% of the program participants enrolled in science subjects this year, which is great to see. The program was again offered to Year 10 students enrolling at Darwin High School in 2017, with 27 female students participating. From those small steps, let us aim to increase the number of girls studying STEM subjects and being successful.

There are young women challenging traditional job opportunities. The 2016 Northern Territory Training Awards Austin Asche Apprentice of the Year was Ella Cavallaro. She did a Certificate III and is an Electrotechnology Electrician. The Member for Port Darwin and I attended a function and got to meet her late last year. It is great to see the Apprentice of the Year being female.

Ella is the first female linesperson apprentice in the Territory and in October 2015 she graduated with her second apprenticeship as an electrician. Ella is a strong advocate for women in trades and, during her apprenticeship, started the Sparkettes, a support group that presents at career expos and schools to promote her trade to young girls and women.

Education is the key to end discrimination against women. Early childhood services in schools provide an environment and opportunities to instil and nurture positive attitudes and respectful relationships between all members of the school population, regardless of gender, sexuality or religion.

During early childhood children learn about gender diversity and equity. It is also the time that children can learn to be inclusive, equitable and kind. Quality early childhood education needs to ensure we equip all young children with positive messages of empowerment regardless of gender, support the development of critical thinking skills to identify stereotypes that are promoted, and accept diversity and difference in our community.

When we have a problem with numeracy we invest in maths. We look towards improving our education system to build knowledge and skills. As the Minister for Territory Families said, we know we have a long way to go and many challenges to overcome to achieve gender equity, so it is important that we invest in education, children and young people to improve knowledge and build skills in having respectful relationships and valuing diversity.

As part of this government's \$124m investment in education over the next four years, we have made available the funding to support the expansion of a Territory-wide social and emotional learning curriculum. By the end of 2017 this program will have expanded to at least 70 schools. Part of this curriculum aims to

provide young people with the skills required to lead respectful relationships and to challenge the gender norms, stereotypes, attitudes and social systems that allow inequity to continue. Importantly, the program aims to do this in an interactive and fun way that meets the needs of young people in an age appropriate way.

Educators know that in order for meaningful learning to take place all students must feel engaged, safe and supported at school. In a safe and supportive school, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel welcome and included. Young people who exit our school system with the knowledge and skills to have respectful relationships and value diversity help to build a positive society where gender equity can be realised.

It has been lovely to hear the contributions to the education statement over the last week. Education in schools gives us the opportunity to interact with different people, learn tolerance and address bullying and discrimination.

I will deliver an education system that is fair and equitable for all students in the Territory, which results in strong and resilient young people, and which aims to promote equity for women, men and the diverse range of individuals in our schools, where people are respected and valued for the contributions they make.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I support Minister Wakefield's commitment to ensuring the women in the Northern Territory are supported and empowered to live their lives confidently and safely.

Throughout much of my adult life I have worked, advocated and lobbied for and on behalf of women, particularly those in developing countries. I have seen with my own eyes that if there is a magic answer for successful development, it can only be summed up in two words: empower women.

Even as we celebrate the advancement of women in work, the harsh reality is that too many of us continue to struggle when we should not have to. I once read that Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer at Facebook and founder of Lean In, when delivering a speech at a working women's forum, said, 'As women there are times when we all need to lean in and brace ourselves against the winds of resistance'.

Most working women are already leaning in so hard we are practically falling over. We are being forced to hang on, scrape by and make do at a far greater rate than our male counterparts. Although we have made great strides in equality, there is still much work to do. Women are still paid less than our male counterparts, and women of diverse heritage experience lower median weekly earnings, higher rates of poverty and greater unemployment.

We still find ourselves needing to join together and speak out for equal benefits, fair scheduling and equal pay for equal work. We need to protect paid sick leave, family leave and childcare. We need to unite to continue the campaign for paid leave for domestic violence victims until it becomes a normal condition of all employment contracts.

While I am on that subject, I reiterate what the Minister for Education stated about our early childhood educators and the fact they are still fighting to be paid what they are worth, that is, the same as their male counterparts.

Women represent half the world's population, yet they represent far less than half of measured economic activity. Today there are about 865 million women around the world who have the potential to contribute more fully. Everywhere around the world men participate more than women in every sector. These gender gaps range from 12% in the OECD economies to 50% in the Middle East and North Africa.

When women participate they tend to be stuck in low paying, low status jobs. Globally, women earn only three-quarters as much as men. This is even true with the same level of education and in the same occupations. Surely, one of the most basic norms of justice is equal pay for equal work.

This is an opportune time for me to quote a woman who is inspirational to those of us who are staunch, proud unionists and feminists. Sarah Bagley was President of the Female Labour Reform Association, and, at the very first meeting of the New England Workingmen's Association in Boston, Massachusetts, in May 1845, she stood in front of a predominantly male crowd and said:

For the past half century, it has been deemed a violation of woman's sphere to appear in public as a speaker; but when our rights are trampled upon and we appeal in vain to legislators, what shall we do but appeal to the people? Shall not our voice be heard and our rights acknowledged?

Today, in 2017, 172 years later, we women often—too often, in my opinion—still have to stand in front of a predominantly male crowd and say the same thing.

Too often, women carry the burden of work which is unpaid, unseen, unreported and underappreciated. Globally, women spend twice as much time on household chores as men, and four times as much on childcare. With this stark reality, it is not surprising that girls and women are the main victims of extreme poverty in the world today. They make up 70% of the one billion people trying to eke out an existence on less than \$1 a day, and they are the first to be submerged by economic crisis.

Across all fields of work, the higher you climb the fewer women you see. The evidence is painfully obvious when we look at the world of business. Only 4% of CEOs on the Standard & Poor's 500 companies list are women. Only one-fifth of parliamentary seats across the world are held by women. Less than 10% of countries have female leaders.

A woman's experience is unarguably shaped by her gender and the way it intersects with her other identities, such as her race, class, sexuality, ability et cetera. Therefore, being a woman means having experiences and disadvantages that are fundamentally different from men's.

Economically speaking, women world-wide are paid less than men. That is a fact, and in most countries they earn anywhere from 25% to 40% less than men. Women are more likely to work for hourly wages, work in the informal sector or do unpaid work within the home. Women are also severely underrepresented in politics—but thankfully not in the NT. In the US, for example, only 98 of the 535 seats in Congress are held by women. That equates to about 18%—shameful. Sadly, though, this is a record high for American politics. This compares with 25% women in Australia's House of Representatives in the last parliament, and 37% of women in the Senate, numbers which are almost identical to those in the 41st parliament, in which John Howard was Prime Minister.

In the UK, 22% of parliamentarians are women and 19% of the ministry is women. When you compare that with business, things definitely look far more promising for female politicians. In saying that, there are only 12 female CEOs of ASX-200 companies, which is only about 6%, although 16% of the non-executive board positions are filled by women. So we are making some progress.

Women are subject to physical and sexual violence world-wide at appalling rates. One out of four Australian women has experienced rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. Young women enrolled in university are three times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than the general population. The most common victims of domestic abuse are women aged 18 to 24. One in five women has experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner, a much higher rate than men. Ninety-four percent of victims in murder/suicides involving an intimate partner are female. For the women in the United States, the leading cause of death from workplace injuries is being murdered.

Although women have made incredible advances in social status and overcome many disadvantages, our society is not an equal one yet. Last week many of us commemorated and celebrated International Women's Day. As I was getting ready to participate in the Circle of Women event in Katherine, I took the time to reflect on the lives of the women who inspire me. I will talk about them today.

I draw strength from strong, vibrant, powerful women like my mother, grandmother, aunts and female cousins who survived the civil war in Timor. These women trekked through mountains with their young children in 1975 just to get to safety and protect their families.

I draw strength from my grandmother who, after fleeing Dili in 1975, stayed in the mountains with her young children and some grandchildren for three years. She stayed there protecting herself, her children and grandchildren on her own.

I draw strength from my mother, who is independent, intelligent, and compassionate, and one of the most generous people I know. She inspires me to continue. She has inspired me to learn from my past and apply the lessons learnt to move forward and therefore continue to support and fight for other women so their voices are heard.

I draw strength from all the women who work full-time, earning 18% less than their male counterparts. They juggle their obligations at work, home and within their communities.

I draw strength from my fellow Labor women, who inspire me each day in this Chamber to keep fighting for equality on all levels.

One can be easily disheartened that equality and equity will take much longer than we wish, especially when we have a federal government that has, for the last four years, cut funding to women's legal services and shelters. It defies logic that a federal government which committed \$100m towards programs that raise awareness about domestic and family violence is the same government that cut funds to frontline services that serve and protect women and children, quite often the most vulnerable in our communities.

I fail to understand at times why we are still lobbying our federal government to make provisions for victims of domestic and family violence to access leave that would ensure their privacy and protection. Currently the Australian services union and their members are campaigning, urging the federal government to not privatise Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, a frontline counselling service that has been providing this crucial service for the last six years.

I look forward to the year I can reflect on what the women in my family and I have lived through, and say that with support and encouragement I have made a difference in the community I live in. In honour of all the women who fought for women's right to vote, for equality and acknowledgement, we have finally arrived. We, as a society and community, have finally progressed and are doing okay.

I look forward to the day when a strong woman, such as Sally McManus, Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, can speak honestly and passionately to encourage everyone to speak and fight against unjust laws, and not be chastised and condemned. Until that day comes I will continue, without apology, to advocate for women, equality and equity.

I am fortunate to be the assistant minister for women's policy, working alongside Minister Wakefield and the staff of the Office of Women's Policy, who are passionate and committed to ensuring the focus on gender equality does not wane. I look forward to working with the government and all my colleagues in developing policy and programs that will close the gap in gender equity.

I commend Minister Wakefield's statement to this parliament.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Minister for Territory Families and her statement on women. I thank her for sharing her vision for women to achieve gender equity in the Northern Territory.

I am proud to be part of a Legislative Assembly with so many women in representation. I am proud to be part of our government and the Northern Territory Cabinet, which has a female majority for the first time in Northern Territory history, with 12 out of the 25 Members of the Legislative Assembly being women—the highest number ever—and five out of the eight Cabinet members being women. This progresses change. When you have women in positions of decision-making it is reflected upon in every aspect—some of the issues my colleague, the Member for Katherine was just speaking about—such as equal pay and support for domestic violence prevention and vulnerable women. It makes a big difference.

This is not to be critical of men and the role they play. For us to be in these positions we need strong men around us, whether they are strong work colleagues or strong partners. For example, the Chief Minister allowed us this week to have a conscience vote and he fully supported me, the Health minister, when I brought forward what some may say is controversial legislation—very clear legislation which is long overdue. We need to acknowledge there are still challenges we face.

I am proud that the majority of my office is made up of female staff, many of them being mothers to young children. To accommodate the practical realities of working mothers, I encourage a workplace that is child friendly and flexible. This is a critical element of achieving gender equity. It is not easy; children do not follow routine; they will get sick in the middle of parliamentary sittings and they will threaten to be born during the middle of parliament, as we know. Looking at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—we all need to work together to support each other.

Someone may ring in because their little one is sick, or they might need to take them to an appointment, or they are running late because school drop-off did not go as planned. It is always the days when you have an 8.40 am radio interview that the children decide you need to do a puzzle with them. As difficult as it is,

and as much as it impacts you, we must be compassionate about supporting women or we will not see more women stepping up. It is not easy at times, but we need to support women.

I am proud to be part of a government that supports women. I also acknowledge my colleagues on the Independent and opposition benches, who support us women in the Chamber. I am proud that women working in this government feel comfortable enough to bring their children in to work if they have to. If you pop in to my office you will find colouring books and toys. It is important for us to have this perspective as we try to deliver change for Territory women, restore trust in government, create jobs, invest in our children and build safer, fairer and stronger communities across the Northern Territory.

On Tuesday this week the Territory Labor government delivered an important election commitment for Territory women—and for Territorians, male and female—by improving safety and choice in termination of pregnancy services. Until this week the Northern Territory was the only jurisdiction where all terminations of pregnancy were surgical and took place in a hospital setting. This new legislation allows Territory women access to the same medical services available elsewhere in Australia.

Territory Labor believes all Territory women are entitled to have control over their lives and access to high-quality services. That is why we planned, consulted and passed this important legislation that will allow Territory women the same access to medical termination drugs, such as RU486, that other Australian women have. Once again, I acknowledge the former Minister for Health under the CLP government, the Member for Araluen, who first raised this idea with Madam Speaker regarding the private members' bill.

With the support of the Chief Minister and the government, the Department of Health has provided contemporary legislation that will remove the requirement for all termination of pregnancy procedures to be performed in a hospital; provide for termination of pregnancy services to be provided in out-of-hospital settings, such as day surgeries and specialist clinics; ensure that early medical termination of pregnancy using drugs such as RU486 is possible in an out-of-hospital setting; ensure that doctors and other health staff who conscientiously object to involvement in a termination of pregnancy refer a woman to a doctor who can provide these services; and include safe access zones around the premises where the termination of pregnancy services are being provided, to prevent women and those working there from being harassed when attending, and to give suitable protections.

We also changed the Criminal Code offence provisions under the *Criminal Code Act* which make it legal for all this to take place. These changes provide safe options for terminations of pregnancy, bringing the legislation up to date with contemporary medical and legal practices. These are important community-driven changes. The speed in which the legislation passed in parliament is a testament to the level of work that has gone into consultation and drafting legislation, and the commitment from the community groups who drove this issue last year during the election and well before.

The consultation was significant across the Northern Territory, with a department discussion paper calling for submissions and consultations, and everyone in the Chamber being consulted extensively.

On Tuesday we had a significant debate. It took a significant amount of time and was a passionate debate, with parliamentarians given the rare opportunity to participate in a conscience vote. I do not recall the last time a conscience vote took place in the Northern Territory parliament. The debate was courteous and compassionate, and I thank my colleagues for the respect they showed each other throughout the process.

This legislation will be gazetted with the aim for it to commence on 1 July. This is one significant step forward for Territory women—when you have a majority of women in a Cabinet and have equal representation within a parliament.

We have also passed other significant legislation that supports Territory women. The other legislation I have debated—as the Attorney-General—of vital importance to women is the Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Video and Domestic Violence Evidence) Bill, and the *Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Act 2016*.

Fighting the scourge of domestic and family violence is a priority for our government. We believe every Territory has the right to feel safe and secure. They have the right to enjoy safe and vibrant cities, towns and communities. Last week we debated a bill to support the evidence in prosecutions which is obtained from police body-worn cameras. We also passed legislation last sittings, implementing cross-border domestic violence order recognition.

Our government is investigating domestic violence offender registers so police can more effectively monitor the worst of the worst offenders. Our government will trial a specialised approach to domestic violence in the Alice Springs Local Court and a better and faster court process. I will elaborate on that shortly.

I also recently had a chance to review a comprehensive report on what has been done and what is proposed. I am pleased to see that government, non-government organisations and local community are all working together to find effective solutions. I take a moment to acknowledge Charlie King and his No More campaign for making this something our community talks about, an issue we raise in our community, and that we tackle this issue in settings such as football clubs. We need to talk about it to do something about it.

On 21 September 2016 the coroner handed down his findings into the inquest of the deaths of two women. He made recommendations on how the justice system could be improved in dealing with domestic and family violence, including that police continue to pursue the use of body-worn cameras and legislation be amended to enable evidence gathered in this way admissible on a complainant's evidence-in-chief.

Northern Territory Police began trialling the use of body-worn cameras in late 2014. Body-worn video acts as a modern day equivalent as the police notebook, recording what the police see and do. It provides an accurate record of police observations and events. It also records police behaviour. It encourages best practice for police. We have spoken in this Chamber about how it provides accurate evidence and improves behaviour.

Giving evidence in a domestic violence matter can be a traumatic experience, often applying additional pressure by the perpetrator or family members to not cooperate with police. These changes will help those who are involved in this process. Without the complainant's evidence, prosecution usually has to withdraw the charges. These are important steps forward in the Northern Territory. Measures to reduce the trauma of giving evidence, thereby encouraging complainants to give evidence, are important tools in improving responses to domestic and family violence.

The Justice Legislation Amendment (Body-worn Video and Domestic Violence Evidence) Bill amends the *Surveillance Devices Act* to ensure there is no question about the legality of police recordings made using body-worn video evidence; that the *Evidence Act* should provide that the complainants in domestic violence proceedings are vulnerable witnesses and are accorded the protections available to vulnerable witnesses as a right; and that the *Evidence Act* facilitates the admission of a recorded statement of a complainant in a domestic violence offence proceeding to be admitted as their evidence-in-chief. The giving of evidence-in-chief by a recorded statement is aimed at reducing the trauma of giving evidence, improving the accuracy of evidence and encouraging early guilty pleas from defendants.

Turning to other legislation that is of vital importance to women is the *Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Act*. The Minister for Territory Families attended the COAG National Summit on domestic violence late last year. When I attended the police and justice national ministerial meeting last year it was an issue on the agenda. This act is the first step towards the automatic recognition and enforcement in the NT of domestic violence orders made elsewhere in Australia. This legislation is based on model legislation developed across Australia under the auspices of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council.

Under existing state and territory legislation, the protection provided by domestic violence orders ends at a state or territory border. Unless the protected person or a police officer registers their domestic violence order in the new jurisdiction, it is not in place. This new legislation vastly simplifies the requirements for domestic violence victims. The general rule will be that a domestic violence order made in any jurisdiction will apply in all Australian states and territories.

There are four principles underpinning how these national laws will work: a family and domestic violence order made or registered anywhere in Australia is nationally recognised and enforceable; an order made in one jurisdiction can be amended by another jurisdiction, but only by a court; where an order made in one jurisdiction is in force, if necessary a new order can be made in another jurisdiction, but only by a court; and the latest order in time prevails. It is critical that police and courts have the capacity to quickly identify the current domestic violence order in place, as it will be the only order legally enforceable.

This is an important part—our population is far more transient these days. People cross borders and are moving about. There is no information system capable of providing this kind of information; however, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission is coming up with a solution, and that will be put in place. Timing of commencement of this legislation will therefore depend on the development of this effective information system. It is important to this government and other Australian governments.

Once implemented, the recognition of national domestic violence orders will help ensure the safety and wellbeing of women right across the Northern Territory.

I have mentioned previously the Alice Springs domestic violence court. The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice has developed a proposal for the establishment of a specialised approach for dealing with domestic and family violence matters in the Alice Springs Local Court. The proposed model is a whole-of-court approach to domestic and family violence that focuses on victim safety and offender accountability through improved processes and engagement with victims and offenders.

The proposed model was informed by in-depth consultation with key stakeholders in family and domestic violence, legal and social supports, government, courts and police. The proposed domestic violence court would operate in the Local Court according to special procedures, which may include practical directions made by the Chief Judge and rules of court.

The proposed model includes specialised domestic and family violence training for court registry staff, judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers; the development of improved court processes and procedures to deal with domestic and family violence matters more quickly; improved procedures for addressing related legal issues, which might include domestic violence orders, criminal matters, child protection and family law more efficiently, with a focus on victim safety; a common risk assessment tool to better assess the risk to victims and their children; increased referral processes for offender treatment and counselling programs; improvements in information sharing and collaboration across agencies to provide holistic case management and support for victims; and improved services for perpetrators to support them to change their behaviour.

These are practical ways for our court processes to support women affected by domestic and family violence. This is a priority for this government. We need to fight the scourge of domestic and family violence in our community. The government will trial a specialised approach to domestic violence in the Alice Springs Local Court aimed at better and faster court processes to improve the safety of those victims.

I recently had the chance to review the comprehensive report on what is being done and what is proposed, and I am pleased to see that government agencies, NGOs and the local community are working together effectively for local solutions.

Our government is committed to this project. The Minister for Territory Families and I are committed to making sure the project is expanded. If it works it is potentially a template to be rolled out across the Northern Territory.

The links between alcohol and crime are well documented. I heard on the radio this morning, on Mix FM, that a number of incidents took place overnight in Darwin. The common link was that they were alcohol related. In the Northern Territory there are 6500 assaults per year, with over 50% of these being alcohol related, and a further 60% of them being domestic violence. These figures are staggering, and women are disproportionately impacted by alcohol-related crime.

Our government recognises that alcohol is the biggest single social challenge we have in the Northern Territory. We made it clear before the last election that we would bring back the Banned Drinker Register and that by 1 September 2017 it would be in place across the Northern Territory. This aligns with our core values of investing in children and families and making our community safer.

The scrapping of the BDR led to an immediate escalation, with 2500 problem drinkers being able to access alcohol. We have focused on delivering a comprehensive evidence-based health approach to stop the destructive path alcohol creates across our community.

The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice is finalising the technical audit of equipment for the Banned Drinker Register. The BDR works because it cuts off the supply of alcohol to problem drinkers. Updated procedures for BDR entrance points are being developed. This will include police, courts, the Parole Board, and appropriate referrals and self-referrals so people can make that choice themselves.

The temporary beat locations, TBLs, or POSIs, will continue to be resourced by police after the BDR. There are police resources for police on the beat to decide what they feel needs to be used. We will change the focus of treatment away from the alcohol mandatory treatment to a transition of services within the new BDR model.

The Department of Health has received the evaluation report on the AMT and is preparing a response to the recommendations for government's consideration. These measures are designed to reduce alcohol-related crime that disproportionately impacts women in our communities. Women and children feel the effects of alcohol.

We recognise that whilst everyone has the right to drink responsibly, alcohol abuse is a significant cause of violence in our community. As the Minister for Health, I am determined to help tackle the cost of alcohol abuse in our community. It is not just about the financial cost—estimated to be close to three-quarters of a billion dollars on our community—but the effect on women, children and communities is devastating.

I am pleased this government has agreed to a review of alcohol policy so all voices in the Northern Territory are heard, not just those who are the loudest and have the most money. It is about listening to community about what they want. Everybody has the right to have a drink and that will be catered for. We need to make sure we listen to everyone.

Since coming to government we have placed a moratorium on takeaway liquor licences, except for greenfield sites, such as new residential developments. For example if Weddell was coming online—greenfield sites or hotels that need takeaway licences for their guests.

We have strengthened legislation to ensure Sunday trading remains limited. We have limited the floor space for takeaway alcohol stores. We have made sure public hearings occur for liquor applications. We were very critical when the previous minister changed that. The community needs to be involved. Even a half-an-hour change to a licence time can have a huge impact on the community if they are waiting for the noise to stop so they can get a good night's sleep and so their kids can go to school the next day.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43 I request an extension of time for the Attorney-General.

Motion agreed to.

Ms FYLES: Draft terms of reference are out for review and we encourage everyone to have a look at them. We want to get the terms of reference right so we can get the review right. The government will release an issues paper to inform community-wide discussion and provide guidance for those wishing to provide feedback and input in the review.

An expert panel will look at evidence-based policy initiatives required to reduce alcohol-fuelled crime, ensuring safe and vibrant entertainment precincts, the provision of alcohol service and management in remote communities, decision-making under the *Liquor Act*, density, liquor licences and the size of liquor outlets. The report and its recommendations will give a solid evidence-based approach for the government to develop an alcohol harm reduction strategy for the Northern Territory.

VISITORS

Wulagi Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 5/6 students from Wulagi Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Cameron Carmichael, Delsey Ah Wang and Lee Gray. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms FYLES: The Member for Sanderson, Kate Worden, is very excited to see you all. I am sure she will catch up with you while you are visiting parliament. Welcome.

There is much to talk about in the alcohol space. I am passionate about providing a pathway so we can have responsible use of alcohol and start to tackle the issues that cause so much harm in our community, particularly those that impact on women.

I will take a moment to turn to the important role that women play in our corrections system. We have a number of women who fulfil a range of operations in health and administrative support. We need a diverse workforce that provides a range of unique perspectives and skills. We often say in this Chamber that

having strong female representation helps us and puts a unique perspective—but the same is true of many of our agencies, corrections included.

Women comprise less than 10% of prisoners in the Northern Territory, and there are about 80 sentenced female prisoners in Darwin and Alice Springs. These women have access to a range of opportunities, including vocational training, therapeutic programs and employment contracts. It can be difficult to provide a broad range of opportunities to female prisoners due to low numbers and a range of other circumstances. I acknowledge the concerns raised in the Hamburger Report about limited opportunities for female prisoners.

I am committed to a full review of the current situation. The government and my office have started consultation with key non-government organisations as a first step in formulating a plan. We know that successful rehabilitation of a female prisoner has a positive ripple effect on their family and the wider community. If we are serious about breaking the generational cycles of disadvantage, providing genuine rehabilitation and reducing recidivism, we must equip our female prisoners with the skills and support to transition to community.

It is important to acknowledge that while every individual has different needs and goals, one goal shared by many women incarcerated in the Northern Territory is to reconnect with their family and fulfil the role of a primary caregiver. We are looking at ways in which we can better prepare female prisoners for this role. We acknowledge the impact on the family of someone who is sentenced to prison, especially if it is the mother or aunty who is sentenced. It has a huge impact. I look forward to updating the House on these developments as we progress with our plans.

I will take a moment to draw your attention to a remarkable initiative started by Ruth Mellor, the senior industrial officer in the female industries section. Women work together in a social healing circle and crochet blankets. This teaches women about each other; they work collaboratively and make blankets, which are donated to the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre. Since June they have finished 12 blankets, 10 of which have been donated. Many of the women have been so proficient they have now started working on blankets individually. It is one small opportunity for women to learn skills, support each other and give back to the community.

The importance of women in our community cannot be understated or overestimated. It is vital as a government, parliament and society that we value women and continue to strive for gender equity. I am immensely proud to be part of this parliament. I am proud to be part of a community that, for me, took a chance. I was 38 weeks pregnant when I said I would run for parliament. Some people thought I was a bit mad.

Over my term I have tried to work as hard as I can for my community. It is a juggle—we were talking in my office about the fact that, as the female in the house, you are responsible for many things, and it is a juggle at times. But every day I relish the opportunity to be part of a broader community that has elected so many women into this Chamber. It was only 20 years ago we saw our first female Cabinet minister—I think it was Loraine Braham. We now have a majority of women in Cabinet, and that impacts on policies and decisions.

I will take a moment to acknowledge one of the issues the Member for Katherine spoke about, the Big Steps campaign. I will read a quote that resonated with me. ‘Just because we educate small children does not mean we can live on small wages.’

The role that childcare workers play in our community is invaluable. The care my children received at childcare allowed me to step away from the home and step into the parliament, knowing my children were being nurtured and cared for like they were those carers’ own. It is time, as a community, that we acknowledge the hard work of childcare workers and the struggle many families face with the cost of childcare. Those workers deserve a fair day’s pay for an amazing day’s work.

They work so hard. I see some childcare workers at work by 7 am, and some of them do not get out of there until 5 pm or 6 pm. There is one lady who, to make ends meet, cleans the childcare centre on the weekend. To me that is unacceptable. That is in the federal domain, but we need to challenge it and make sure the Big Steps campaign is supported and those workers get paid.

I am immensely proud to be a part of this team, this Legislative Assembly and this Gunner government that supports women. It was a joy to see so many women, girls and blokes supporting women as we marched through the streets of Darwin to support International Women’s Day. The cultural diversity was fabulous. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for hosting the reception in the hall afterwards.

I was very proud to walk alongside the Chief Minister, holding a banner with Charlie King. The Member for Brennan joined us and the Member for Port Darwin also walked with us, carrying the No More campaign banner.

We should be proud of our achievements. We can reflect upon this week as a momentous occasion in this parliament, passing such a significant piece of legislation, but we can also reflect upon the other pieces of legislation we have passed and will continue to work on.

I thank the Minister for Territory Families for bringing this statement to the House. I fully support her and I commend the motion to the House.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

PETITION

Petition No 10 – Provision and Availability of Improved Health Services in the Coomalie Shire

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I present a petition from 175 petitioners that respectfully sheweth the difficulty faced by the Coomalie shire residents, especially those who are aged, disabled or Indigenous, in accessing a doctor at the local primary healthcare centres within the townships of Adelaide River and Batchelor. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders.

Madam Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

We the undersigned respectfully sheweth the difficulty faced by the Coomalie Shire residents, especially those who are aged, disabled or Indigenous, in accessing a doctor at the local primary healthcare centres within the townships of Adelaide River and Batchelor. The lack of coordination between the two health clinics with visiting doctors is of great concern to residents who are often limited or restricted in being seen in a timely manner by a general practitioner, or GP.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Northern Territory Government ensures better coordination of essential services between the two townships to ensure regular and consistent visits by doctors, and the ability of residents from Adelaide River, Batchelor and surrounding communities within the shire to be able to access both services.

Previous weekly health service be restored, that is, a doctor servicing Batchelor Community Health Centre for three days, and Adelaide River Community Health Centre for one-and-a-half days, thus ensuring these services are able to be accessed by residents of Adelaide River and Batchelor as well as workers and transient patients from out stations and communities.

REORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 59 I move that the normal routine of business for this day be deferred so that at the conclusion or adjournment of the ministerial statement on supporting Territory women the Assembly considers papers and then committee reports and government responses.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Note Statement – Supporting Territory Women

Continued from earlier this day.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her statement on Northern Territory women. It is important that in this Chamber we debate matters relating to gender equality. The inequalities and challenges of achieving gender equality are front of mind in the wake of International Women's Day, which was celebrated on 8 March.

I was privileged to attend several International Women's Day events, at which I listened to what women in the community saw as challenges, celebrated all the achievements of Territory women, and was able to discuss how we move forward towards gender equality for all Territorians. I thank all the organisers and attendees of these events, who are working together to make the Territory a better place for all.

There is no question that men and women have enormous contributions to make in improving the social health of our society and economic development. To get the best results, research shows that an equal contribution of men and women in all industries increases the industry's capabilities. In the recent *Gender and Politics* paper by Menzies there is a quote from Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC in relation to increasing the number of women in Defence. He summed up the importance of diversity by saying:

The reason we're doing this is for capability. We need to be the best Defence Force we can be and we're not going to do that unless we address the gender imbalance that we have.

So for me personally, I'm keen for the Australian Defence Force to become more diverse because diversity enhances capability. It's been my experience diverse teams challenge each other, they see the widest range of risks, are able to come up with creative solutions to those issues that arise.

We are lucky as Territorians to have so many prominent female leaders in business and social sectors, in the public service and in parliament, who are role models for future generations. I am proud to be supported by a parliament with such diverse representation. Twelve of the 25 elected members in this Chamber are women and I am delighted to be part of an opposition with 50% female membership. I hope that is something we can continue into the future.

We are representatives of our communities; we reflect the community and need to encourage more women to run for parliament. I must also mention that Litchfield Council has a female mayor, Maree Bredhauer, and three of her four aldermen are women. The City of Darwin also has a female mayor.

The Country Liberal Party also has a proud history of producing strong, capable women in its administrative and parliamentary wings. Within the party we have had and continue to develop strong female leaders. Suzanne Cavanagh is a case in point. Suzanne was a founding member of the Country Liberals and was elected to the party's presidency in 1999. She also served in the roles of general secretary and branch chairwoman, amongst many other senior strategic responsibilities.

Another former president—this time in a more recent era—is Tory Mencshelyi, who led the party during an extraordinarily tough time. Jodeen Carney was the first female leader of the parliamentary wing and guided us through some difficult days after the 2005 election. Natasha Griggs, the former Member for Solomon, is another Country Liberal woman who made a mark in the world of Canberra's conservative politics. I am also proud to see the emergence passionate and engaged young women who are stepping up into senior roles. They are the future and we must support them to follow their dreams.

Women have long played a vital role in building the Territory—not just in our families and communities, but also in business. Anecdotally, in my electorate of Spillett, many women are establishing home business start-ups on microbusinesses. We have such talented women in the Territory and opportunities to allow them to excel. We have very strong women in the business sector. It was earlier this week that I shared a table with Karen Sheldon, a very known and well-respected businesswoman, and Martina Matzner, an innovative mango farmer and well known as Australian rural woman of the year in 2016. A couple of years ago another Territorian was the Australian rural woman of the year, Giovanna Webb from Crocodylus Park who is also proud member of the Country Liberals.

Organisations such as Women in Mining; Women in Resources; Business and Professional Women; Women's Network NT; Working Women's Centre; Women in Construction; and the Litchfield Council's Women in Business Forum all play a role in helping women network, support and connect with each other. I am sure there are many more organisations, so I am sorry if I have left any out. Please let me know if I have left you out; I would love to come to your next meeting.

It is important to note that the Northern Territory media has very strong female representation in a world that as recently as 30 years ago was still very much a domain of the blokey bloke. The media is important because it is read, heard and seen by Territorians, Australians and citizens of the world every day. The role modelling in that industry is very important. I remember watching an interview with Lisa Wilkinson where she explained that when she first came into journalism, as a young woman—how different things are now and how hard it was at that time.

Rachel Hancock was promoted interstate in 2015. She made history by being appointed the first female editor of the *NT News*. Whilst it took a long time for a woman to take the reins at the paper, Rachel's appointment smashed the glass ceiling. It brought a nuance change to the paper's tone and presentation, which maintained its important contribution to news and current affairs while having an increased emphasis on features, lifestyle and wellbeing in its Sunday edition.

The *NT News* has several female journalists, including Tamara Howie, Phillippa Butt, Lauren Roberts, Ellie Turner and Judith Aisthorpe, and photographers Patrina Malone, Katrina Bridgeford, Elise Derwin and Helen Orr. There are still women in senior roles in the *NT News*, with Jill Poulsen recently appointed head of news, and Hayley Sorensen playing an important role in political coverage.

Still on print media, Lucy Hughes Jones is the AAP's correspondent. This is not to exclude of a wide range of female journalists who report on a range of issues and are making their mark.

I also want to mention two women from the *Palmerston Sun* that I had a lot to do with when I was a backbencher in the last term. They are Leanne Hudson, who was its female editor, and Courtney Todd, who had a strong focus on community issues.

Television is also well represented by women. At Channel Nine the vast majority of the news team are women, with Kate Limon as the news director; Kathleen Gazzola as the political reporter and chief of staff, and the reporters are Elizabeth Creasy; Isabelle Mullen; Georgie Chumbley; Kathleen Foran; and new mum currently on maternity leave, who I went to high school with, Amy Culpitt.

Women are also well represented at the national broadcaster ABC with television news reader Eleni Roussos fronting the nightly bulletin, and senior reporters, including Sara Everingham, Alyssa Betts, Jane Bardon and Nadia Daly. Radio Darwin also has Lyrella Cochrane, Kate O'Toole on Drive, and Rebecca McLaren in the evenings, and Lydia Burton hosts Country Hour.

On commercial radio Mix FM leads with Ali Burton, and then Katie Wolfe asks the tough questions on 360 from 9 am. Katie's news director, Kyrrie Blenkinsop, also had a very successful career with Channel Nine in Darwin and Sydney, and she also worked in London.

The *Tennant Creek and District Times* is owned and operated by the great Jasmine Afianos, and, further south, Andrea Johnston is a senior reporter of the *Centralian Advocate*. The female voices in our media are strong and varied. We are delighted to have them in the Territory and watch the progression of young journalists climb the ranks.

Women in sport is another really important area of female representation in the NT. It is another area in which we are excelling. Territory members of the Adelaide Crows flying south for the historic AFL Women's league have already done us very proud. Thank you to Tayla Thorn, Lauren O'Shea, Angela Foley, Abbey Holmes, Sophie Armistead, Jasmine Anderson, Stevie-Lee Thompson, Heather Anderson and Sally Riley. You are role models to young women, and you are taking women in sport to the next level.

Another sporting role model and heroine is Bo de la Cruz. She was part of the team that won the 2003 World Cup for touch football. She is doing a wonderful job at Palmerston Senior College running the Palmerston Girls Academy. What a tremendous role model we are very lucky to have, not just in sport but in education and our community.

Territory women also forge ahead in AFL. When three women joined the AFL board it crushed any notion of a boys' club reputation it may have had. Colleen Gwynne, Di Borella and Kathy Sadler now form part of the board. They are long-time Territorians bringing a wealth of experience in and outside the game. Notably, Di Borella is the first Indigenous female to serve on any AFL sanctioned state body board.

It is not only in football; in the Territory there is also women's cricket. We welcomed the news yesterday that Cricket Australia has offered its female players a massive pay rise as part of contract negotiations. This is welcomed by all women across the board to recognise that female participation in sport is equal to that of men.

Darwin born Hannah Hollis is in the thick of leading the way for women in sport. At 26, Hannah does not want to waste her chance to become a role model for young Indigenous people. She is one of the new faces on Fox Sport's all-female panel as part of Australia's first ever catered channel for sports. Hannah is a descendant of the Jawoyn people and is hoping to be a role model for young Indigenous people. I congratulate her and look forward to see her on TV soon.

A strong victory for women in the Northern Territory this year is that nine out of 16 of the Australian of the Year's Northern Territory finalists were women, and three out of the four winners were women, which is outstanding. We should be so proud of these women: Andrea Mason, the Northern Territory Australian of the Year; Bridie Duggan, the NT Young Australian of the Year; and, most exciting of all, Sister Anne Gardiner AM, representing the Northern Territory on a national level as the Senior Australian of the Year. Sister Anne is a great inspiration, having devoted 50 years to supporting the Tiwi culture, enriching its people as the principal of the local primary school and promoting female unity and maternal health through mothers clubs, among many other things.

Additionally this year, Mary Ann Bin-Sallik AO was the first Indigenous Australian to work in higher education in Australia and she received a prestigious Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to a high degree to Australia and humanity, and her contribution to Indigenous studies and culture at our very own Charles Darwin University.

Another inspiring woman is Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann, the first qualified Aboriginal teacher in the Northern Territory, who is deeply committed to helping Aboriginal people become qualified teachers and manage their own schools. Women in leadership is incredibly important for a number of reasons across a range of sectors, and I have spoken about some of them today. It is through leadership that we can be positive role models for aspiring young women and give them an indication of what they can achieve.

Gender diversity and cultural diversity at a leadership level means that a wider range of issues are viewed with a variety of perspectives, leading to more innovative solutions and, ultimately, a better Territory. It is very important to represent the views and values of women at a leadership level where they can impact at high-level policy; after all, women make up half the population.

Although the Northern Territory has some amazing, ground-breaking female leaders, worrying statistics show that the proportion of women in leadership positions across Australia remains relatively low. According to Australia's gender equality scorecard from 2015, the top levels of management remain heavily male dominated with just 15.4% of CEO positions and 27.4% of key management personnel positions held by women.

One-quarter of Australian organisations have no female key management. It is worth mentioning that in the Territory only five out of 21 Northern Territory Government CEOs and acting CEOs are women. I congratulate Kathleen Robinson, from the Department of Corporate Information Services; Vicki Baylis, from the Department of Education; Jodie Ryan, from the Department of the Chief Minister; Janet Anderson, from the Department of Health; and Jo Townsend, from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. We have a female Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sally Sievers; a female Children's Commissioner, Colleen Gwynne; a female Information Commissioner, Brenda Monaghan; and a female Auditor-General, Julie Crisp.

We also have women leading a range of industries in the Territory, even those you would class as typical male-dominated environments. Just some of those women I can think of are Tracey Hayes, CEO of the NT Cattlemen's Association; Katherine Winchester, CEO of the NT Seafood Council; Vicki O'Halloran, CEO of Somerville Community Services; Kaylene Conrick, CEO of Litchfield Council; Kellie Grainger, CEO of the Law Society; Janet Hamilton, General Manager of the Darwin Convention Centre; and Louise Bilato, Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Road Transport Association. That is just to name a few.

There are so many other terrific women in the not-for-profit sector and in the sectors I have mentioned today. I hope I have not missed anyone. There are so many women worthy of recognition for everything they are doing in the Northern Territory and who have my respect.

Gender parity in the workplace is something I spoke about at the International Women's Day event, and I addressed the issue in my response to the Member for Nelson's motion yesterday regarding male teachers. In addition to having a lack of women in leadership across Australia, currently women are also underrepresented in many industries, including making up 16% of the mining workforce; 16.2% of the construction workforce; 25.5% of the electricity, gas, water and waste services workforce; 26% of the transport workforce; 35.4% of the agriculture workforce; and 39% of the professional, scientific and technical services workforce.

I must reflect on the Member for Nelson's motion yesterday; men are equally underrepresented in primary schools and nursing, just to name two professions, and there are many more. Gender equality cuts both ways. Yesterday's debate was a really important example of recognising that, so I will not rehash that debate.

In addition a disproportionate number of women are working in part-time and casual employment. According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency this figure stands at a huge 46%. Women accrue half as much superannuation as men. That has a significant impact on a woman's economic security.

How do we encourage more women to engage in non-traditional industries, and how do we facilitate an increased transition to permanent roles and leadership positions? One way is to address the wage gap. The Australian Human Rights Commission's gender equality report from 2014 showed that the average full-time weekly wage for women is 18.2% less than men across Australia.

The minister said that in the Northern Territory this figure is 18.9%. Australia is ranked 46 of 144 countries in gender parity in the latest Global Gender Gap Report. The lower-value figure placed on women is no way to encourage them to reach their full potential in the workplace. It can be changed by engaging men and women in finding solutions.

Research shows that the gender wage gap starts as soon as a woman enters the workforce, and it widens when a woman starts having children. Sometimes the pay lags because they take breaks from work to care for their children, work fewer hours or take more time off than men to care for their child. For this reason flexible workplace policies are paramount. It has been shown that the wage gap shrinks when people are empowered to work on their own schedules.

Government has a responsibility to be a model employer and lead by example with workplace policies that support women in the workforce, such as affordable childcare, options to work from home, flexible hours, job share, paid sick days and parental leave.

I am pleased to say female participation in the Northern Territory workforce is currently leading the nation at 79%. Put simply, participation rates measure how many women are active in paid employment in a full-time or part-time capacity. It is the highest it has ever been in the Northern Territory. Whilst the private sector of the NT economy is doing it tough, more women than ever are going to work.

Encouraging female participation in the workforce is possibly the easiest, quickest and cheapest way to grow the Territory economy. It makes so much sense to support women who want to go back to work. It is our responsibility as community leaders to support women's engagement in the economy.

It is important in this debate that we respect and acknowledge the women who choose not to return to the workforce. We cannot underestimate the contribution those women make to our community and their family. Supporting one's family is a vital role. It is not an easy task. Many women are the backbone of their family and empower their children or partners to achieve their goals. They are our unsung heroes.

As members of parliament we have a responsibility to pass legislation that promotes gender equality and endeavours to help and protect the most vulnerable people in our society. This week we passed a bill that allows Territory women to access medical termination of pregnancy, which is something women in every other Australian jurisdiction already have access to.

I am proud to be part of a government that reversed the presumption of bail for repeat offenders, enabling victims to feel safe knowing their abuser is not at large. I am also proud to be part of a government that initiated and trialled body-worn cameras to reduce the trauma of women reliving domestic violence incidents in court. Part of this involved collaborating with the federal and state governments on the domestic violence order national recognition scheme, which ensures domestic violence victims, the majority of which are women, are protected across all jurisdictions without having to reregister their DVO when they move interstate.

Women are disproportionately affected by all types of violence in the Northern Territory, including domestic violence. We can always do more to protect them. This is not to diminish the seriousness of violence against men.

Last week we passed legislation that increases the electronic monitoring of persons on bail, particularly police bail, which will include monitoring of domestic violence offenders and those who have committed sexual offenses.

Mr WOOD: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I seek an extension of time for the Member for Spillet, pursuant to Standing Order 43.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of the brother of the Member for Katherine, Joao Miguel Carrascalao, and his daughter Beatriz.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: She is very cute.

Turning to maternal health, we face a significant challenge in the Territory in this area. According to the Primary Healthcare Research and Information Service at Flinders University in its August 2015 report, in 2011 approximately 4% of all babies were born to Indigenous mothers; the average age of Indigenous mothers tends to be significantly younger when compared to non-Indigenous average, which is 25.3 versus 30.2; and 90% of Indigenous mothers are teenagers, compared to just 3% for non-Indigenous mothers.

There is also significant disparity in maternal health between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers and babies. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, between 2007 and 2011 Indigenous mothers and babies had higher rates of pre-term birth, higher rates of low birth weight, higher rates of maternal mortality during pregnancy or childbirth and higher rates of perinatal death, with Indigenous children between zero and four years of age having more than twice the mortality rate of non-Indigenous mortality. This equates to 212 deaths per 100 000 births versus 95 deaths per 100 000 for non-Indigenous pregnancies.

These are awful statistics. As the minister mentioned, Indigenous mothers tend to be younger, more likely to smoke and less likely to attend antenatal care. Since coming into the role as deputy leader I have spent a lot of time trying to learn more about what can be done to support Indigenous women better so their health, and that of their child, can be exponentially increased.

Two key people I have met with to discuss the significant gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers are Donna Ah Chee, the CEO of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, and Eddie Mulholland, the CEO of Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation.

We also talked about the great work being undertaken by those organisations to close the gap. Congress and Miwatj are running programs in their own right across the Territory, with the assistance of the federal Coalition government, which are having an impact on reducing the disparity between health outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous families.

Just this week Congress commenced a new program, which is a final piece in its comprehensive care model from antenatal to preschool. I cannot wait to touch base with Congress in a few months' time to see how that program is going.

I recently travelled to Canberra and had the opportunity to speak extensively about this subject with a number of ministers in the federal Coalition who are working tirelessly to deliver support programs to achieve better outcomes in maternal health for Indigenous women. Those ministers include Hon Ken Wyatt MP, who is the federal Minister for Indigenous Health, and Senator Hon Nigel Scullion, who is the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

I took the opportunity, on behalf of Territorians, to instil how integral these programs are to promoting healthy Indigenous mothers and children, and to press for further expansions of these programs and resources to deliver better outcomes for the Territory. Two programs funded by the federal Coalition government are making a real impact in this space: the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program; and New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services, a part of the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme aimed at improving child and maternal health.

The Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program is an evidence-based approach to improve pregnancy outcomes by helping women engage in good preventative health practices, supporting parents to improve their child's health and development, and helping parents develop a vision for their own future, including continuing education and finding work. This is complemented by the partner program, New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services, which is part of the federal Coalition government's Better Start to Life child and maternal health package. The program provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and

young children access to antenatal care, standard information about baby care, and practical advice on breastfeeding, nutrition and parenting. It monitors developmental milestones, immunisation status and infections, and undertakes health checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children before starting school.

The federal Coalition government committed in the 2014–15 Budget to provide \$94m over four years, commencing in July 2015, to expand efforts to improve child and maternal health through the Better Start to Life program. Of this funding, \$40m was provided to the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program to expand and increase support for high-needs families. The program originally started at just three sites and is projected to reach 13 sites across the country by 2017–18. The remaining \$54m was provided to increase the number of sites offering the New Directions: Mothers and Babies Service. This program was initially offered from 85 sites and is projected to increase to 136 sites across the country by 2017–18.

These commitments show the significant emphasis the federal Coalition is placing on Indigenous maternal health, not only in the Northern Territory but across the country. I will continue to lobby for additional sites to be identified and rolled out in the Northern Territory.

I am heartened to discuss this topic in parliament, as I have been able to highlight some of the numerous achievements of women in the Northern Territory, as well as the challenges we all face. I had to skip a few pages of my speech because there is much to say, but not enough time to say it. It is nearly impossible to mention all the ideas of women and acknowledge all the women in every industry. I hope that by mentioning women in parliament, the media, sport, the home, businesses and male-dominated industries, and mentioning issues such as the pay gap, flexible working arrangements, economic development, domestic violence and health, I have painted a picture of where we are and where we need to go.

I look forward to Territory women reaping the benefits of the initiatives the minister discussed and which the federal Coalition government provides, and I hope we can work together as a parliament, lead by example and advance gender parity in the Northern Territory.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I think the Member for Spillett covered everything. But I can guarantee she has not covered one thing—I thank my mother, otherwise I would not be here. Would you not be relieved by that?

On a serious note, my mother would be extremely disappointed with the bill that was passed on Tuesday. She would never have thought of anything like that. I suppose you could say that is where we stand in this day and age. My mother is 98 next month. If you ever want a woman who has a free ticket to heaven, she has it. She has been a very generous woman all her life. I remember winter in Melbourne when I was growing up. There was a little old lady at the end of the street whom my mother would make sure there was an extra meal for, and we would take it to her. My mother is still like that.

We need to thank our mothers for the great love they give us. I feel sad for young people who do not have that in their lives because of whatever reason—break-up of marriage, drugs, alcohol or whatever. We are lucky. My mother would always say, 'But for the grace of God, there go I'. We have to be careful we do not condemn people who may not have had as good a ride as we have had.

I told a lady last night that this would be debated and she said, 'Would you please remind people ...'—and the Member for Spillett just touched on it—'... that there are a good number of women who want to stay home. Unfortunately when people ask what you do for a living and you say, 'I stay home and look after my children', it is seen as a second-class job today. We need to see raising children as probably the most important job, whether it is done by a man or a woman.

I always say, regardless of where you stand in that debate, it is a bit hard for a man to breastfeed a baby. The reality is, it is good if a woman can stay home and care for her children, especially in the first years. That is how my wife raised our children. My good wife is a Wadjigan woman who raised three beautiful children on Bathurst Island and at Daly River. When they were old enough to go to school she did some part-time work as an Aboriginal assistant teacher at Sacred Heart Primary School.

Our society has lost its way a bit. It promotes people to go to work, and one of the reasons many people have to go to work is because they cannot afford not to. Yet the government will give subsidies to people for their children to stay at daycare. I cannot work out why the government cannot give direct subsidies to women who want to stay at home with their children to take the burden off daycare facilities. I do not think we have given women enough choices. To some extent women want to go back to their jobs because they

enjoy it and want that option of being able to work. But sometimes the cost of a house and land package today is so great that there has to be a double income. That can be at the cost of the family.

We have to look at our society today. How many of the problems we see today, especially with young people getting into trouble, relate to the difficulties in families coping with the extra pressures of having to work and not being able to stay at home?

I sat in front of six men at the west central therapeutic community in Marysville, Ohio. They all told me why they ended up in gaol. They all came from broken homes or families where mum and dad did not bother; they were not interested in them or worked until late at night and never had much time for the children.

We do not put on a high enough pedestal the great work of mothers who stay at home and look after their kids. There are plenty of stay-at-home mothers; I see them at school assemblies and on school councils. They use some of their time at home taking the children for a walk or going to the school to help out. We need to praise people who are willing to stay at home, but governments have a role to encourage people to stay home by giving them financial assistance. If it is good enough for people going to work to get financial assistance for daycare, it should be good enough for the people who wish to stay at home with their kids.

It does not mean dads cannot stay at home. I am not saying they cannot. I am not looking for a gender parity argument. I wonder if our society, in many cases, is letting some of our children down by not allowing parents to stay home, especially in the younger years. I was always told the first three years are the most important years in life. They set the goal for the future.

The other group that gets missed out—I see them around town occasionally—are the sisters of charity. They are in Katherine and Darwin. There are people like that, who do lots of work and go unnoticed helping poorer people. We need to recognise them as well.

There are not too many nuns around today, but look at the educated Aboriginal people in our communities from days gone by; if it were not for the nuns they would not have been educated. In Wadeye, Daly River, Bathurst Island, Santa Teresa and other communities, people lived in poor conditions. People sometimes forget that the mod cons they have today were not around then. In their traditional garbs—it is not easy to wear that in 30 or 40 degree heat.

Those things were the foundations, in many cases, for the education of many Aboriginal people. Many of those well-educated Aboriginal people were educated by the nuns. My wife only got to grade 6. She would have repeated it a few times because you could go no further. It was the education of the day that gave her the education she has today.

I sometimes say we spend a fortune on education today and do not always achieve great outcomes. Simple education in the past produced people who could read, write and add up. I wonder if we have lost the simplicity in education and turned it into a technical matter, with lots of whiz bang pieces of equipment today but not coming up with the achievements. That can be seen just looking at the literacy, numeracy and writing results in the education reports today.

Mum is the most important person in my life, along with my wife.

Madam SPEAKER: Good save.

Mr WOOD: Yes, good save.

My mother is very special. I get told I am the favourite, but I was the one who had polio. My mother went to check on me sleeping and I was not moving, so she knew straight away something was wrong. Polio was the main issue at that time. If any anti-vaccination people are out there, you will not convince me that vaccination is not one of the most important things you can do for your children.

I still have an arm that does not work 100%. I live with it and hardly even notice it, although I notice it now because my good arm is stuffed. Then it makes life hard.

My mother went through that traumatic period when a lot of people got polio. They took me to the hospital where they put a jab in the back of my spine—she can still hear me screaming—because they had to take a fluid sample. I have seen many young people my age in hospital, covered in plaster. That would have affected many families. Many of those polio people are still alive.

My mother had to care for me and work on my arm, time in and time out, because there are muscles missing in my hand. She would take me to the children's hospital regularly to get a splint put on my hand. Mothers are special. If I happen to be the favourite in the family because of that, well, that is too bad.

Since we are talking about women today, I want to say I will always be very thankful for my mother.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I support the Minister for Territory Families' statement and thank her for sharing her vision for women to achieve gender equality in the Northern Territory. The Member for Braitling's vision for equality is bold, inspiring and important. It highlights why women and girls of all ages should be treated equally and with respect and dignity, and be empowered to contribute to society in whatever capacity they choose. It reminded us that we need to work hard, as a society, to ensure all females, no matter their age, are supported to believe they can forge their own dreams and purposes in life.

I am proud to speak on gender equality, as a member of the Northern Territory Cabinet with a majority of female ministers who are strong, inspiring and leading the Territory towards a prosperous future. As the Member for Braitling identified, the Michael Gunner Labor government is a shining example of achieving gender equity and equality, with women as our leaders. The Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, sent a strong message when he appointed five females to his Cabinet, including the Deputy Chief Minister and the Attorney-General. I have the great privilege of working alongside these elected members, including the 12 women who were elected. My colleagues are prime examples that women are equal to men; they make great leaders, and they make great contributions to our communities.

There is a famous saying that states we should lead by example. A very humble example of a woman leading by example in the Barkly is Helen Marsh. As a Power and Water employee, Helen was acknowledged by Power and Water with their Best Community Participant award for 2016. I am delighted to hear of Helen's award, as too often the efforts of our public servants in their community go unrecognised. As Minister for both Essential Services and Public Employment, it is an honour to recognise people who go above and beyond for their community. Helen has volunteered many hours for Power and Water at Territory shows. Helen is also a tireless volunteer who has enriched many community groups throughout our region. Communities thrive and rely on our volunteers, and it is important we acknowledge and thank them for their hard work. Helen is certainly an asset to the Barkly region and to Tennant Creek, her home town.

As a member of the Michael Gunner Labor government, I believe that when our remote communities and regions are strong the Northern Territory is strong. Helen's contributions and dedication have greatly benefited the Tennant Creek community. For years Helen has volunteered with little athletics, Girl Guides and the annual Christmas tree committee. Since 2009 Helen has offered her free time to coach athletics, run carnivals, record athletic competition scores, organise quiz nights and fundraise for little athletics. As part of Helen's role on the Christmas tree committee she has thoughtfully ensured every child under 10 years of age in Tennant Creek receives a Christmas present.

Helen also fundraises for Girl Guides, teaches gym classes on Friday and Sunday mornings at the local jujitsu shed and volunteers for Power and Water on the Territory show circuit and at other public awareness events. Helen is a great role model in our community, especially for her children, their friends and the children she coaches and volunteers alongside. As a role model, Helen has encouraged girls to participate in sport, which can help build children's self-esteem and a belief that they can achieve anything they set their heart on. Helen is fostering a gender-equal future for women in the Barkly.

I congratulate Helen on her tireless efforts, her deserving award and the esteemed example she is setting for our future women leaders. I also congratulate Helen on her nomination for an Australia Day award last year for Assistant of the Year. I am certain Helen has been inspirational to many women and young girls in the local community and that her example has encouraged them to participate in sport and community groups.

I singled out Helen Marsh because she is a great example of a new generation of pioneering women on the goldfields of Tennant Creek and in the regional areas of the Northern Territory. I have watched women like Helen grow up. She shares a dynamic cohort of colleagues who represent young families who are serious about carrying on the traditions of regional towns and communities. They are serious about raising their children to enjoy a prosperous future within the Northern Territory, where they were born and raised.

These women resonate a pioneering spirit. In Tennant Creek and the early goldfields there was a recognised gold rush from about 1931. Most people do not know this, but the ranges just northeast of

Tennant Creek are called the Honeymoon Ranges by the locals. They got their name from when the miners who made good in the mines across the northeast area of the goldfields cashed up and went south to Adelaide, then courted their future wives and brought them back to the goldfields.

I often wonder about the stories that must have been shared in Adelaide, because the women returning to the goldfields of Tennant Creek and the Honeymoon Ranges must have been significantly challenged with the conditions they faced. There are some classic historical photographs of miners of that early era on very rudimentary mine sites, totally focused on industry outcomes, supported by their young wives in the photos. They stand out on a stark landscape, but are totally committed to the true pioneering spirit and outcomes of a fledgling town and region.

That spirit united when the town of Tennant Creek was developed on its current site. One of those great examples of consolidation of the women's spirit, energy and courage was the Country Women's Association. The CWA in Tennant Creek has a great history. It is good to see the women of Helen Marsh's generation are now embracing that spirit and carrying on those traditions.

There is a great story to tell about the CWA of Tennant Creek. They coordinated the relief efforts for the evacuation following Cyclone Tracy. Tennant Creek is known as the town with a heart of gold, but it does not relate to the incredible amount of gold that came out of that region; it relates to the spirit of the pioneers on the mining field, those local people in the town of Tennant Creek. Under guidance of the CWA the Tennant Creek branch bonded together and created all the support networks for the road travellers evacuating from Cyclone Tracy in 1974. There are some incredible stories that go with that. The women provided food, clothing and support for the children. They mobilised their menfolk to repair vehicles and support the people who were travelling either east to Mount Isa or further south to be received by the similarly generous community of Alice Springs.

The Barkly women reflect a diverse pioneering community. Looking at the different groups of the Barkly women you cannot go past acknowledging the pastoral community. The women who live, work and raise their families on the great cattle stations of the Barkly Tablelands and wider Barkly region are not only involved in the industry and in raising their families, they are also heavily involved in the education of their children.

My family and I have had great experiences over the years, particularly with the Gulf branch of the ICPA, supporting the needs of those living at stations, being a part of that movement and being a member, and engaging in functions and the collegial culture it brings to challenge isolation and tyranny of distance.

Among the great women of the Barkly in the Territory, it is really important to acknowledge the Indigenous women, the first Australians. I have always had a very special feeling in the communities where I have worked, where my family has lived and where we have shared the cattle station and outstation life in the regional towns. It was essentially those strong family women who were turning their children to me as the first schoolteacher in their lives.

I think where it started in Epenarra was probably the starkest example. I was appointed as a teacher. There was no infrastructure at the time, but it was a very beautiful waterfront block that I established on the Frew River. Slowly we started to build the school; it was a pastoral property school with silver bullet caravans. I will never forget the courage and trust those women and their families must have had to release their children, for the first time in their lives, to come to school with this male stranger who had entered their lives.

It was a pretty straight-shooting show; it was a government school, and they were great days. It was a very stable community, a small family-owned property. People had lived there for a couple of generations, and the men were heavily involved in the operations of the cattle station and the stock camp. The women did a lot of volunteering work at the station with the matriarch of that family, Mrs Heather Clough. I ran the school and all the kids were at school. They were very focused days and a great time for early pioneering work.

I can remember being a traditional school teacher, holding very strong standards and being a role model, particularly where Alyawarra was the first language. I spent a number of years asking all the questions and providing all the answers and was lucky to learn some of the local language. At the end of the day the usual routine was an art and education focus, and all the kids gathered on the mat. There were 46 kids at one stage in one silver bullet classroom. It was then dismissal time and the kids would disperse through the landscape and go home to the camp—it literally was a camp as there was no infrastructure in the first couple of years—and back into their first culture and traditional life.

That was focused on the government's position and the task of education and operating those formal standards at the school. As I got to know that community and share in the cultural context, which was the most important part, I got to understand there was an old woman in that camp who was Anmatyerre. She had arrived in the Alyawarra context through marriage, and she was a survivor of the Coniston Massacre.

As a teenager she witnessed one of the atrocities committed against Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and Australia. She had escaped and survived and was in that community, nurturing the children whose families were sending them to school every day. It started to play on my mind—alone in my silver bullet caravan on the Frew River at night, after preparing lessons and a meal and doing things like that. It was interesting that there was this straight-laced school teacher running a government school by day and those children were returning to camp that night to hear of the reality and brutality of colonial contact.

It was a privilege to celebrate diversity and trust. I had my great days in the stock camps, and I had the rough and tumble with the men, but I acknowledge those incredibly strong and powerful women and their traditional cultural context—raising their children and embracing a future. They took a serious quantum leap into the future, making decisions so their kids could live as part of two worlds.

The women in my upbringing should be mentioned in the brief time I have left to contribute. I need to talk about Nora Cecilia McCarthy. I was very fortunate to grow up in a household where my father's mother paid the rent on the housing commission three-bedroom fibro cottage. My mother's mother sheltered there for a number of years. My mother was also there, as well as my father's sister and her two children. They used the property to build on certain stages of their lives. Uncle John, who was my father's younger brother, never left. It was an amazing household to grow up in—and there were five of us siblings. It was an action-packed place to grow up, and was well-stocked with strong women and strong leadership.

My father always appreciated that. He was a shift worker all his life; he worked tirelessly, including overtime. He knew it was a strong base, so he had few concerns for his kids growing up.

To Nora Cecilia McCarthy, who inspired me, along with my brothers and sisters, thank you. A big part of what you have done has gotten me to where I am today, having a very enjoyable and fruitful life.

I can remember mum writing my first real political speech in primary school. It was a speech about the environment. She had great trouble reconciling how she was feeding our national emblem, the kangaroo, to our family dog in a tin. I remember the powerful punch that resonated in the speech that day.

She went on to do amazing things in her life and was a triple certificate nursing sister. She had a lot of experience in acute, surgical and aged care in the latter part of her nursing career. She was always one for making sure the kids had a well-balanced outlook in regard to culture, heritage and the environment. She was a great supporter of the arts and the household was always busy—ballet and piano for the girls. She made all the costumes.

She had a great strategy where she always encouraged the kids of the neighbourhood to come play at our place. It was a very smart strategy, which my wife and I employed as parents as well. When you have the kids in your home environment, you have a better handle on what is going on, who they are and where they are heading. When they get to the teenage years it is a disadvantage because your mum knows exactly what is going on in your life and what you are up to.

Well done, Nora Cecilia McCarthy, and thank you.

I also acknowledge my wife, Dawn McCarthy, who is another pioneering woman of the Barkly. She joined me at Epenarra a couple of years in. She then helped me pioneer another five schools. What we share as a family was when the Aboriginal families at Murun Murula gave my wife an abandoned tin shed as her house on the outstation when they moved into their new houses. She had her third child by that stage and she set that up as a home in the remote part of the Territory—the Nicholson River Land Trust. Well done, Dawn. In any statement about Territory women, you deserve your acknowledgement and your position in that statement.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I support the Minister for Territory Families' statement on women. I will take this opportunity to talk about some of the gender equality issues I have observed across my working life.

I have spoken a number of times in this Assembly about the women closest to me, the women and girls in my family: my mother, my daughters and even my collection of ex-wives. Today, however, I will talk about

the broader picture of growing up, and the women I have worked with who have helped shape my views along the way.

Whilst I am in my mid-50s, I do not recall a time when I saw men and women as anything other than equals. Some of my colleagues suggest this is a result of Alzheimer's, but I beg to differ. In my early teens, of my own volition, I eagerly left the most academically prestigious school in New South Wales, James Ruse Agricultural High School. I moved down the road to the academically questionable Cumberland High School. I did this for one reason alone: James Ruse was a boys' school at the time and Cumberland was co-ed. Feel free to draw the appropriate—or inappropriate—inference regarding my interests at the time.

As I said yesterday, I had a great time at school. I chased lots of girls and even managed to catch my fair share. At no time, however, did I ever consider any of the girls or young women as anything other than my equal, and to this day I remain great friends with a large number of them. Facebook is an interesting tool for maintaining contact with people from your past.

As a side story regarding the academics of James Ruse and Cumberland, ultimately I left school at 16, after Year 10. As I have detailed in the past, I commenced an apprenticeship and became an electrician. Then I joined the New South Wales fire brigade as a firefighter. Somewhere down the track I obtained a law degree and, for a time, I was a barrister in Sydney. Over this period, I ran into various people I attended school with. In the fire brigade, two of the firefighters I worked with were class mates from the academically superior James Ruse.

When I was at the bar in New South Wales, I ran into one of the women I attended Cumberland with. Meredith Phelps remains, to this day, one of the senior barristers at the criminal bar in Sydney, and she is a truly fantastic legal counsel. Of course, this is not indicative of the broader group of graduates from the two schools; it is an interesting aside from my experience.

When I left school and commenced my trade certificate at Meadowbank TAFE, I was in a class that included two women—the first two women to attend an electrical trades course at Meadowbank. Sadly, I do not recall the names of these two young women, but I recall the general sense that it was a bit of an oddity. I also recall thinking at the time, 'Why do these people think it is an oddity, and why should women not be welcome in this course?' I understood that the electrical trade was generally considered a blokey occupation, but I did not understand why.

I do not know where my underlying position came from. I came from a family of three brothers. My parents were originally country people—my mother from Moree, New South Wales, and my father from Gunning, near Goulburn, also in New South Wales. They were not politically active and they did not push equity issues or those sorts of things. That being said, they were not bigoted in any way and were happy to consider every person on their merits.

Outside of my TAFE class I did not have the opportunity to work with any women while I was an electrician. When I joined the New South Wales fire brigade it was even more blokey than the electrical trade, if that is possible. When I joined in 1983 there were about 3500 permanent firefighters and not one of them was a woman. I think it was about 18 months later that the first three women joined the brigade. I never had the opportunity to meet any of those original trailblazers, but I understand they suffered some tough times.

Over the years the department attempted to implement a number of programs aimed at encouraging more women to join the brigade, with different levels of success. It is a difficult process, to break down barriers in male-dominated occupations like the electrical trades or firefighting. Some of the men involved resent the intrusion. Sometimes it is a simple matter of perception, and shifting the community perception is necessary.

Once the number of female firefighters began to grow the story reached a broader audience, that firefighting was a career women could be involved in without it being something of an oddity. Women in the job were able to relate their experience to other women, and this was a tipping point. I recall a time in 2004, when I was stationed at Glebe Fire Station on a platoon, just outside Sydney. The platoon strength at the time was a station officer and five firefighters. At that time we had three women on a platoon, so more than 50% of the actual workers—that is not a slur on the station officer, by the way—were women.

I also recall an incident when I was driving the pump, and we had a relieving station officer. I do not recall this joker's name, but he sat in the truck and while returning from a fire call he asked a number of leading questions. He asked me how I felt about being rostered with three women and if I felt safe. I stopped the

truck, turned to this officer and gave it to him. These were my workmates that he was demeaning, and I resented the inferences he was making about their quality and capacity as firefighters.

I assured this bloke I had no concern whatsoever with my workmates, and I trusted and believed in each and every one of them. I did not hear anything further on the issue. I have far too many friends who are women firefighters to name them all, but three great mates I would like to acknowledge are Zena Mehanna, Bronwyn Griffith and Bindi Wheels. I had such a great time being stationed with each of them, and I would trust my life in their hands any time.

In spite of my experience and the increase in the number of women firefighters I observed, a recent article on SBS has highlighted some of the ongoing problems for women seeking to enter the fire services around the country. In NSW it is still the case that only 5% of firefighters are women. Some of these women continue to face harassment and bullying. Not all of them, but whatever the number, it is too many. In 2014 the then chief officer of NSW Fire and Rescue, Greg Mullins, was prompted to circulate an email to all firefighters, in which the following message was contained: 'I am particularly concerned about suggestions that we are dropping standards and employing women incapable of being firefighters. If you simply do not like working with a more diverse group then you need to start looking for a new job.'

I echo Chief Officer Mullins' words and I truly believe they should stand for every occupation, not just firefighting. The simple truth is, and it is a truth that far too many men still do not want to accept, women are as capable as men of doing the job, regardless of what that job is. Firefighting is a great job. I still rate it as the best job in the world. It is a job that, like the Territory, provides opportunity. I describe it to people as the Peter Pan of jobs. It is a job you can join and you never have to grow up. You can remain a boy or girl for the rest of your life. It has a serious side, but that is what makes the job exciting. That excitement is the same regardless of if you are a man or a woman.

I am extremely proud to be the assistant minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. I am excited by the challenge ahead. I look forward to offering the benefit of my experience in assisting Chief Officer Mark Spain and Director Jennifer Reilly in their efforts to increase the number of women in the NT fire service. I am happy to provide my positive experience in this process.

My time in the NSW fire brigade was divided by a period in which I worked for various members and ministers of the federal parliament. What many people do not know is that I originally left the brigades on the basis of a deal with the then federal Member for Fowler and government Whip, Ted Grace. Ted was around 63 at the time and was the endorsed Labor candidate for the upcoming 1993 election. However, in party terms, he had lost the numbers in his local branches and would not win another preselection. Fowler was, and remains, one of the safest Labor seats in the federal parliament.

An offer was made for me to come on board as Ted's chief of staff, as Ted was not intending on running for the following election. If I were to work the branches in my own time and re-establish the numbers I could stand at the next preselection. Effectively, the seat would be mine. I took the opportunity and began working closely with the disparate groups in the local branches. Eventually I was able to pull these groups back together and ensure the numbers were there. However, in a classic political move, once I established those numbers Ted changed his mind and decided to do another term. There was not much I could do. It was his seat, after all. I decided that waiting another three years would be fairly straightforward and it was a pretty good job that I enjoyed. I was confident in my ability to keep membership on board.

Preselection came and went, and Ted was endorsed as the candidate for the 1996 election. About six months later I received a call from the president of the New South Wales branch. We had a conversation that went something like this: 'I know about the deal you and Ted have, but the admin committee has implemented a policy of affirmative action. Sorry, but Fowler has been earmarked to go to a woman.'

I was pretty devastated at the time, but I was not bitter. It has been my experience over many years in politics that the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry, even when you think you have covered every base. The upside of the admin committee decision was that my great, supportive friend, Julia Irwin, had the opportunity to have her time in the federal parliament.

Jules, I love you, and I am so happy you had that opportunity.

In my view, affirmative action has a role in breaking down barriers in some instances. I do not begrudge the loss of my opportunity. It is always refreshing to see equality established in its own right. This in an area where the Territory shines.

I have been in the Territory for five years. Four of those I was a councillor on the Law Society of the Northern Territory. Throughout my time as a councillor there was always a majority of women on the council. On the executive of the same council, more often than not, there was also a majority of females. Where there was not a majority it was never less than 50-50. I have been to numerous admission ceremonies at the Supreme Court since moving to the NT. It is striking that females always make up the vast majority of admissions.

In late 2015 I travelled to Canberra to attend a meeting of the Law Council of Australia. One of the agenda items for discussion was how to encourage greater female participation in the law. This was an area the Territory has provided a lead over the other states and ACT by a long way.

We have heard about Ella Cavallaro, the Power and Water electrician who recently won the apprentice of the year. Given my experience in the electrical trade I was enthralled by this news. I am so proud of this woman; great work, Ella.

Our 13th Assembly, as has been noted by a number of speakers, has 50% representation on the government and opposition benches. Twelve of the 25 members of this Assembly are women. Most importantly, a Cabinet of eight contains five women; 62.5%. Not even Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau can match that, as good as he is.

We can be proud of the way things happen in the Territory, but we should never be complacent. We need to continue to promote diversity, as the entire community will benefit. We need to promote equity. There is no equity when a woman is paid less than her male counterparts for the same job. How this can possibly be the case in this day and age beggars belief. Sadly, it is too often the case.

I will always support women and I will always support diversity, but I see the challenges ahead as we promote diversity, put in place programs that support it, and rigorously pursue equity for those we are supporting. Perhaps it is self-interest—I have two young daughters who will go to high school soon and then head into the workforce. I look forward to the day they are equal to everybody in their workplace.

I commend the minister's statement to the House.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the Minister for Territory Families, for bringing this statement to the House, a statement about achievement, recognition and women.

I want to talk about some of the wonderful initiatives that exist to support our women, as well as some of the achievements of our amazing Territory women.

Isn't it great to be a woman in the NT parliament today! Alongside our colleagues we fill almost 50% of this Chamber, with our current number of 12 being the largest female representation in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Yay for us!

This 13th Assembly is served by strong and powerful women who fill the important positions of Speaker, Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Attorney-General and Deputy Opposition Leader. This is not to take away from all other female Cabinet members, backbenchers and Independent members, who work tirelessly to fulfil our commitments to our constituents and achieve our goals for our community and our Territory.

I pay homage to the female politicians who have walked the path before me in the NT Legislative Assembly, and I thank the wives and partners of the men who have served in the NT Legislative Assembly.

I am fortunate to have participated in a number of leadership activities and programs that have enabled me to stand in this House today. It is important that Territorians are afforded the same opportunities so they are able to contribute to and drive the change and progress we seek to continually improve our communities.

The NT Youth Round Table provides one such opportunity. It consists of 16 young Territorians aged between 15 and 25 years from all over the Territory. This year's group sees an even split between young men and young women, which is fantastic. I have had the privilege of meeting many strong and determined young women in my time, and the eight young women on this year's Youth Round Table measure up to the best of them.

These young women put their hands up to be a voice for their peers, families and communities, and to do their share of the heavy lifting to make a difference and improve our Territory. I thank them all for their

commitment and I am sure I will see them all graduate to other important roles following their term on this year's Youth Round Table.

I am proud to be part of a government that understands the importance of gender equality and has committed to a minimum 50% membership of women on government boards and committees by 2020. This commitment will ensure the voices, experiences and knowledge of our women are harnessed to enhance this beautiful Territory we live in. I, along with many others in this House, have experienced the uncomfortableness that comes with being a minority in a room. Despite everyone's best attempts to ease this discomfort, it can still be challenging to contribute effectively. The 50% membership will allow strong women to work alongside our strong men to deliver a better Territory for our children.

I owe a lot of my strength, compassion and resilience to the strong women who have had an impact on my life. I want to publicly acknowledge some of these women.

I will start with my mum. She is the strongest woman I know. She is a role model to many, the queen of our family, and my best friend and karaoke partner.

As a 19-year-old, my mum left her home in Queensland. She left her family and her community of Yarrabah just outside of Cairns to undertake studies in Adelaide to further her life and career. That is where she met my dad. She relocated to Katherine with my dad, where she gave birth to my brother Jonathan and me. She worked full-time, provided a safe and warm home, and supported my dad in each of the positions and roles he undertook.

My mum continues to put the needs of others before her own; she supports all those around her and has her children's back 100%. Thank you for that, mum.

To my aunties, my sister, my cousins, my nieces and my closest girls, thank you for being the wonderful role models you are and for encouraging others to never give up, no matter how hard times get.

I have another story I would like to share with the House, a story of courage and resilience, about another strong woman I am privileged to have in my life. Five weeks ago my younger cousin, Karlie, who I consider to be my little sister, received the devastating news that her two-year-old baby boy was suffering from Leukaemia. Our world came crashing down around us, but in the midst of this turmoil Karlie's strength of character and love shone through.

For the past five weeks Karlie has continued in her role as a mum, partner, daughter, sister, cousin and friend. She continues to support and comfort her sick baby boy as he receives treatment. She shares parenting responsibilities with her partner, Aaron, and she even manages to try to continue with her university studies. Karlie is an amazing woman who was born and bred in the Territory, and the phrase 'Territory tough' just does not do her justice.

Our government is undertaking to advance women's issues and encourage and value Territory women's input. We strengthened our mutual recognition act on domestic violence to ensure that women who cross state borders do not have to reapply for a domestic violence order. We amended the *Bail Act* to expand the use of electronic monitoring bracelets. We introduced the body-worn video and domestic violence evidence bill, which enables police to capture video on body-worn cameras to be used as evidence in court. Earlier this week we passed the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill to provide Territory women with access to a medical termination of pregnancy.

I look forward to these measures and future initiatives which support Territory women, and Territory women will in turn deliver for other Territorians because of those initiatives. I commend the Minister for Territory Families for bringing this important statement before the House.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I support all women across Australia, the Northern Territory and the world. I am very pleased the Minister for Families has brought this important issue to the table, and to hear the minister's vision in gender equality across the Northern Territory.

I have been brought up by a very strong woman, that being my mother. I recall family stories of how another strong woman in our family, my great-grandmother, supported my great-grandfather in World War I—when my great-grandfather went to Gallipoli and, sadly, did not return.

My great-grandmother was left to raise three children by herself in times of war and through other very hard times. She did it well, hence why I am here today. I also have two sisters, one older and one younger. Both

my sisters are very strong-headed women and, believe me, when I was young there was not much I got away with.

Being strong women, they have both achieved some great things within their own lives and their families over many years. I have been very lucky in life to meet and work with some fantastic, very strong women. Some of these great women have been mentioned today by the Members for Casuarina and Spillett. The one who comes to my mind is Jo Townsend. Jo taught me so much in the world of executive management and to understand issues in a very different context. I thank Jo and all the women in the workplace over many years for all their support.

I lived and worked in Alice Springs for over 10 years, and I have worked in many remote communities across the Northern Territory. One of the best programs I have been lucky enough to work with and support is Night Patrol. Night Patrol was developed by strong women from Alice Springs standing together and saying they have had enough of the drinking and violence occurring within their communities. Night Patrol is one of the most successful programs we have seen and I am honoured to know some of the strong women who started it to make a difference. I commend them.

I have also worked in many Top End communities in the areas of alcohol and other drugs, including inhalants, in some tough times and situations where substance misuse was taking over the whole community and women had a voice, but no one would listen. I always found time to listen to these fantastic women, and I found that they had some great ideas on how to combat the local issues. When they came together as a collective, my God, they were very strong women who got the jobs done.

As we heard today from the Minister for Territory Families, there is much more we need to do, including providing a strong focus on leadership; investing in addressing systematic barriers that prevent women from obtaining leadership positions; more workforce participation and financial security to empower our women; the development of women's economic growth and political empowerment; better working conditions for our women; and reducing violence against women.

I am very pleased to know this government is committed to addressing these issues and working towards clear goals to achieve some great outcomes for our Territory women. These changes have started, including the recent RU486 bill, which many women in this Chamber and across the NT have worked very hard on. They should be congratulated and commended for the outcome of that, and for the never-give-up attitude to get it through parliament.

Last week we celebrated International Women's Day. I was very pleased to participate in the walk and stand alongside our wonderful members in this Chamber and Territory women. It was a great morning walk and I was so happy to see the sky filled with purple.

I must mention women in sport. The people who come to my mind are great Australians like Nova Peris and Cathy Freeman, who represent strong women across the world and the NT.

The Palmerston Crocs netball team is a great group of hard-working women raising money for their sport club on weekends. I am sure they will do very well this season. The Darwin Buffettes, the Tiwi Island girls—the list goes on. Many members in the Chamber support our women's teams in the AFL.

Mr Paech: Redtails!

Mr SIEVERS: And the Redtails—very good.

The most current—and favourite—strong women in sport today are our very own Adelaide Crows team. They include Abby Holmes, Ange Foley, Sally Riley, Stevie-Lee Thompson, Tayla Thorn, Heather Anderson, Lauren O'Shea, Jasmine Anderson and Sophie Armistead. All these great women will be playing in the Australian Women's Football League grand final this weekend. What an achievement! I am so proud of them, as every Territorian is.

My daughter is a young Larrakia woman, and I want the best chances in life for her. Her mum and her grandmother Alice, who was part of the Stolen Generation, are very strong Larrakia women. They have fought very hard for their culture and way of life in a very tough world.

I remember having cups of tea, listening to my daughter's grandmother tell the stories of the Bombing of Darwin, and how as a young girl she was playing on Cullen Bay beach when a truck came and took her away. When she returned to Darwin she rebuilt her family and brought up 10 children who all learned to

read and write. She talked about how she was proud they all went to work and raised their families in Darwin. I have the greatest respect for Alice and how she overcame such huge barriers in her life. She is a very strong woman.

I commend Clare Martin as being the first woman to be a Chief Minister in the NT. I remember Clare presenting me with a postgraduate qualification in my younger years, in Parliament House. The way Clare went about her business and engaged with everyone in the room is something I always admired and will never forget.

As the assistant minister for men's policy, I feel we must ensure we include men in the discussion. We must work together across the issues to achieve gender equity and greater outcomes for our Territory women, men and children.

I am also very pleased to acknowledge all the strong women here today in parliament. From our fifth floor, through each level in this parliament—the Legislative Assembly, support staff and the very strong women in this Chamber today. I am very proud to work with them all, and I know they are looking after the women in my life and beyond.

There is truth in this saying, 'Behind every man there is a great woman'. How true. I thank my partner for her support. That saying has been prevalent every day of my life and through generations of women in my family. I am pleased to know NT women are in great hands with the Minister for Territory Families. I know this will continue through this Chamber and this government. We will support our women now and into the future to achieve gender equality in the Territory.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I support the statement by the minister, who has many wonderful, strong women in the electorate of Braitling. I am very happy to see the minister, a local from Alice Springs and the electorate of Braitling, was able to share that positive story today.

The Northern Territory has a history of embracing strong women of all colours and races, which I am very proud to talk about today. As the minister mentioned earlier today, for the last 40 000 years Aboriginal women have been raising families, caring for country and traveling the great lands of the NT and the greater country. I am a descendent of some of these women, and I would like to share with you some of their stories to paint a picture of why Territory women are so valued and important to many of us.

For those who are familiar with Alice Springs and have been down there to see my beautiful home town—I am the great-great-grandson of a woman named Topsy Smith. She was a member of the Arabana tribe of Alice Springs and is celebrated in the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame, which is an outstanding place to recognise the excellence of women in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. It is only one of two women's halls of fame in the world. I am proud and privileged in my home town of Alice Springs.

My great-grandmother, Topsy Smith, was married to a Welshman miner. He died at the Arltunga goldfields. My great-grandmother had to travel from Arltunga to Alice Springs, which is about 100 kilometres. Topsy, though pregnant, made the trip with seven children and her herd of billygoats, which she agisted on Billy Goat Hill, one of the famous icons of Alice Springs.

When she arrived in Alice Springs the local police officer allowed her to live in a small shed that later become known as the Bungalow. While she was there she became an assistant teacher for the fair skinned, part-Aboriginal children, as they were referred to in the day. She helped manage the school and was responsible for the children's welfare at night, and she protected the older girls from the unwelcome attention of men.

My great-grandmother dedicated her life to caring for these children as if they were her own. She spent the rest of her life in Alice Springs with her extended family and, unfortunately, passed away in 1960 due to health issues. She was a true pioneering woman of Central Australia. My great-grandmother, Ada Wade, was one of the first women in Alice Springs to own land the whitefella way. Her property at 10 South Terrace is now home to the Quest Apartments.

I think about the pioneering women of Central Australia, such as Ida Standley; Molly Clark, from Old Andado; and Bertha Strehlow, who was the first white woman to see Uluru. They are Central Australian trailblazers, people of the inland who lived in difficult times, but played a significant role in shaping Alice Springs to what it is today, a vibrant hub of multiculturalism and diversity. I am thankful for these pioneering women.

I am fortunate to have a deep connection to Alice Springs, and I have many older relatives who reside there. I am able to hear and share stories from my elders, stories of Central Australian women on the land and in the country in those early days. These women played a significant role in setting up our great town of Alice Springs, the place I am proud to call home.

I took great pleasure in sitting down and thinking about the incredibly strong women in the electorate of Namatjira, whom I am privileged to represent in the Chamber. These incredible women are constantly teaching me new things and sharing stories with me. They continue to trail blaze not only in the Northern Territory, but on the national and international stages. The women of Namatjira, whether they are women on our great pastoral stations, on communities or in the rural area—there is vibrancy, resilience and a drive that is evident. The women of Namatjira are strong and proud.

It is always with great pride that I am able to visit Territory organisations that are led by strong and deadly women. These are women like Donna Ah Chee, from the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress; Councillor Jade Kudrenko on the Alice Springs Town Council, who is a strong advocate for the need for more women in local government; Lauren Ganley, at Desert Knowledge Australia; Andrea Mason, at NPY; Roxanne Kenny, the President of the MacDonnell Regional Council; and I must not forget our dear comrade, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, who is a fierce advocate for pursuing women's rights on the national level. I am very thankful for that.

There are so many great Territory women doing great things for the place we call home. I acknowledge and continue to thank rural women right across this great Territory. I want to focus on a couple of women in particular: Rebecca Cadzow, from Mount Riddick Station; Kate Chalmers, from the Gemtree; Natalie Turner, from Bonya; Sheree Fogarty; Nicole Hayes, from Undoolya Station; and Liz Bird. These are just some of the outstanding rural women who make a significant contribution—and another great rural woman is Kezia Purick, the Member for Goyder.

A majority of these ladies have to depend on the supply of natural resources in agriculture. Apart from that there are no other means of living for the families who belong to rural areas. These women make up more than one-quarter of the overall world population. In developing countries rural women comprise more than 43% of agricultural labour forces. We must acknowledge that they play an important role in preparing and delivering cattle and food.

I like this fact: rural women spend a lot more time on domestic work and household duties than any urban man or woman. Men and women from the rural area are tough. These women take part in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improvements to food security and eradicating rural poverty.

Rural women have to face a lot of inequalities in education, finance and health. Still, these women offer their heart and soul to work for the land and their children.

On 15 October it is International Day of Rural Women. We will make sure we have ribbons for everyone here to wear and share in this wonderful event. This is a great event, but it also highlights the fact we still have a long way to go for many rural women and all women of the Northern Territory in regard to inequality.

Last week we celebrated International Women's Day—we had our ribbons on. International Women's Day is a great day for us to come together and acknowledge that work still has to happen; women are still struggling for better working conditions and allowances, and fighting the inequality and injustice that still goes on. I am a fierce advocate for and continue to support events like International Women's Day and White Ribbon Day.

It seems fitting to reflect on how far Territory women have come and what we need to do in future to overcome inequality. Earlier today the minister stated that 40% of the population of the Northern Territory is women, and almost 40% of women are under the age of 25. That is a key issue we need to pick up on. We need to do a lot of work with our young people. Despite the fact one in two Australians is female, the gender gap is large. I was very thankful that the minister spoke about the work that needs to be done to overcome that.

I also must acknowledge and pay my respects to women in Territory politics. I am very fortunate to have a number of women in my team, Territory Labor, but I must acknowledge the contributions of former members. Marion Scrymgour was the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. She was a trailblazer, signalling that Aboriginal women should be in this Chamber and participating in debate, and that they are active and very confident in delivering for the people.

Clare Martin's name has been raised a few times in the Chamber today, as the first female Chief Minister. The former senator for the Northern Territory, Nova Peris, was the first Aboriginal woman to enter federal politics. That was a very significant trailblazing exercise, making sure the pathway for Aboriginal women into the federal parliament was achieved. Since then Senator Malarndirri McCarthy has taken on that role.

I also want to thank many other women. I would not be here today if it was not for the love, help and guidance of Territory women like Pat Turner; Eileen Hoosan; my mother, Cheryl Schembri, and her sisters; my grandmothers, Barbara, June, Isabelle and Rhonda. To them I say thanks, and they have my utmost R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

We do not talk enough about what gender equality means. There are many people in the Northern Territory who hear us talking about this in parliament, but do not understand what that means. We all have a role, as parliamentarians, to make sure we communicate the message of what we need to do to overcome gender inequality.

When we speak about gender inequality it means women, men, transgender people, sistergirls and brotherboys having equal access to the opportunity to be able to reach their full potential and aspire to whatever they want to do or be. This is about making sure our future generations are raised to love, not hate; to accept, not refuse.

As a government we have a strong focus on leadership and working with people on the ground to develop mechanisms for financial security to empower women at all stages of their life. We are doing this; our government is not leaving any women behind. We will make sure women in communities, in remote and regional towns and in cities are supported and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Iceland and some of the Scandinavian countries have been leaders in developing equality strategies. An example of this is—I will try to pronounce the name but I will probably not get it right—Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who served as the fourth President of Iceland. She was democratically elected by the people of Iceland between 1980 and 1996. She was Europe's first woman president and considered the world's first democratically elected female president. The world's first out-lesbian Prime Minister was Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir in 2009, also from Iceland. We can learn a thing or two from Iceland.

Unfortunately it was not until 2010 that our great nation had its first female Prime Minister. Hon Julia Gillard was the 27th Prime Minister of Australia. Julia Gillard's term as Prime Minister provides a unique opportunity for us to analyse the explicit and implicit ways in which gender has been, and continues to be, used. I think that from time to time the treatment she was subjected to was based primarily on the fact she was a woman.

We have had female Speakers in the Northern Territory Assembly for 18 of the past 20 years, Northern Territory women had been elected to head of state before any other state, and then the ACT followed with Katy Gallagher. This government is committed to ensuring that vital services for women and children are funded and well resourced. The Minister for Territory Families, whom I am very proud to call a good friend and colleague, is always speaking about the work we need to do in ensuring our women's shelters and their services are adequately resourced.

For people to suggest, as they do, that girls just want to have fun is completely untrue. You only have to look around this Chamber at the commitment. From time to time it is not fun in here for a large portion of the women and men.

Women contribute to the Northern Territory's economic and social fabric, and I am thankful for the contributions they make.

In closing, I will take this opportunity to thank the women of the Northern Territory. Nothing is impossible for them. They have the support of the Northern Territory Government—if there is any way we can assist them to follow their path and achieve whatever they desire.

I have a message for all the other men out there: get behind our women, otherwise you will be hanging out the passenger side of your best friend's ride. Get behind; be active; be a supporter and an ally of Territory women; and do not forget the rural women.

Mr COSTA (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Braitling for bringing this statement to the House and for speaking about her vision for gender equality in the Northern Territory. It is a vision I share

in my working and personal life, and one I am committed to promoting as the elected representative of Arafura.

I am proud to be a member of this House, which has such a high representation of women—almost 50%. But I am even prouder that this government leads by example by setting a target that all advisory and decision-making boards in the NT have a minimum 50% women representation by 2020.

Of the 18 seats Labor holds in this House—50%. We have five women in Cabinet, with women outnumbering men, which is an Australian first.

During my years in local government and as the CEO of Tiwi Islands local council I was conscious of the need to increase female representation on our board, as well as within the council's workforce. During the time I served on council, it was great to see Lynette De Santos step up to the role of president, and today she continues to serve as the Mayor of Tiwi Islands Regional Council. The former member for Arafura, Marion Scrymgour, continues to serve the Tiwi people as the CEO of the Tiwi Islands Regional Council. To have two strong women like Lynette and Marion at the helm of council sends a positive signal to my community members.

During my years working in health we worked hard to ensure the employment of more women, who provide a crucial role in dealing with women's health matters. Culturally, they are the ones we need to be working and speaking with about women's health. I assisted in setting up the Tiwi Health Advisory Group, where 50% of the membership consists of women from the four skin groups.

I note the reference by the minister to how we need to talk more about what gender equality means, recognising that it enables men, women and trans and gender diverse people to have access to opportunity.

I want to acknowledge the Tiwi Islands Sistagirls, who have fought for a long time to be accepted as transgender women. Over the years they have suffered a great deal of pain, mental health issues, depression and tragic suicides as part of their fight to be recognised. I was pleased to see them reach their dream of attending, for their first time ever, the Sydney Mardi Gras.

As I travel around my electorate, I hear about and see women who are role models for their families and communities, who deserve recognition for their contributions. I will now talk about a few of them.

The Tiwi Bombers Football Club has a mighty reputation, and I am really pleased to see talented young Tiwi women rise to the challenge and participate in Aussie Rules. They can show us men a thing or two about playing football and how to be a good sport. On 11 March the Tiwi Bombers Under 15 side won the NTFL grand final against Palmerston. Unfortunately the Tiwi Bombers Under 18 girls, who also played in the NTFL grand final, did not come away with a win, but they sure gave it their best shot.

These young women train hard and demonstrate teamwork, but we have to remember that behind the team are the volunteers who support them. Well done to Cindy-Lee McDonald, from the Tiwi Bombers Football Club, who won the Kennards Volunteer of the Year award for the NTFL. I also acknowledge the hard work and effort put into the team by Karina Gray, who is the girls' leadership program coordinator and the coach of the Under 15 girls. What a fantastic effort.

The Tiwis are blessed to have Sister Anne Gardiner, who has devoted 62 years of her life to working alongside the Tiwi people in many ways. Because of this she was named NT Senior Australian of the Year, on Australia Day. She is an incredible woman and is completely deserving of this national award. She is an inspiration to not only the Tiwis, but Australia.

Speaking of awards, the 2017 NT Young Achievers Awards night is coming up on Saturday 1 April. One of our finalists is a young woman from Maningrida, Philamena McKenzie. According to the awards webpage, Philamena works with the youth services delivering programs to support the health, education and leadership skills of remote Indigenous youth. She established the Youth Leadership Committee, creating 20 leaders who now drive the program.

Philamena coordinated the Yarning Up Strong – Healing Our Youth forum for over 100 remote youth workers, and she was co-director of the Lurra Festival. Philamena has provided opportunities for remote Indigenous youth to develop pride in their communities and achieve their goals.

I also acknowledge Codie Gibson and Noeletta McKenzie, who were announced as semi-finalists in the awards, and I offer my congratulations.

Another strong woman, and there are many in my electorate, is Helen Williams from Maningrida. A leader of (inaudible) clan, she serves as the director of Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, an elected councillor of the West Arnhem Regional Council, a councillor with Malabam Health Board, and with Maningrida Progress Association. She is a very strong advocate for the environment and for West Arnhem.

Helen is also the proud mother to Alice, Noni and Grace, who are better known as the Maningrida Stingray Sisters. A recent article in the West Arnhem *Wire* explained their travel to the 2017 Vancouver International Women in Film Festival. The sisters star in a documentary series filmed over four years, telling their story of fighting against mining in Arnhem Land. I am told it is brilliant and I look forward to its official release so I can see it for myself. Clearly they are very much their mother's daughters, sharing a passion to protect the environment.

Caring for country is at the heart of the people of the Arafura electorate, like the Stingray Sisters and their mum, Helen. This is true of the work of the Djelk Rangers at Maningrida. Djelk, like other ranger groups around the NT, is a large employer of local people, including many females. I am pleased to see the continued success of the Learning on Country Program at Maningrida, which, like the ranger program, is all about protecting and preserving land and sea, country and language, and culture for generations to come.

A recent announcement was that Djelk created seven internships for seven rangers in partnership with Maningrida School. This is great news, but even better is that six of the seven interns are women. I offer my congratulations to Zenayha, Zoe, Normalina, Rickisha, Bowme, Samatha and Dioni. It is a paid internship, and these young women have earned their roles because they have worked hard in the last two years to successfully complete a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. They will work three days a week with Djelk Rangers for six months. If they work hard at their ranger duties and complete studies in their Year 12 NTCET, they will be offered full-time permanent positions.

As we know, it is important to keep kids at school to complete their middle years schooling through to senior years. The longer we keep kids at school, the better their chances are in gaining employment and success in life.

We see good, successful students at Gunbalanya School, girls in particular. I attended the graduation of eight young women, with my colleague, the Member for Barkly, being the acting Education minister, in January. I offer my congratulations to Barbarina, Laurina, Alexandria, Charlina, Corrinna, Tanisha, Zoe and Victoria. For Victoria the achievement was especially admirable because she completed her schooling even with a baby boy, Victor. She is blessed to have strong family support, and she said that wanting a better future for little Victor drove her to complete her schooling.

It is the highest number of graduates from any remote Indigenous community in the Northern Territory. I believe this is a reflection of the strong leadership of co-principals Esther Djayhgurrnga and Sue Trimble. They work as a successful team and collaborate with local community and families of Gunbalanya to see continued success for girls and boys alike.

The issue of domestic and family violence impacts too many women and children in my electorate. We all know the Northern Territory has the highest statistics in the country. It is good to hear from the Minister for Territory Families, a strong woman who has worked for many years at Alice Springs Women's Shelter, that work has commenced on delivering a new domestic, family and social violence reduction framework for the NT. We need this to identify where services can be improved, but we also need to keep working on prevention of domestic and family violence to understand the underlying causes. As men we need to accept the responsibility and say, 'No more', and to underpin this with actions, not just words.

The work of Charlie King and the No More campaign is fantastic, but we need more men to stand up and drive this change and demonstrate respect for our women—our mothers, sisters, aunties and daughters.

As men we need to be strong role models for our young men and young boys, and lead by example in having respectful relationships with our womenfolk.

I acknowledge the women who work on night patrol across the communities of my electorate, ensuring that people can get home safely. On behalf of the women who, sadly, have to find safety in one of the safe houses at Gunbalanya, Milikapiti, Wurrumiyanga or Maningrida, I thank the women who run these houses and provide comfort to other women.

I am pleased to hear that this government is strengthening family violence services in remote communities such as mine to maintain safe houses and outreach services.

I take this chance to pay tribute to the women of Arafura electorate, who are the backbone of the families and communities. Their strength and wisdom keep our culture strong and connected. It sometimes worries me that it is the senior women of our communities who carry so many responsibilities and leadership roles, but I feel confident that we have many young ones stepping up to these roles as well.

To our women, thank you. As your elected member in this parliament I am committed to working with you to try to fix the issues and challenges you face in addressing gender inequality.

I am also committed to celebrating and acknowledging your achievements and successes. International Women's Day is a wonderful day to celebrate success, but we need to celebrate women's success, strength and courage every day.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am prouder than I can explain to speak in support of the Minister for Territory Families' statement on women, and explain a bit about the brilliant women I am lucky enough to have graced my life.

Since my maiden speech I have repeatedly sung the praises of women across the Territory. From my mother to colleagues in this House to my own children, I have been blessed to be influenced by some strong and wonderful women for most of my life.

My mum was a Londoner from a large family, and she faced many challenges in her upbringing. I can recall some of my mum's stories of her and her brothers and sisters being split up and billeted out through the English countryside during the Second World War because of the bombings in London at the time. If anybody has seen the movies about Narnia, such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, it is exactly what happened to the kids in that movie.

About 15 years ago my mum was here on holidays, and I took her, with my two young kids, to see that movie. I looked over after the first 10 minutes, when the family had been split up and the children sent out to the countryside, and mum was crying. I asked her after the movie what was wrong. She did not want to tell me at the time, but she explained afterwards that that was exactly what had happened to her family. Their family, the Ellises, lived through the horrors of World War II, never to be in one place at one time again.

For me that was the start of the stories as I grew up, living the life with my mother. I saw her battle the loss of her only daughter and beat breast cancer. The support she had for us as a family, being one of the strongest women I have ever met—I am happy to have her as my mum, and I am proud to call her a hero of mine.

She was a seamstress in the 1960s and with my dad she migrated to Australia with their infant daughter in search of a better life for their young family. They could not put up with the cold weather in England. I am happy that they made that move, just quietly. I would not be standing here if they did not.

After arriving and spending a short time in Adelaide, they moved to country South Australia and quickly settled in, finding work on farms—which was dad's history—and various cleaning jobs throughout the community to try to support their family.

Over the years mum and dad worked many jobs to give us the upbringing they thought we deserved and the life they could only have dreamed of if we were back in England. The unwavering support from mum during the toughest of times will always stay with me—working a number of jobs to make sure there was food on the table, taking us to whatever sport training we wanted. This was in country South Australia, so it was not just down the road. Our games were 40 or 50 miles away. To go to Adelaide was a couple of hundred miles as a round trip.

She did all this whilst missing her family back in the United Kingdom terribly. I take this opportunity to echo the sentiments of members this morning. I want to say, mainly to my family and friends but also to everybody in England, that we are thinking of them at this horrible time.

Sadly, as I mentioned, our family was rocked by a tragic incident that took my sister, mum's daughter, away from us when she was barely 20 years of age. That was a stark life lesson for me about making the most of things while you possibly can and taking every opportunity when you can. The strength of character of my

mum, to beat breast cancer back in the 1970s, when not many people at all survived a disease like that—thankfully mum is still in South Australia, living a reasonably full life.

Something that struck me recently was at a Jimmy Barnes show on the weekend. He spoke about moving with his family from Glasgow to London and catching a boat with his parents at about the same time my parents came here from London. There were so many similarities in the story he told about the upbringing he had, except he grew up in a house with alcoholic, violent parents. That is something I am blessed never to have been a part of—the challenges that family faced. It was an amazing show, but to hear him speak about his violent upbringing—it seemed normal to him and his family. Thankfully I have never experienced that in my life or with my family.

The more I speak with people and move around the more I realise we may have been a very lucky family. We did not ever see or live with any of those horrors. Some members in the House have spoken about domestic violence today, so I will not dwell on it. I absolutely hate it, and I know we all will do as much as we can to stamp it out. We need to make sure that the majority of the time it can be stopped, and we need to do all we can to stop it and give our women the best opportunity to get out of those situations.

I have mentioned before that I have had the luxury of assisting some fantastic women through the Electrical Trades Union. I was a part of setting up the inaugural ETU women's conference in Darwin. It was probably one of the proudest moments I have had, gaining the trust of those women to be able to advocate for them in a male dominant industry. It took many years to get to a position where they would confide in me and trust me to advocate on their behalf. Through some of the professional networks I was developing through the union, I was able to help those women set up the inaugural conference in Darwin. They had tried a number of times to get it off the ground in Brisbane.

The Electrical Trades Union has about 11 000 or 12 000 people in Queensland, and about 1000 through the Territory, so for us to organise a conference here when they could not get enough interest in Queensland was a very proud moment for me.

We were lucky that Nova Peris, Delia Lawrie and a host of other wonderful women spoke at those conferences in the time I was looking after the electrical union. It was a very proud moment for me. One of the ladies who helped set that up was Pat Rogers from Queensland. I want to pay homage to Pat. I have known her for about 10 years; she is an industrial officer for the electrical union. In her role, Pat gets to take on the toughest of disputes against the biggest of multinational businesses when it comes to workers not being treated the way they need to.

When we walk into Fair Work or some other jurisdiction and there are multinationals with their silks in hand, folders and everything else to back them up, the electrical union has Pat Rogers. I can guarantee you we lost a lot more than we won with Pat Rogers. She is an amazing woman and very strong in her own right. I am very proud to have her as a friend. I texted her the other night after the vote in the House and she was extremely proud of us to have achieved what we did earlier this week. As I mentioned, Pat and a number of other women within the electrical union were extremely integral in setting up that inaugural conference.

One of the women who attended that conference was young Ella from Tennant Creek, who I have been fortunate enough to build trust with. Ella had completed her linespersons training in Alice Springs with Power and Water after moving from Tennant Creek. She is a slight build and she continually hurt her back trying to lift more than the boys did. It is a reasonably common problem for people to hurt their back in that industry. I met with Ella when I was in Alice Springs; she was pretty distraught, she thought she would have to leave Power and Water and the trade because she could not see a future in a place the size of Alice Springs. There were not many career opportunities outside the role she was employed in.

I was able to convince a good friend from Darwin, Marnie Scobie, who also works with Power and Water, to meet with Ella the next time she was in Alice Springs, and the two of them struck up a very strong friendship. Marnie had worked from northern Western Australia through Power and Water. She is a very strong woman and a very good electrician.

When Ella met Marnie, Ella was able to find a confidante and see that there may be a different way for her to stay in the industry with Power and Water. After some time she decided to move to Darwin, which was a fantastic thing. She had some training in a few different areas and then, as a few people have mentioned, she has been fortunate and skilled enough to earn the opportunity to do a second apprenticeship as an electrician. Upon completing that apprenticeship she was nominated as the Northern Territory's Apprentice of the Year and got to represent us on the national stage, which she did remarkably well.

If anybody has ever seen Ella and her band, 19 Miles and Counting—they befit themselves very well. Her music is another fantastic story. She was the bass guitarist. The drummer left the band and they thought they would have to leave. She spoke to the singer, probably their most experienced musician, Gus Cameron, and said, 'I think I can learn the drums if you have the time and patience to train me', so they did. That band is still going stronger than ever. Ella is now their drummer rather than their bass player. She is a fantastic woman.

I enjoyed the Member for Barkly telling me stories about the dust-ups in the playground at Tennant Creek school, and how it was not very often that Ella found herself at the bottom of that. She could handle herself okay. To be able to play a very small part in the way she has matured and worked her way through different problems in the Northern Territory has been extremely fulfilling for me. In my experience, that is all that is needed from us at times—not to give these young women a hand up. They just need a hand in the right direction and to be encouraged and told they are heading in the right direction. The rest of it they can handle on their own.

One of the young women I started dealing with at that time was a lot more experienced than me in these matters, and said, 'Kirbs, you have to do about 120% of the work of a male if you want to be a female in any of these trades. If you can do things at 120% then you will at least be seen as an equal in the tradies' eyes.' That stuck with me forever.

I met another young woman, Sarah Brunton, a few years ago. She has worked on major projects around the nation. If you can imagine what it must have been like to work on major projects—Power and Water at least had a bit of safety and security, being part of the public sector. Major projects do not. They are extremely torrid places to work, and Sarah forged her way through, being one of the only female workers on many of these jobs for many years. To see Sarah blossom into the person she is now—some of the battles and struggles she has had to take on, on her own, just for portaloos on-site or for a separate toilet for women so they would not be told, 'Walk down the street and use a public toilet if you can find one'. It is amazing, what she has been through. She is now, thankfully, employed as a lecturer on electrical instrument industry at Charles Darwin University. She is extremely proud of the journey she has had, as we are of her.

While we are talking about women it would be remiss of me not to mention my daughter, who has been an early educator for about six years. She has furthered her qualifications in a number of areas. She is a calm, placid and fantastic soul. I remember the first time I visited Alana at the early learning centre where she works. I looked around and there was quite a bit of mayhem in the room, as there often is. Perhaps those early learning centres could be reflective of this Chamber during Question Time. There would not be too many other roles that are as hectic as they can be in those early learning centres.

I could not see Alana, and I turned around into an alcove where there was a bookshelf. She sat cross-legged on the ground with a young girl, brushing her hair and listening to the story, and another young girl sitting in front of her. Despite all the turmoil around them they were paying no attention to it because they had Alana reading to them, and that was all they needed at that moment. It was a very proud and gratifying time for me to see Alana in her element.

It is beautiful to move through Darwin at different times and see the young children Alana has had the opportunity to be involved with come up to her and appear excited to see her. They yell out across the room, 'Ms Alana, Ms Alana', as they come up to say g'day. It is heart-warming.

My son's girlfriend, Breanna Kerle, or Bree, as we know her, has lived with us for many years and is testament to a new-age, Territorian, strong young woman. She was dux of the class at O'Loughlin Catholic College in Year 12. She had been with us for that long that while my kids were moving back and forward from week to week, as part of the shared care arrangement with my ex-wife, Bree moved from place to place with the kids.

She went on to study at Charles Darwin University after finishing at O'Loughlin. She is a driven young girl. She spent some time with NEC while she was studying and went on to work for Captovate as a web designer. Now, at the ripe age of 21 years old, she is running her own business which is tied up with Mel Brautigam and a host of other women who are doing some great things throughout the Top End. It is exciting to see what the future might hold for bright young businesswomen like Bree.

If we can get our head around some of the problems we face, it opens so many doors for somebody like Bree, who is a professional young woman. They can shoot to the top of the tree fairly well and quickly in a place like the Territory.

I am also proud of some of the events that happened in Port Darwin. A number of people have spoken about the International Women's Day marches in my electorate. To have the Chief Minister and a number of other colleagues, as has been mentioned this morning, walk with Charlie King in support of his No More campaign, and to see the number of professional women—including Madam Speaker—men and children come along is gratifying and gives me hope that the Territory is headed in the right direction.

I have delivered an adjournment speech on the International Women's Day gala dinner, so I will not go back through that too much. I want to reiterate how proud I am of Seranna, Bek and Bianca, who organised that dinner. It has only been up and running for a couple of years. Anybody who has started any sort of event from nothing in the Territory will realise how much hard work that is. To see some of the people who come up north and help celebrate International Women's Day over that weekend is a complement to the range of events that happen for International Women's Day.

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.

Mr KIRBY: Most of the women from industries I have been fortunate enough to work in know that women have to work harder than men to be seen as an equal. Thankfully, from where the Territory was in the mid-1990s when I first came here to where we are now, the situation has significantly changed. With people like the Minister for Territory Families we are in good hands to stay the course to make sure we give women a better chance throughout the Top End.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my lovely partner, Bek, who is at home expecting the impending birth of our first child. It is not just because of that that I mention her. I have had the fortune of watching Bek work in what can be the most challenging of areas: youth services in the Northern Territory. I think we have all worked in some tough and challenging roles at times, but to see the hours that need to be put in and the heart and soul that goes into those services across the Top End—I commend Bek and all the women who work in those areas. It can, at times, be a gut-wrenching journey.

I was fortunate enough to have two children when I was young, who are now young adults in their own right. To be able to now share the experience again, with Bek, I feel blessed. We will make a great family.

Some of the women who have graced and still grace these halls, the electorate of Port Darwin and this great Territory we live in—we know they can match anyone, on any stage, at any time. I congratulate them all on how challenging their journeys have been across the Top End. I will do all I can to support women throughout the Northern Territory.

It would be remiss of me, being a Crows fan, not to wish the Adelaide Crows women all the best, as many others have done. We hope they travel well and have a fantastic win in the inaugural AFL Women's grand final on the weekend. Congratulations to them all.

I congratulate the minister for her hard work so far, in a very testing environment, and I commend her statement to the House.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I echo the sentiments that have been shared today in the House.

I congratulate Ella, as mentioned by the Member for Port Darwin, for her award as Apprentice of the Year. I played soccer with Ella as the Northern Territory rep when we were in high school, so I know her from a long way back—not quite the same dust-ups as in the Barkly, but she is a fierce soccer player nonetheless.

There is much to improve upon in the space of gender equality. As the minister stated, we do not talk enough about what gender equality means. Gender equality means women, men and trans and gender diverse people having equal access to opportunity and being able to reach their full potential and contribute fully to our community. I wholeheartedly agree with the minister's statement.

I want to start with an international context and share a few stories of some amazing women from my recent travels to the US on the International Visitor Leadership Program.

Sally Yates was the US Acting Attorney-General when I arrived in the States, and a couple of days later she was fired from her position for not defending President Trump's executive order due to the travel ban on some countries. Ms Yates received much backfire for her decision, but she stood by it as someone who

is there to umpire justice. I appreciate that she was put in a very difficult position at a high level. Nevertheless, she stood by her position. She lost her job for it, but she made the statement that she would not stand for anything she thought was discrimination, regardless of the consequences. Sally Yates, the previous Acting Attorney-General, was someone I talked about whilst in the States, and I followed her story keenly.

Now to some of the participants I met on the program. I mentioned a few last week in adjournment, and I will now go into a bit more detail.

Bernadette Muyomi, from Kenya, is an aspiring senator. It is very exciting that there is an election in Kenya this year, and she and I talked for three weeks constantly about politics. She and I shared many conversations about the comparisons, similarities and differences between our two countries. She gave me fresh insight into politics in her country, what her campaign would look like and what it would mean over the next couple of months in 2017. I wish Bernadette very well for her campaign to become a senator in Kenya. Hopefully I will be able to add a Kenyan senator to my list of great mates.

The next woman I would like to talk about is Sushree Rana, from Nepal, who is a teacher and a kind, generous soul with a strong nature. Sushree and I became good friends. She is the first woman in her family and her community in Nepal to obtain a master's degree. I hope to visit her one day in her country, and I have offered a place to stay whenever she is able to visit me here in the Northern Territory.

Tabasum Wolayat, from Afghanistan, is an amazing woman whom I spoke about in my adjournment speech last week. She is a teacher at the American University of Afghanistan. Tabasum has a gentle nature and a strong head and heart. I learned so much from spending time with Tabasum about her country, her faith and who she was. Hopefully she will be able to visit me in the Northern Territory one day.

Raghda Alhaddad, from the Palestinian Territories, also known as the Gaza Strip, is principal of a school of over 1000 students. This population is bigger than my community of Numbulwar in total. Raghda takes great interest in and works hard at supporting her female students to grow with confidence and succeed in education. This is a great objective, which I am sure comes with many challenges, but equally priceless success stories. I am not sure if I will ever be able to visit Raghda in her home. She was quite emotional when farewelling all of us, not being able to invite people to her country. I hope that one day she will be able to visit our part of the world, and I will be able to welcome her family with open arms and show off our unique part of Australia.

Amal Nasr, from Egypt, is a teacher at the University of Sinai and a wonderful woman with a warm heart, who teaches English as a second language at her university. Amal actually lives in Cairo and travels to the Sinai to teach English at the university. This is because it is unsafe for her to live in Sinai. There are a lot of troubles in that part of her country, but she is brave and takes the transit every week to teach students English at the university. Coming from a country where we feel safe and secure, it means a lot to know there are women around the world who will risk their lives to be able to share education with other people.

There are many other wonderful stories to share from the people I met on the program; however, I chose these couple of women to show the diversity and different contexts across the globe—dealing with an array of issues in other people's countries.

On Saturday 11 March I was fortunate to join the International Women's Day celebration on Groote Eylandt. There was a small march and a luncheon held at the Alyangula Golf Club. I was fortunate to attend the march and walk with local women from the island around the golf course, from holes one to six, reading some empowering quotes about being bold for change.

I have mentioned several times, and have also heard today, how proud we are in the Territory to have some great statistics amongst the Northern Territory Members of the Legislative Assembly in the NT, Australian and global contexts. Twelve out of our 25 members are women, and out of our eight Cabinet ministers, five are women, taking the majority. I was proud to share this when I was travelling and I will continue to do so for this term of government.

Another name that was mentioned quite a bit today was Clare Martin, being the first female Chief Minister in the Northern Territory, with a Labor government. I also acknowledge two more women who have esteemed careers in NT politics, and they are Marion Scrymgour and Malarndirri McCarthy, who were both Cabinet ministers in the Northern Territory Government. Malarndirri is now Senator for the Northern Territory, and she was the former Member for Arnhem for eight years. I appreciate her ongoing support and guidance in the role I now hold.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many women who work and carry themselves in local government. I will only pick a few. These are women who work hard at the grassroots level to create change, encourage other people to be community minded and support things that happen in their community, be it changing or sustaining a positive program that needs to continue. Examples I would like to share with the House are Ms Ella Geia, who works in Numbulwar for Roper Gulf Regional Council; Sharon Hillen, who works for the Roper Gulf Regional Council based at the Katherine headquarters; and Judy MacFarlane, who is the Deputy Mayor of the Roper Gulf Regional Council and is based in a station, but very close to Mataranka—close being 800 kilometres away.

They are three wonderful women working in local government. We need strong representation of women in all tiers of government: local government, state and territory governments, and federal government.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge my electorate staff, some wonderful women I am working with. I feel humbled to have such great support, particularly from my full-time Electorate Officer, Brooke Brenner. Brooke has had some amazing experiences in work. I feel very lucky that she has landed in my office and we work very well together. I am very happy to have Brooke's support. She has experienced some very challenging times in her personal life, but she has come out on top and is a wonderful mother to her son Cash. I feel very lucky to have her working for the Arnhem electorate and the people of Arnhem. Thank you, Brooke, for all that you do for me and for the Arnhem electorate.

I also acknowledge Kara Burgoyne, who I talked about in my adjournment speech. She is my Groote Eylandt liaison officer. Kara has been an avid Labor supporter since she was a baby. She has been supporting Labor, along with her father Grant Burgoyne and her mother Nancy Lalara on Groote. She is a fiercely strong woman and amazing in the role she has with me.

Kara is a single mother of five children, and she has such beautiful children. She is well respected in her community, not frightened to say what she thinks, and can be a real pocket rocket. It is wonderful to have Kara working alongside me and being a representative for me in Groote, Bickerton and Numbulwar when she gets across to there. I thank Kara for being a strong woman, who I think is amazing and who is working for her community, still supporting her kids and being able to enjoy life as well. Thank you, Kara.

I also acknowledge Helen Lee, who is based in Barunga. Helen is my electorate office assistant. Helen was wonderful in helping me campaign last year for the seat of Arnhem, and she continues to be a strong advocate for me on the Central Arnhem Road, in the communities she is closely tied to. It is wonderful to have a strong woman supporting me in that role.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge Gary Hillen, who is my casual relief staff. Gary is the husband of Sharon Hillen, who I mentioned earlier. It is wonderful to have some great women working with me, and a really wonderful man at the same time.

The Attorney-General spoke about the impact of alcohol abuse and its significant links to family and domestic violence in the Northern Territory. This is a huge issue for women, but also for our wider society. I acknowledge that women and men need to work together in a collaborative effort to stop family violence and domestic violence so we can grow safe, strong, healthy and happy children and families here in the Territory.

I also want to mention some of the wonderful projects in the Arnhem electorate. These are not all the projects or businesses, but a lot of them are predominantly female enterprises and I think they are worth acknowledging while we are talking about women, particularly strong women in the Territory.

The first project I want mention is the Bush Miyalks in Gapuwiyak. These wonderful women are making really beautiful products, from earrings to necklaces, candles, lip gloss and body cream. I am not sure what they do not do. They also make beautiful mist sprays; I have one in my parliament office. If I feel flustered I just spray myself with it. I do not know what is in the spray, but it makes you feel refreshed.

Bush Miyalks is a wonderful program in Gapuwiyak. It also hosts tourists when they visit the arts centre in Gapuwiyak. There is a women's group and a men's group which take some of the visitors out. They do some busy dyeing of materials for weaving, and they take the women out, have a nice lunch under a tree and tell cultural stories. It is nice to hear there is a strong representation of women in the Bush Miyalks program in Gapuwiyak.

The next project is Bush Medijina, which I mentioned the other day. It is based on Groote Eylandt. The women in the group are turning bush plants into medicine and cosmetics. The Bush Medijina enterprise is

based on Groote and is looking to expand to markets in other communities, such as the Aboriginal Art Fair. It is wonderful to see that type of enterprise working in the bush; well done to Bush Medijina on Groote Eylandt and the women who work there.

The last example I want share is the Numburindi Arts project in Numbulwar. This is basically a collection of women who make beautiful pandanus woven products, from baskets to mats to dilly bags. They are all female artists making these woven products. For the last four-and-a-half years I have worked on this project, while I was at Numbulwar as a teacher, and I was blown away by the amazing ability of these women in Numbulwar and the crafts they make. They are so humble about making such beautiful products.

I hope that with the support of the Department of Business that project can move outside of the school and into its own enterprise and retail store this year. Fingers crossed I will be able to share that project with the House later on. It will provide opportunity for employment in the community, but also ongoing profits for the women who are making these beautiful crafts, many of whom are grandmothers and great-grandmothers. It is nice to see they have this wonderful skill, and hopefully they will be able to pass it along, with support in the community, to teach other women these skills.

I acknowledge the ladies who work hard in all the arts and language centres not only in the Arnhem electorate, but across the Territory. Preserving language and culture is extremely important in the Territory with the diversity of all our different cultures, particularly Indigenous cultures. The women in the programs I have mentioned work very hard to make sure culture and language are passed on to next generations and we do not lose our older stories and history.

We have a wonderful young lady from Wugularr, which is also known as Beswick, who has been entered into the Young Achiever Awards. I wish Amy from Beswick all the best. Amy is a manager in training at the outback store in Beswick. The last time I saw her I was driving through Bulman and she was the manager there, managing a staff of about six to eight people. Well done to Amy, a young Indigenous achiever in the Territory. I wish her all the best at the awards; it is very exciting.

I also acknowledge the work of people who have very difficult positions in our community, that is, the police. Yesterday I mentioned Tanya Woodcock, Senior Sergeant on Groote Eylandt, and Deb Blackwell, who is the community engagement police officer on Groote. Policing is not an easy job. I do not think it is an easy job if you are a woman. Hats off to the ladies who step up to that role, protect our communities and keep them safe. Thank you to Tanya and Deb on Groote. I hope they continue the good work there and inspire other women to work in the field of law enforcement.

Yesterday I mentioned the wonderful female principals working in southeast Arnhem Land, Tania Kolomitsev, Stephanie Blitner, Cheryl Dwyer, Sarah Rowe and Irene Singleton. They are all hard-working principals and strong females in southeast Arnhem Land, and it is really great to have them working in our Arnhem schools.

Because both my parents are retired teachers and principals, I grew up with a lot of really strong educators in my family and through friendships with our extended family. I acknowledge Ms Shirley Nirrpuwanydji and Christine Birkin Birkin, both from Gapuwiyak and strong leaders in the community, who have a very long history in education.

I also acknowledge Annette Miller, who works at Bulman School. Annette was one of my father's students, so she gets to see him and still thinks of him as Mr Uibo. It is wonderful to see her still working hard in education and in the community she lives in and loves. Well done to Annette; she is still a very strong advocate for her school.

Merrki Ganambarr, the Principal at Yirrkala School, and Yalmay Yunupingu are both fierce advocates in their communities and across the region for two-way learning and cross-cultural collaboration in education. They are wonderful women who have seen me grow up. I still look up to them, and I look forward to collaborating with them in future to support education in the Arnhem electorate. Even though they belong to the Nhulunbuy electorate—there is a lot of great work in that region as far down as Numbulwar and Borroloola. It is wonderful to have strong Indigenous women in those positions of leadership.

I acknowledge my aunties, Ingrid Horton and Kirsten Cunningham, my father's sisters, who are both retired teachers. As you can see, education is a theme in our family. My godmother, Patricia Myers, who was here at my inauguration, is a highly-esteemed teacher. The Minister for Education has a long history with my Auntie Pat, as I call her.

Mrs WORDEN: 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 UIBO: There is very strong support and exposure to strong educators in my family and our friendship group. Pat Myers is very well known in the northern suburbs as an educator, and now helps out by babysitting my nephew and great-nephew. She always has children at heart and only wants the best for kids, which shows the type of person she is. It is wonderful to have people like her in the Territory.

On my mother's side, my aunties Molly, Dalijirra and Madhalugu Nundhirribala are all very knowledgeable elders in the Numbulwar community area, and they are all amazing basket weavers.

I told my mum off once and asked, 'Mum, why don't you make baskets like all the aunties?' She said, 'I have no time!' She was sitting there watching her team, Collingwood, on TV. I had a giggle and a poke at her, and she just laughed it off and kept watching footy. No time for basket-making for Didamain, but she has time to watch her team. Do not hold Collingwood against her—I am a Bombers fan.

The next aunty I want to talk about is Jangu Nundhirribala. She is a cultural advisor at Numbulwar School and is currently working as a linguist and language adviser in the Numbulwar School Wubuy language program. Further to that, Jangu is a Director of the ANKAAA, which is the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists. She is a talented weaver. I have a beautiful pandanus basket that she made for me in my parliament office, and another in my Katherine office. It is wonderful to be related to these women; I get these beautiful products from them. She is a very talented artist indeed.

Jangu also is an interpreter for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and has worked for the Census data collection team and the federal Department of Human Services, formally Centrelink, when they attend Numbulwar community. She is usually walking around, leading someone somewhere and telling people how it is. She is a strong lady, indeed.

I am proud to share with the House that my aunty Jangu won the Pride of Australia Medal in 2013 for her career as a senior health worker over four decades. She received the Care and Compassion award for her 40 years of service to the community of Numbulwar. She is still going strong and working in the school.

Jangu is a woman who contributes not only to her family, but to her community, the wider region, the NT and language projects across Australia.

My mother, Didamain Uibo, was born under a tree on the north coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, near the outstation of Miwul, north of Numbulwar, the year the missionaries arrived. If I give you the year you might work out her age; she will not mind. It was 1952, so she is 65. She had a long career in education and is very well known in the Territory for her work, particularly in Indigenous education. On the side, she has also done a lot of language work and interpreting, including the Wubuy Bible. She has also done some interpreting into Anindilyakwa language. She is a very talented woman, very humble, and I am proud to say she is my mother. She has been a very strong influence on my sister and me growing up.

I pay homage to my mother, Didamain; my sister, Jocelyn; and my nieces, Zelda and Chanel. I also acknowledge my father, Mick, who supports the crazy women in our family. My dad looks great for his age. Most people are very shocked to hear how old he is. We joke that Mick has no time to grow old because he is too busy running after all us crazy women. He now has a grandson, Keanu, and a great-grandson, Dwayne, so hopefully we will have support in regard to gender balance in our family.

There are many positive stories to share. Find strength and courage to inspire each other to work towards bettering gendering equality and shaping our communities for the better where possible, whether you are a member of parliament, business owner, cleaner, healthcare worker, bus driver, bureaucrat, lawyer or a mother or carer at home. Territory women have much to offer.

I commend the statement brought to the House by the Minister for Territory Families.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am also very happy to support the Minister for Territory Families' statement on women. I note that most people have named a few women who are important in their lives.

Last week I was asked on radio about which women have impressed me. I will put on record that the two people who came to mind at that time still resonate and are true to that—Colleen Gwynne, who is now the Children's Commissioner, but in a previous life she was my boss. I would describe her more as my mentor, and I have great admiration for her. Also the Lord Mayor, Katrina Fong Lim, who sometimes is completely misunderstood in her role, was an excellent role model for me during my four years on council before coming to this House.

Today I will talk about a topic that is very new to me. I have been researching it this week in order to speak tomorrow at the United Nations Youth NT conference, which the minister mentioned earlier. Their topic is multiculturalism and gender equality in a world of change, which is quite difficult. I found that all the research equally applies to gender equality issues for Indigenous women.

As Territorians we are very fortunate to have well-established multicultural communities that have played a very important role in the social and economic development of the Northern Territory. Mutual respect for different religions is an integral part of the Northern Territory's shared culture. There are an Islamic mosques, Buddhist and Chinese temples and a host of Christian churches offering religious instruction and worship.

Gender equality is a term I use to describe my belief that everyone should receive equal treatment and not be discriminated against based on their gender. Of course, I am speaking from the perspective of a female. The last time I looked it is the only perspective I am truly qualified to speak from.

I echo the words of the minister; gender equality is a notion that everyone gains from, not just women. She stated it should re-establish relationships on an equal footing which neither advantage nor disadvantage men or women. So please let me know if I am sounding like a raging feminist; that is not my intention and not part of who I am or was raised to be.

During my research in this space I had my eyes opened to issues I have never considered or had solutions for, but I may be able to help facilitate in my time here. It has been a good learning journey, and it is full of contradictions and controversies. There are many questions still to answer in this space, which I cannot currently answer but we should all ponder and start a conversation with others about. I do not think there are easy solutions, but collectively, over time, they are our challenges as current leaders.

I have discovered that intersectionality affects equality in Australia for women in our multicultural community. I thank Prue from the minister's office for challenging me with that word. I had to go away and google it. Intersectionality is a buzzword. For those who do not know what it means, like me recently, it is a term that refers to a circumstance where a person can face multiple threats of discrimination where there are gender, race and other categories of difference, and where they overlap.

More simply put, it is a space where a person can be doubly impacted by their gender and their multicultural background. 'Intersectionality' is a perfect term for this topic. It is traditionally applied to women but can also affect men who suffer compounding, often unintentional prejudice, particularly as it may relate to their social class, which is a term I hate but one that conveys my meaning. It relates to power. We can all accept that men and women all over the world have vastly different levels of power. Women in one place can be strong leaders, proudly, like here in the Territory, but in others they can be without any power and sometimes even traded as an economic asset.

So how do gender equality and multiculturalism sit together? How can we marry them up when they are clearly such different terms? Gender equality is generally seen as an internal problem, whilst multiculturalism is seen, particularly by governments, as a predominantly external challenge. Is there any compatibility between those two terms? It is something for us to think about.

Does multiculturalism threaten gender equality for us in the Northern Territory? I think the answer is yes. I will be looking at these issues through three prisms: jobs, leadership and education. Before I get into those three prisms I will discuss the modern context of multiculturalism in Australia.

Multiculturalism clearly describes colour, and I do not mean that in terms of skin. I mean new ideas, a different sort of openness which is generally seen as a political rather than societal challenge. In our history of migration, people migrated to Australia in waves. Originally from Britain, but later from broader Europe, then from our Asian neighbours. More recently we have seen waves of refugees from war-torn countries, places of terror, torment and oppression.

In the Territory we have communities made up of our first Australians as well as people from India, Sri Lanka, China, East Timor, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia. It goes on. And they all now call the Territory home. Our cultural diversity continues to grow and enrich many aspects of our society.

In our rich history this migration has changed our country from a singular Indigenous nation to a multination. Multiculturalism in Australia is defined by our migration, but on the other hand, gender equality is not.

In my view, gender has been and continues to be defined in general by an old world view of inequality, which in many places, such as Australia, has slowly progressed, while in other places it continues to be bound by strict cultural, traditional and often religious protocols. I guess those are the ones that are on our shores now.

I agree that while ethnicity, or multiculturalism, is seen as a form of difference, gender is seen as a form of division. We know that for many migrant women, even the notion of feminism remains foreign. It is safe to say there continue to be groups of women all over the world that are suffering oppression of both ethnicity and gender, some of them in Australia and some in the Northern Territory.

In Australia there is a clear white feminism view around liberating women, often driven from a singular cultural and middle-class perspective—not always, but often—which is alien to the immediate needs and aspirations of the very women we are seeking to liberate. I ask you to consider whether taking up the fight for gender equality is part of becoming Australian, or do our cultural, religious and ethnic values divide us in this fight?

In the last few months, as assistant minister for multicultural affairs, I have become acutely aware of how these questions are playing out in our community. In one multicultural community, men and women moved here for a better life, most often to flee persecution only to find that the Australian context does not align with their strong gender and cultural order.

Many women can easily move into caring roles, such as nursing, while their male counterparts often struggle to gain the same status level of employment with compatible skills that they had in their homeland. This in turn can cause internal conflict for men and women, as traditionally a female was not allowed to earn more than her partner. We see that played out in increasing community and family conflicts. Do our own concepts of liberation and freedom to be the best we can be have a place in that space, particularly when we have come so far but still have so far to go?

What are our immediate mainstream challenges to gender equality in Australia, given that we are just over 50% of the population? Here are some facts for you, because no speech is any good without facts. We have heard a few of these before, but I will recap for the House. Two women a week in Australia are killed in situations of domestic violence. More than smoking or obesity, domestic violence continues to contribute to the death, disability and illness of many women. Think about how that may play out for multicultural women. One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence, and one in four women has experienced physical violence. We can assume that this equally applies to women with a multicultural background. In situations where a woman comes from a place where women are way down in the pecking order, even following migration, this has to have a multiplied affect.

On average, Territory women are paid 18.9% less than Territory men. I heard the minister say earlier that Territory women would need to work an additional 69 days a year to be paid the same rate as their male colleagues for the same work. The figure is higher than the national pay gap.

On retirement women only receive 50% of the superannuation of men due to being in lower-paid and part-time positions, and often have their career interrupted to take up caring roles. Only 18.4% of people on boards across our nation are women. Women also continue to be sexually harassed in the workplace. It is a fact that globally there are a small number of high-earning professional women.

I go back to the pay gap and how it may affect gender equality for migrant women. I will present a very simplistic argument in regard to the pay gap and jobs, and I will not apologise for that, but I think it demonstrates what I am trying to highlight. I think we can comfortably divide our jobs sector into four categories:

1. Australian males tend to enjoy high-paying skilled jobs that come with a defined career structure and are disproportionately represented in power structures.

2. Migrant males are in semi-skilled and unskilled construction and manufacturing jobs but often with the middle-range pay.
3. Australian women are paid less and predominately work in traditional areas of women's employment.
4. Migrant women are generally from non-English speaking background and found concentrated all over Australia in the manufacturing and caring sectors, the lowest-paid, poorest working conditions and piecemeal work. I am glad to see that is slowly coming to an end.

In the last two categories, despite women's liberation movements, by our physical and physiological makeup we usually carry the double burden of domestic, unpaid work. These lesser categories bring with them great vulnerability in regard to career structures, support structures and stability. I might add one further compounding factor; situations where migrant men may not find commensurate employment to what they enjoyed in the homeland may result in a loss of self-esteem. As their families become more independent and they are often reduced to menial work and a loss of authority in an unfamiliar environment, the psychological effect can be devastating. It is a double burden for women in those homes at a time of their own adjustment in a new country.

How do we overcome stereotyping, sexism and racism in employment to reduce the pay gap? We know this will take generational change, but a big part of the puzzle is to ensure merit-based employment takes place and culturally appropriate employment pathways are offered to migrant men and women. But financial independence for the migrant woman can be both liberating and perplexing. It has the potential through career progression to break them away from a deep sense of place and community. As we know, working longer hours and dedicating ourselves to study—every woman and man in here would know that a career reduces time with family. It reduces our time in the caring role. It is a complex battle between assimilation and traditionalism.

For second generation migrant women, who often strive to achieve in an environment very different to that of their parents, we encourage them to reach for the stars, challenging the strong traditions they have been raised within. We then ask them to risk being cut adrift. I dare us all to walk a mile in their shoes. My question for you to consider is, can they have both? Should their background hold them back from reaching their potential? As I said earlier, I have no answers.

We know that in our modern world education and work are the great equalisers, so I will briefly talk about multiculturalism and gender equality in the prism of education.

It is the truth that from a young age children all over the world have a perception of rules that govern gender across their society. There are gender norms where we are programmed, whether we like it or not, to treat people differently due to a background or gender from a very young age. This can go across all life's stages.

Schools in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory, like to think they teach respect for difference, where students have an opportunity to learn equally. This includes fostering positive personal identities and challenging gender stereotypes and roles. This starts in the very early years and continues through to adolescence. Evidence shows that the greatest gains in life can be made in those early years—which we talked about last week in the Minister for Education's statement on education—when the brain is growing quickly and the best chance exists to build self-esteem, positive behaviours in relationships and the skills needed later in life. It is at this point that the groundwork can be put in place for building equal and positive relationships and opportunities between boys and girls, and men and women, and build cultural awareness and acceptance.

I propose that young women's and men's behaviours, study choices, ambitions and views about relationships are all affected by those gender norms. Education is a very powerful thing. Through education we can introduce role models, mentoring and programs that challenge these norms, and which provide women, including young multicultural women, with opportunities to succeed in life, whatever that might look like. This can have a very positive impact on men and our society. I think I heard the minister say that earlier. By encouraging men to take on non-traditional roles it is of benefit to everyone. Men as stay-at-home fathers, teachers and carers have the opportunity to influence their children.

I think you agree that our schools have an important role in preparing young people to become better informed and more conscious of multiculturalism and gender equality. We need to live in a world where all girls, regardless of ethnicity or country of origin, are encouraged to be superheroes, politicians, mothers, professional sportswomen or anything they wish to be. But in the multicultural context we need to do this

carefully, generationally, and focus on respectful relationships between and among men and women, and boys and girls.

I will turn now to my last prism of leadership. Let us be honest. The world of politics may not be appealing to everyone. If I had a dollar for every time someone says, 'What are you doing?' I would be a millionaire. I could retire tomorrow. But governments should be representative of all Australians.

Sadly, decisions that affect women are still being predominantly made by men. Let us look quickly at how well Australia is doing on that score. Let us pause for a moment and think about the sexism that surrounded the departure of Julia Gillard in 2013, our first female Prime Minister—incredible sexism. If she were male would we have questioned her not having children? Would we have made any comment on what she wore or how she looked? While we only just made it in Australia—I would say barely.

The USA still has not had a female president, but places like Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh all have elected women into the office of the Prime Minister. That is great food for thought.

Did you know that in only 2013, Mehreen Faruqi became the first Muslim woman to ever be elected to an Australian parliament? While our Territory parliament has a number of women, it is just not so across Australia, and it is even worse for migrant women.

Leadership is not all about politics. We now have a 50-50 target. This government has its commitment to female representation on boards. Women will be at the forefront of decision-making on multicultural affairs with the appointment of a women's advisory committee on multicultural affairs, announced by our Minister for Territory Families—thank you! It is a truly cultural and linguistically diverse membership of five men and five women.

Political leaders must get the settings right so all females can choose their path. We must also demystify parliament. I am proud to say that to celebrate this year's International Women's Day I had seven local migrant and refugee women in my electorate office to enjoy lunch and be comfortable in the office. They know they are supported, but more importantly, it was to encourage them to see there is no mystery; they can choose to seek public office and make a difference if they want to.

I hope I have highlighted three ways we can address gender equality where there is an overlay or intersectionality with multiculturalism. We need a strong focus on leadership, education and workforce participation to give multicultural women a voice, enable financial security to empower all women across all stages of their lives, and at the same time be sensitive of culture and tradition, find the common ground and continue to build the values of our nation as inclusive and a place to get ahead, regardless of where you come from or your gender.

My last question today is should people be able to choose their cultural background over gender equality in Australia? I suspect that giving up one agenda over another does not serve the needs of migrant women. We need to support them in their choices about their paths and how they individually navigate cultural and traditional overlays.

Sometimes it is good to challenge our thinking, and this week I have thought about whether we, as women, can really have it all, let alone multicultural women. Should we redefine what having it all means for us, or can we accept that having it all means different things to different women? To ensure we continually turn our minds to the compounding effect of gender inequality and multiculturalism, I believe we need to turn our minds to what unites us. Women are united worldwide over the issue of sexism, gender stereotyping and pay gap.

Ms LAWLER: Mr Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move an extension of time for the member for Sanderson.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs WORDEN: I have no doubt that we often continue to consider ourselves less than worthy. It is the female condition.

I am convinced that while Australian women still have so far to go, we must walk the journey together that accommodates differing levels of expectation and pays the deepest of respect to the overlay of culture and tradition, the very essence of multiculturalism.

I hope I have given you all some food for thought about gender equality, and some thoughts about how additionally compounding that is for multicultural women.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the minister's awesome statement to the House.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everyone for their contributions to the debate today. It has been a strong debate which has shown that whilst we face many challenges in the Northern Territory, we also have many strengths. The positivity of everything said today has shone through.

I thank the Member for Sanderson for that great discussion because it went to the heart of some of the challenges we face in the Northern Territory about gender equity and what it looks like. A cross-cultural understanding of equity and gender is something we have been grappling with and will need to continue. I hope the formation of Territory Families, including multiculturalism, domestic violence policy and men's and women's policy gives us an extraordinary opportunity to pull all those policy pieces together into a cohesive whole.

I also thank the Members for Casuarina and Drysdale for emphasising women in science, which has taken us a long time to get. When I was in high school in the 1980s, there was the start of a conversation about women in science. But I look at the way my nieces are being encouraged to be part of that and take on maths and science subjects. We are getting there but still have a long way to go.

The mentorship the Member for Casuarina spoke about is important. I had no idea about the drones, so thank you for enlightening us on that.

I highlight the Member for Drysdale's mention of early childhood educators. This is an important issue. Community service workers had a gender pay equity decision handed down from Fair Work Australia some time ago. We need to make sure early childhood educators are a part of the movement. Those of us with children in childcare know the work it takes and how important it is to have people who are skilled and have the workforce capacity to do that important work.

I acknowledge the Members for Katherine, Namatjira and Barkly for reminding us of the women who came before us. The Member for Katherine honoured the work of the women who forge ahead every day. I acknowledge that women from remote and rural areas are the backbone of the communities in regions such as the Barkly and Central Australia. Every time I go past Billy Goat Hill I think of the Member for Namatjira's great-grandmother with her goats on the hill. It is a great story and is unique to Central Australia.

I also thank the Members for Namatjira and Arafura for talking about gender diversity and mentioning the sisters and brotherboys, who are an increasingly visible and important part of our community. Contemporary notions of gender do not necessarily see a binary idea of men and women. We need to support and encourage that. As the Member for Arafura said, there have been too many suicides and deaths from the sense of isolation, and we need to acknowledge that as part of this conversation.

I thank the Members for Port Darwin and Fong Lim for sharing their experiences, talking about their own families and daughters. One of the tips my mum always gave me was to check out how a man speaks about his family and the women in his life, and you will know how much of a gentleman he is. When you both speak about your daughters I always feel like you are grand gentlemen. Words matter, and the way we speak about each other matters. There has been conversation nationally this week about the fact words maybe do not matter, but words do matter. It tells who you are and what you believe in. The way we speak about each other is incredibly important. You are both grand examples of that.

Member for Karama, what a great mentor you are to the women on the Youth Round Table. Thank you. I also want to sing karaoke with you and your mother, so I will hassle you about that.

I also acknowledge some of the comments from the other side of the House. I thank the Member for Spillett for acknowledging the female journalists in the Northern Territory. I think we are well represented. It can be a male-dominated area, especially on TV.

I also acknowledge the ABC's Kristy O'Brien, who was not on that list. She is a fine example of a female journalist. She is in the Barkly at the moment, talking about cows again.

The Members for Arafura and Arnhem talked about local government and its importance. The Member for Sanderson mentioned people asking, 'Why would you stand for politics?' I have had those conversations

as well, as have we all. My family were very concerned about the robust commentary that female politicians receive in this game. Anyone considering coming to the local council elections in August, any women considering running, I strongly encourage you, whatever your views, to put your hand up. You get far more positives than negatives out of this. That has been my experience so far, from when I was campaigning. What you get back in relation to community support, understanding your community and having involvement in decision-making—it is really important that our third tier of government has good, strong representation of women.

In summary, I also thank the Attorney-General for her contribution, not only today but over the last seven months, putting up three pieces of strong legislation that strengthen the safety of women and children in one of our biggest issues facing the Northern Territory: domestic violence. I think these are important first steps for us as a government. It sends a signal about our intentions and how important we think gender equity and stopping violence against women are.

I was incredibly proud this week to be part of a government that passed the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill. I think we handled that debate with grace, and I was proud to see so many women stand up and tell their personal stories, which is a difficult thing to do in public when there can be such passion around this issue. It really showed why we need women's voices in this place. Not everyone agreed, but there was enormous diversity in the voices across the floor, and that is why we need diversity in our parliaments.

The Territory truly is an amazing place. We have our challenges, but those strengths of Territory women, with their tenacity, strength, wisdom and resolve, will clearly be an important part of our prosperous future.

I said in Question Time that we live in a big place with big skies, and when I am not in the Territory I miss that the most, the big sky. It gives you a lot of space for thinking and dreaming. The other thing the Territory gives us is the opportunity to achieve big if you put your mind to it. The boys and girls we see in here every day, I encourage them to dream big as being part of the future of the Northern Territory and not to be limited or restricted by what our society has previously told us about who boys and girls should be. We need to encourage our boys and girls to be whoever they want, and to be true to themselves as individuals and not what people tell them they should be.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am proud to be the minister responsible for this area, and I commend the statement to the House.

Motion agreed to; statement noted.

PAPERS TABLED

Annual Report on Members' Travel and Government Payments for Satellite Telephones

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to the requirements of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 1 of 2015 I table the annual report of members' travel undertaken under clause 6 of the determination in the 2016 calendar year.

Annual Return of Members' Interests

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to resolution of the Assembly on Wednesday 19 October 2016 I table the Annual Return of Members' Interests.

Members' Fuel Transaction Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, following the Auditor-General's report and recommendations into members' fuel card use provided on 18 December 2013, I table the quarterly December 2016 Members' Fuel Transaction Report.

Travel Report – Member for Karama

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table a travel report from the Member for Karama, pursuant to clause 6.1 of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination, Access to Travel.

MOTION

Note Paper – Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's November 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly

Continued from 16 February 2017.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have concluded my remarks; however, we have government members who wish to continue.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is the intention of the government to conclude this tonight.

Firstly, I acknowledge that there were a number of issues raised in the Auditor-General's November 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly regarding my ministerial responsibilities with the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

The Auditor-General's report references the Integrated Justice Information System, which is a business-critical system used as the primary source of truth of information relating to justice matters across the Northern Territory by a number of NT Government stakeholders. These issues are now being progressed jointly with the Department of Corporate and Information Services Data Centre Services.

The report also made reference to Project VERITAS, which is an overarching project targeted at modernising this system and a component of changes to justice management in the Northern Territory.

Since reporting to the Auditor-General, the department and Data Centre Services project to test the disaster recovery procedures, such as restoring this system from off-site backup tapes, has advanced and the testing and validation of such procedures should be completed by the end of this month, March 2017.

The Northern Territory Government's ICT Governance Board has taken control of the matter, and the department is working closely alongside the board to ensure the issues are dealt with accordingly.

I note that the outstanding issues arising out of the Auditor-General's reports to the Legislative Assembly are monitored by the department's Risk and Audit Committee until they are resolved, and as such, the issues around these two projects are monitored by the committee.

In relation to my other portfolio of Health, the Auditor-General's November 2016 report included the findings of the Auditor-General's routine audit of the Central Australian and Top End Health Services financial statements. It was heartening to note the Auditor-General's finding that there were no material weaknesses in the control identified.

In relation to the other findings, I am assured the department has acknowledged the findings and recommendations for action, and has measures in place with the Top End and Central Australian Health Services to actively implement continuous improvement initiatives to strengthen systems and processes to ensure compliance.

This report was in November 2016, when I had only held the ministerial portfolio for a short time, but it is important to note the hard work of the Auditor-General, somebody I was privileged to work alongside as a member of the Public Accounts Committee. She has continued that hard work and my departments take her reports seriously. I look forward to continuing to update the House as further Auditor-General reports are tabled.

Ms MOSS (Corporate and Information Services): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Auditor-General's report included findings from the electronic funds transfer accounts receivable audit on processes. DCIS is responsible for management of the Government Accounting System and access to the NAB Transact facility for receipts.

The report found that access security controls related to administrative access, including segregation of duties, requires enhancing. As I understand, the administrative access to accounts receivable security profiles is reviewed twice each year and a biannual review has been implemented for NAB Transact facility profiles.

To further enhance controls, DCIS is reviewing accounts receivable processes to identify and document powerful and sensitive transactions and any segregation of duties requirements to be reflected in security profiles.

The report found that the removal of terminated users' access to systems should be undertaken on a timely basis. The risk of inappropriate access by terminated users after ceasing employment is minimised due to the Northern Territory computer network access being removed under ePASS system controls.

In addition, mainframe user access is automatically revoked after a period of non-use. The terminated users identified at audit had their Northern Territory Government computer network access removed, and while changes in removal of user access to NAB Transact and GAS is the responsibility of line agencies, it is not undertaken by DCIS. A biannual reminder to agencies to check their access has been implemented.

The report found that the disaster recovery and business continuity plan testing has not occurred. The agency's strategic audit plan identifies testing of business continuity plans to occur in 2017.

The Auditor-General's report also includes findings from the agency's end-of-year review to assess the adequacy of selected aspects of end-of-year controls over reporting, accounting and material transactions and balances. The end-of-year review found that accounting and control procedures are generally satisfactory; although, auditors considered the ICT clearing account was not fully reconciled.

The review assessed the adequacy of aspects of DCIS's end-of-year financial year controls over reporting, accounting and material financial transactions and balances. The review focused on the accrual accounting aspects of 30 June 2016 financial data contained in DCIS general ledger. The funds in the ICT clearing account are held on behalf of the Northern Territory Government to cover costs relating to the government's ICT services contracts. The treatment of funds and account balances has been confirmed with the Department of Treasury and Finance, and the account is fully reconciled and rigorously monitored.

The Auditor-General has queried the treatment of account balances in relation to Australian accounting standards, and independent specialist advice is being sourced on the accounting treatments in compliance with Australian accounting standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on this tonight. As the Attorney-General said, it is a report we take very seriously.

Motion agreed to; paper noted.

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

Auditor-General's Report to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly March 2017—consideration deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr HIGGINS (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I commemorate the life and tireless work of Merv Pattemore. Merv was a resident of Humpty Doo, a long-time resident of the Northern Territory, a well-known missionary and, I am told, a staunch CLP voter.

Devastatingly for his family and for many communities across the Territory, Merv passed away last week at 94 years of age. A committed Christian, I am sure he is in a better place. However, I want to put a few brief words on the record to commemorate the long and fruitful life lived in the pursuit of helping others that Merv Pattemore led, mostly in the Northern Territory.

Merv was born on 21 April 1922 in Deep Creek, near Ulmarra, in New South Wales. He shared his birthday with his twin brother, Bruce; his younger brother, Lindsay; and, as he often reminded people, with Her Majesty the Queen.

The son of a Methodist lay preacher, he was raised in a large family of seven boys and one girl. He attended school until grade 6 and then left to work as a farmer's labourer. At the age of 14 Merv left home

to work on a local farm and during this time he studied at night, doing a diesel motor course by correspondence. At 16 years of age Merv was invited to go to church by his older brother, Earl. It was there he made a decision to become a Christian and, forevermore, had a passion and dedication to serve God.

When World War II began Merv was keen to enlist with his elder brothers; however, as he was under the age of 18 he required the permission of his mother, which she did not give. This was understandable, as three of her sons had already enlisted. Later, Merv was notified that the 15th Australian Light Horse Regiment would be holding a training camp at Rutherford, so he enlisted with a horse he borrowed from his older brother Errol, named Little Sister.

When the regiment was renamed the 15th Australian Motor Regiment, Merv was placed in charge of a Bren Gun Carrier and deployed on coast watch to Coffs Harbour and then Lismore. He did more training at Narrabri and then trained as a small arms instructor at Bonegilla, near Albury.

From there he went to a staging camp at Geelong before being transported by train across the Nullarbor to Mingenew in Western Australia. It was on this train trip during the stopovers along the way that he first met traditional Aboriginal people. At Mingenew Merv completed training in map reading, Morse code and radio transmission. He and a fellow Christian soldier started a Sunday evening Bible study group while also occasionally teaching Sunday school and doing some lay preaching.

Near the end of 1944 his unit was disbanded and his regiment moved to Perth. On 15 December 1944 Merv was discharged from the Army and went on to begin two years of study at the Melbourne Bible Institute. During this time he pastored at a small church at Dingley Dell as well as participating in a missionary medical course and helping to conduct beach missions and open-air preaching on the Yarra bank.

He was accepted to work with the Aborigines Inland Mission and was sent to Fingal, New South Wales. He also later served in Cherbourg, Queensland and, in 1948, he arrived at Phillip Creek in the Northern Territory. It was in Fingal he first met his wife, Lelean May Stewart, and later, in Cherbourg, Merv wrote to Lelean to ask her hand in marriage.

Merv later went on to relieve another missionary at Newcastle Waters and then went on an evangelist tour around the Top End cattle stations, collecting materials from the Mataranka Army dumps to build a mission house at Belyuen. After three years Merv went to work on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, and four years after his proposal Merv married Lelean at Tyalgum.

After a time in Delissaville in the Northern Territory, Merv, Lelean and their baby, Joy, started a mission at Borroloola in 1953. It was the first school in Borroloola and was started at the request of the local people using a small room in their house. In 1956, so large was the demand for entry to the school that a new school building had to be constructed. When the framework of the new school was constructed a local asked Merv, 'What were you going to use for the roof?' Merv responded, 'Stringybark, I suppose'. Figuring that this material was not exactly satisfactory for the new school, the local donated 44 sheets of new corrugated iron to take care of the roof.

For the walls Merv received a donation from another local of an old chook house, which when pulled apart covered three of the four walls. When the local postmaster heard Merv and his new school were short of one wall he offered a disused water tank. Merv got his axe and chopped, cut and flattened out the steel, which was enough to cover the final wall.

From then on Borroloola had its own school building. Merv later went on to construct a church building as well. Merv achieved so much at Borroloola; one of his students, Finlay, was sent off to station work by his father after his first year of schooling. Three months later Finlay returned with a friend and said to Merv, 'Mr Pattemore, this is Roy and he can read now'.

Finlay had taught his friend to read and write, and he went on to become the vice president of the Northern Land Council. During this time Merv and Lelean were blessed with the births of Dorothy, John, Jean and David. In 1962 the Pattemores left Borroloola, and that was the year that brought Merv to Darwin. He was appointed as superintendent of the Retta Dixon Home. He held his position until his retirement in 1980, a stint of 18 years in the job.

When Merv arrived at Retta Dixon he did his best to provide the children with the best housing and accommodation, and the fairest treatment he could provide. He was once quoted as saying:

Fifty years ago things were so different ... the Northern Territory was a pioneer country ... We did our best as far as housing and accommodation was concerned. Nobody else was prepared to do it.

Merv supervised children in missions for over 30 years before retiring in 1980 as superintendent. Merv moved to Stuart Park and made his trips around the Northern Territory as area superintendent whilst also giving religious instructions and Kormilda College, Adelaide River, Berry Springs and Belyuen schools.

Merv and Lelean retired at the age of 70 in a cottage at Humpty Doo. Whilst retired he kept up a significant involvement in the Christian community with his 35 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren.

Merv passed away a month before his 95th birthday, in the early hours of the morning of Sunday 12 March 2017. His service with the Aboriginal inland mission, war service and service to God show that Merv lived a life to help others. He will be missed by his wife of 65 years, Lelean, his family and friends across communities of the Northern Territory, who Merv contributed to so much. He was a dedicated servant of God, whom I am sure he is with now.

May I take this opportunity to pass on my condolences and those of this House to those closest to Merv, who are undoubtedly going through a heartbreaking time.

I will conclude with these words: Vale Merv Pattemore. You will be missed.

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, I pay tribute to a well-known Territorian, Mr Alan Boyce Muir, or, as he was better known, Ali Muir. He was a proud and committed supporter of the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club. Ali was honoured this year as a member of the Buffs Team of the Century.

Last Thursday about 500 people turned up to farewell Ali at a service at the Marrara indoor sport centre.

Ali was a real character, someone with a naturally upbeat nature. Among the many tributes paid to Ali at his funeral was that he would be remembered as a people person. Anyone who knew Ali would agree. His natural spark attracted people to him.

One of eight children, born to Billy and Hilda Muir, Ali began his formal education at the old Darwin Primary School. Football quickly became a big part of young Ali's life. Friends say he was kicking a footy regularly by the age of seven.

After moving to high school, Ali began what was to become a lifelong association with the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club. His long connection with the Buffs was punctuated by two notable events. One related to football, the other military service for his country.

At the tender age of 16, Ali was recruited to SANFL side, Central District Football Club in Adelaide. Nowadays, professional football clubs have well-established player welfare programs for new recruits, particularly young Indigenous players. Those programs were unheard of in 1966, when Ali arrived in Adelaide from the Top End, so it must have been a bit of a culture shock for the skinny, young kid from Darwin when he first showed up at Elizabeth Oval.

Although he was 188cm tall, or six foot two on the old scale, Ali never carried much weight, but his relatively light build never posed too many problems for him on the footy field. In fact, that may have helped his game because he had a great leap on him.

Some of the photos of Ali from his playing days show him getting well above much taller opponents in aerial contests. It did not take long for Ali to make his presence be felt at Central Districts. After a year with the club, at the age of 17, he cracked into the league side. Ali played his final game for them in the 1972 season.

Comments posted on Central's webpage after Ali's passing suggest he won more than his fair share of admirers during his time in the SANFL. Among the online tributes to Ali were, 'He was an excitement machine and a joy to watch', and, 'He is a popular team member, loved by our supporters'.

Ali's football career hit a hurdle in 1970, when he was called up for national service. Not long after his birth date came up in the conscription ballot, Ali found himself serving in Vietnam as a member of A-Squadron 3rd Cavalry Regiment.

Ali never forgot his service in Vietnam and was a regular attendee at Anzac Day services. His close friend Helen Hewitt said during her eulogy, 'Ali took pride in everything he did, and that included his national service'. Helen also said, 'Our brother was a very good sporting person, a Buffalo person in particular, a proud serviceman who marched every year, like his dad used to'.

I have been told that Ali was meticulous in keeping a record of his football achievements. He kept a comprehensive set of newspaper clippings of his time in Centrals, and his playing stint with Merbein in the Sunraysia league, near the Victoria/New South Wales border. The cuttings he kept from the *Sunraysia Daily* suggest he had a real impact on the local competition. Interestingly there was an article from *Sunraysia Daily* which reported he was playing first grade cricket with Merbein as pace bowler.

While he was involved in plenty of big football matches in his time, I imagine a particular game played at Windsor Park in Brisbane on 14 April 1974 might have figured among Ali's fondest footy memories. The match is regarded as a milestone in the development of Northern Territory football.

Ali was a member of the first Territory football side to win an interstate match. He was judged as one of the best on ground when the Territory overcame an 18-point half-time deficit to beat Queensland 15-12-102 to 10-10-70. Coach of that team, Tony Shaw, has spoken fondly of Ali's courageous performance in the ruck against considerably bigger opponents. His old team, the Darwin Buffaloes, now have the Ali Muir trophy, which appropriately enough is awarded to the club's most courageous premier league player. I was there on Sunday for the presentation and saw the players and the respect that Ali is held in. It is a fitting tribute to Ali.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak about this well-loved Territorian, and I want to finish by saying Shuffle up the Buffaloes.

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I might talk about football as well tonight, except this is probably one of the better clubs—Southern Districts Football Club, colloquially called the Crocs. It was a good year for the crocs. They did not quite get to the final week of the finals, but they got to the second week of the finals ...

Ms Worden: I think they choked.

Ms PURICK: Member for Sanderson, the Crocs choke other things; they never choke.

They are a good team; it is a good club and they will never give up. They will be back next season, bigger and brighter. They had two lots of teams get into the grand finals for the 2016–17 season, the Under 12s and the Under 18s.

I express thanks to the players, who are out there every week training and playing, the team staff, the coaches, the volunteers, the parents, sponsors and the committee of the club. None of the club activities would exist without these people pitching in their time.

The Under 12 Crocs played Wanderers. They beat them five goals to 13; 43 to 4-4-28, a very good win. I congratulate Patrick Snell who won the Atkinson Medal for best and fairest on the ground. Well done to Patrick and the Under 12s Crocs team.

Under 18 teams also won the grand final 13-5-83 to Wanderers 4-8-32. In anyone's language that is a flogging. Well done to the Under 18s. Beau Schwartz won the Haritos Medal for best and fairest on the ground. Congratulations to the whole team and to coach Matt Cannard for taking them through the whole season to the grand final.

It is a great club; it has 13 teams: men's, women's and lots of juniors. I think the success of any sporting club is in how well they look after their juniors. It is the juniors who come through the ranks and go into the bigger leagues. You only have to look at St Mary's for that; they have been successful over the decades—a bit of a conflict of interest as I grew up with St Mary's, but Southern Districts Football Club is also a great club.

I referenced Matt Cannard, and I want to put on the record that he has retired as coach of Southern Districts after a stellar career with the Crocs. The announcement was made by coach Shannon Rusca to the players towards the end of the season. The lovely thing was that Matt's parents came up. They travelled to Darwin to surprise Matt and to watch his last game. They were obviously chuffed and proud

that he has done what he has done after so many years. His father spoke to the premiership players, past and present, in the change rooms.

When Matt arrived at the Southern Districts Football Club 11 seasons ago, the club was just starting to rebuild. The league side played very well in 2005–06 season, but finished wooden spooners. Turn the clock forward just over a decade later, and since that season the club has only missed the finals once. The league side has won its second grand final premiership and three minor premierships. The team has played in five preliminary finals to, unfortunately, only make one grand final.

Matt Cannard has been a big part of the league teams' resurgence in the NTFL. He has won a Nichols Medal to prove he is a great player of the NTFL and for the Crocs. He has won Best and Fairest, runner-up Best and Fairest and player awards. For most of that career he has been the captain of that league side.

He has now stepped up and started coaching. As I said before, he was the coach of the Under 18s. Not only was he captaining the league side and playing, but he was also coaching the Under 18s for the last two seasons. Under his leadership they are playing very well. Clearly, they are playing well because they won the grand final. Well done to Matt Cannard on a great career with the Crocs.

Matt played 260 games; he was the captain for the premier league from 2009 to 2016; he was named captain in the Southern Districts Team of the quarter century in 1987–88 and 2012–13; he is an NTFL Player Life Member; he won the Nichols Medal in 2009–10; from 2005 through to 2014 he won Best and Fairest, Most Courageous, Coaches Award, Best Team Man and Players' Player, Leading Goal Kicker, and so on and so forth.

He was a great footballer, but it was time for him to hang up his boots. He has a young family and a lovely wife. Well done and congratulations, and thank you for helping the Southern Districts Football Club to get to the place it is today.

Will Farrer kicked a ton. Premiership league player, Will Farrer, achieved a rare feat this season in kicking his 100th goal for the season. He became the fourth Crocs player to do so. He is also the third NTFL premier league player to do so in the last 10 years, all from the Crocs. This will follow Ashley Wedding in the 2006 season, Damien Cupido in the 2012–13 and Allen Jakovich in the 1989–90, all of whom kicked a ton of goals. Well done to Will. I know he will continue to do great things in football with Crocs and the NTFL.

Last, I acknowledge Lionel Ogden, who played his 100th premier league game for the Crocs in the season, in the semi-final loss to Nightcliff. Lionel was a very good junior soccer NT representative in his junior playing days and then moved south with his family. When he returned to Darwin he started playing Under 18 for the Crocs in the 2009–10 season, including in the loss in the grand final to St Mary's. He played two more games of premier league and one game of reserves, now Division 1, in that season and it was not long before he became a regular player in the premier league. In the 2013–14 season he won the Coach Award; in 2014–15 he won Best Defender; and in 2015–16 season he won the Most Consistent Award and was fourth in the Best and Fairest. Well done, Lionel, and I hope to see you play many more games for the Crocs.

Congratulations to all the Southern Districts Football Club players, coaches, family teams and volunteers. The junior presentation is this Sunday and I am hoping to attend to congratulate the players who got through the final, because it is a good club.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak about football again tonight.

Members: Oh, no!

Mr SIEVERS: I will deliver the results of the Northern Territory Football League season for 2017. Grand final day saw numerous games played where many Territorians participated. Some won and some were runners-up. All were winners in my eyes for being part of this great game.

The Chief Minister was very pleased that his Waratahs Division 1 team won their grand final convincingly against a very tough side, St Mary's. Well done, Tahs; you deserved it. The crowds and supporters were well up, and AFLNT reported that a crowd of just over 7000 people attended throughout the day.

The main event on the Saturday evening was the NTFL Premier League Grand Final between St Mary's and Wanderers. For the most part, it was a very hard-fought and competitive game. Towards the end,

Wanderers fell short; however, they held their composure and won the respect of many supporters that day.

I congratulate Wanderers' coach, Dean Rioli, their captain, Aaron Motlop and the Muk Muks on a great season. Again, they are winners in my eyes, as are all the teams that compete.

The victory on the night belonged to a formidable St Mary's Football Club. They continue to be the standard and a powerful club, with a strong desire to win premierships, which they have proven on many occasions, noting they now have won 32 premierships as a result.

I congratulate St Mary's coach Rick Nolan, captain Peter MacFarlane and the rest of their team on another successful and fantastic 2017 season of NTFL football.

The Chaney Medal is awarded to the best player in the NT premier league grand final, and on this occasion it went to Cameron Ilett, a player who has received many well-deserved accolades throughout his illustrious career, and who is always humble and prepared to praise his teammates for their efforts over his own.

The St Mary's side has many quality players in its mix; however, it is important we provide well wishes to two of the club's retiring players: Peter 'Noodles' MacFarlane, and Iggy Vallejo. Iggy is a game record holder for the Northern Territory Football League, having played 344 premier league games in the competition, and now has 10 premierships to his name. That is a fantastic achievement.

Noodles has held the centre half-forward position since he came to St Marys in 2004, and he has played in seven premierships for the club since then. Both these players have left their mark on Territory football and we thank them for their contributions.

It is important we acknowledge the efforts of the people behind the scenes of the Northern Territory Football League. The passions of football certainly bring their challenges, so I thank Michael Solomon and his team at AFLNT on a fantastic season. Well done, AFLNT.

Although Palmerston Magpies did not have a premiership on Saturday, we did have an important victory in the grand final sprint before the main game. I am pleased to advise that Mr Raven Marika, who is a Palmy Magpies player from Elcho Island, was way too quick for the rest of the pack, and when the dust settled he was already sitting at home with the sponsor's cheque.

It is important we recognise the great number of Territorians who will be competing in the AFL competitions from this weekend onwards. The great game starts tonight—I think it has already started—with the mighty Carlton Blues and the hard men from Tigerland going at it.

I know the Chief Minister's Blues are looking great again this year, or at least better than last year, but I have not checked the scores yet.

We will also be watching our fantastic Territory Adelaide Crows compete in the Australian Women's football league grand final this Saturday on the Gold Coast. We will all be hoping they bring home the holy grail.

NT Thunder is ready to compete in yet another year's national competition, where more Territorians will have the chance to show off their skills to the scouts of the AFL clubs and, hopefully, provide us with the chance to see more of our future stars developing.

It is with deep condolence I acknowledge the passing of one of the Territory's most well-renowned sporting icons from the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club. Mr Jimmy Anderson played many sports in Darwin, including being recognised as a tough rugby league player for the Nightcliff Dragons and, more prominently, as a courageous player for the mighty Darwin Buffaloes Football Club, where he played between 1954 and 1971.

Uncle Jimmy's career was acknowledged widely, which is why he was included into the AFL NT Hall of Fame and was recently inducted into the Darwin Buffaloes Team of the Century.

Jimmy played down south for a couple of seasons also, for West Perth in the West Australian Football League, where by all accounts he excelled. But he found he loved Darwin too much and returned home to continue his fantastic football career in the Northern Territory.

During Jimmy's career he won three premierships for the great Darwin Buffaloes. At the same time he also played in two premierships with the Nightcliff Dragons. Jimmy's wonderful NTFL career included playing in nine grand finals for the Darwin Buffaloes, winning three club best and fairest awards, twice runner-up in the NTFL's Nichols Medal, and representing the NT five times. He coached Buffaloes in 1960–61 and coached Wanderers in 1971–72. He was a Buffaloes life member and NTFL Player Life Member.

My thoughts and sincere condolences are with all the Anderson family and the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club. We have lost a great man this week, a man who helped me and so many others in the great game we love to play.

God bless you, and may you truly rest in peace, Uncle Jimmy Anderson.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, tonight I speak about the future of an iconic Territory town located in the heartland of beautiful Kakadu National Park, in the electorate of Arnhem, the town of Jabiru.

To the residents of Jabiru and the surrounding outstations in Kakadu, you are not alone. The Labor government is committed to working towards planning for the sustainable future of the Jabiru township. We will not abandon you like the CLP government shamefully did in 2015.

We will work hard for all Territorians, and that includes the residents of Jabiru and the surrounding area in Kakadu. The Labor government cares about Jabiru and the surrounding outstation communities.

Since becoming the local member, I have had the privilege and pleasure to meet some of the many wonderful residents of Jabiru, who love the town and call it home.

The Jabiru School principal, Learne Dunne; the Gundjeihmi CEO, Justin O'Brien; the West Arnhem Regional Council CEO, Brian Hylands; Councillor Anna Egerton; and the Corporate Services Director, Valentin Markez, affectionately known as Val.

Some of the outstations I visited have some wonderful people in them. They include the Patonga Homestead, with Jessie Alderson and Mandy Muir; the Mirrar families at Djurrbiyuk, Whistle Duck and Mudginberri; the Kakadu Rangers program, with wonderful people like Fred Hunter; the Jabiru Rangers; the sporting teams, such as the Jabiru Bombers; and the iconic Crocodile Hotel, which many tourists get a kick out of taking photos of.

The Commonwealth currently holds the underlying title to the township of Jabiru through the Director of National Parks, or DNP. In 1981 the DNP granted a head lease over Jabiru to the Jabiru Town Development Authority, or JTDA, which is a Northern Territory statutory authority. The head lease and all sub-leases expire in 2021.

As a background, in 2009 the Commonwealth made arrangements, including an amendment to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, or ALRA, that would enable Jabiru being scheduled as Aboriginal land on the condition it would immediately be leased back to the Executive Director of Township Leasing.

In December 2015, former Northern Territory minister Dave Tollner wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Affairs and to the Chairperson of the Northern Land Council advising that the Northern Territory Government had decided to discontinue any negotiations regarding Jabiru.

On 8 November 2016 the Northern Territory Government decided to reengage with the Commonwealth and other key stakeholders on the future planning of Jabiru. As the local member I am very pleased to hear that our Labor government will not abandon this Territory town, which is already feeling anxious and vulnerable about its future.

Since this key decision to re-engage with various stakeholders, the Labor Territory government participated in meetings in December 2016 and March 2017 with representatives of the Commonwealth Government, Energy Resources of Australia, or ERA, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and the Northern Land Council.

As I understand from the information from the Department of the Chief Minister, progress has included a collaborative approach with key stakeholders in relation to developing scopes of work for the economic and population modelling and infrastructure, and contaminated sites assessment consultancies. These studies will be critical in informing Northern Territory Government decision-making regarding the future of Jabiru and its likely concept as a government and tourism services town.

The Northern Territory Government, along with input from the Commonwealth and other key stakeholders, will lead the development of a comprehensive communications strategy to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in the future of Jabiru are kept updated. This, I hope, will provide some peace of mind to the residents of Jabiru and the surrounding region in Kakadu that the Northern Territory Government does care about the future of the Jabiru township.

The former minister and Member for Fong Lim, Dave Tollner, took the Northern Territory for granted. He cast aside the people of Jabiru in December 2015 and left many people, businesses and organisations unfairly in limbo.

I am proud to say the Gunner Labor government is not afraid of hard work. Yes, we acknowledge there are many complicated issues to work through in planning for the future of Jabiru, for example the power plant and the airport, to name just two. These are just two of the many complex issues that will be considered during the future planning of the town once the Ranger Mine is decommissioned.

I assure the residents of Jabiru and Kakadu that the Labor government is at the negotiation table and on the job, working hard on behalf of Territorians. We recognise and understand how important Jabiru is as a regional service centre and an internationally-renowned tourism springboard into Kakadu National Park, which is World Heritage listed.

I give thanks and acknowledgement to the Department of the Chief Minister for providing some of the technical and detailed information in regard to my adjournment tonight. I also thank Peter Wellings for his ongoing support and guidance, for sharing his wealth of knowledge about Kakadu and Jabiru, and for reading through and proofing my adjournment speech tonight.

I want to reiterate the message for the residents of Jabiru and the surrounding outstations in Kakadu that they are not alone. We will not abandon you like the CLP government shamefully did in 2015. The Labor Government cares about Jabiru and is committed to looking at a sustainable future for the town and its surrounding region.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, post-traumatic stress disorder, otherwise known as PTSD, is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event.

Thomas Joiner, author of *Why People Die by Suicide*, writes that three conditions must be met for suicidal ideas to become an actual suicide attempt. The three conditions that Mr Joiner notes are:

1. thwarted belonging
2. perceived burdensomeness
3. perceived ability to enact lethal self-injury.

When you apply these conditions to veterans of the Defence Force it can be seen why veterans are at high risk of suicide. War veterans or veterans who have been involved in peacekeeping missions fit Joiner's criteria to a frightening degree.

My brother Joao Miguel Carrascalao, who was here this afternoon with my five-year-old niece, Beatriz, is a veteran. He served 10 years as an active duty soldier. He was a medic in the Australian Army. One year ago my brother was diagnosed with PTSD.

My wonderful brother had this to say about his own personal experience with PTSD; these are direct quotes from his diary:

I thought this was normal behaviour; seriously, I just thought it was normal protective behaviour. It's not until recently that I agree that it's not normal for civilians. After all I am a civilian now.

I used to have bad nightmares. I would pace around my yard all night; I'd set up a 'hide', like sitting at a Listening Post. I'd jump out of bed at any unusual noises, sneak past my own guard dogs, climb the wall and scan the perimeter. On my worst nights I would ambush drunken ...

I will not say that naughty word:

... that came past my gate at night and accuse them of throwing rocks at my place; maybe it was them anyway. I was really paranoid.

For a few months I was standing at my gate in the afternoon a few times a week and demanding passers-by tell me who has been throwing rocks and making threats. Twice I had groups of 15-plus people at my gate, threatening to kill me and burn my house down. The first time I was with my nephew, Patrick, so I couldn't go meet them, and my wife begged me not to go with young Patrick. The second time I told my boys to stay in the yard and I went out and confronted them. Afterward I went and met my dad's cousin, whom has lived in the area for more than 50 years. I told him what happened with the groups; he put out the word and the harassment stopped. But I was still edgy. If I didn't hear my roosters and hens then I would get up and pace the yard.

I was particularly anxious during the Wet Season because they were using the rain to hide their movements. So I started to piquet at night during the Wet Season, especially during national holidays as there would be drunks around. If I was not at home I would ring my wife to make sure things were okay. If I was overseas I would not ring at all in case I lost the plot with worry. I would ask my cousins to keep an eye out. If I was at a dinner or party or something I would fade out to my car and drive home real quick to scan the area. I was paranoid as hell. Then I would go back.

I always carried a bug-out bag in my car. Always, I was specifically paranoid about making sure I had Salbutamol on me for medical emergencies of asthma, and rescue gear. I had a full ALS kit including adrenaline and epinephrine; I only lacked in-date IV giving sets and a defibrillator.

I got caught twice without a med kit in someone else's car ... I just figured that having a med-kit and some rations is just good practice. But I think it's paranoia on my part. A bug-out bag contains emergency things in it. Yeah, I just thought it was normal. I'm not like that anymore.

I'm better now because I talk to some old Army mates and I can see that I wasn't right. It's not rational; I'm a pretty intelligent guy, and some things were just simply irrational. So, yeah, sorry if I snapped at you over the last couple of years. I might have been in a bad space at that time; 2017 should be better.

My brother has started the process of accessing support and services, especially with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, but for a veteran who suffers from PTSD the process and protocols can be stressful and possibly far more detrimental. To navigate the complex system of referrals, appointments, DVA forms and rehabilitation whilst also attempting to manage their anxiety is enough to deter veterans from seeking help.

My brother, although having been diagnosed by his GP with PTSD, is still waiting to be assessed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and is still not receiving treatment or support from the very department that was established to support our veterans.

The delay in receiving treatment is unacceptable. I am incredibly concerned, saddened and angry by the federal government's decision to close a number of Veterans' Access Network offices, particularly in regional areas. Although the federal government states that it will co-locate the Veterans Access Network with Centrelink officers, I am very concerned that our veterans will not be receiving the one-on-one care that is needed.

I understand and acknowledge that improving the Department of Veterans' Affairs office is of utmost importance, but I urge the federal government to ensure that face-to-face contact remains in place. In the meantime I urge veterans and their family members in my electorate to contact my office, and we will assist them in accessing community services and organisations that can assist them.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak about this incredibly serious issue. Before my time runs out, I want to say this to my brother: thank you so much for having the courage to allow me to share your story publicly. I love you; you are a wonderful brother, dad and husband, and I am always here for you.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the wonderful achievements of two schools in my electorate of Karama.

I will begin with Manunda Terrace Primary School. On 24 February I joined staff, students and parents at the meet and greet barbecue breakfast. This is the second year the school has held this breakfast and a great time was had by all.

During the final assembly of 2016 the school captains for 2017 were announced, and I want to send huge congratulations to Julie and Samuel. Both Julie and Samuel already displayed their leadership qualities when they attended the 75th Bombing of Darwin commemoration at the Darwin Cenotaph on Sunday 19 February, where they laid a wreath on behalf of the school.

The school has a special connection with the ceremony and commemoration, as the three houses of Manunda Terrace Primary School—Peary, Tulagi and Neptuna—were all ships in the harbour at the time of the Bombing of Darwin. A ship named *Manunda* was also in the harbour at the time.

A number of elections have taken place at the school, including the appointments of house captains, so I send huge congratulations to Takota and Faith, who are the 2017 house captains for Neptuna; Henry and Izabella, who are the 2017 house captains for Peary; and Jayden and Allie, who are the 2017 house captains for Tulagi. I also congratulate this year's SRC representatives who were recently elected. Huge congratulations to Mya and Stephanie from room nine, and Hannah and Paige from room 10.

Each of these students stepped up to fill the leadership roles in their school, and I wish each of them the best of luck in their respective roles.

On Tuesday 28 February I attended the school council AGM. It was the best-organised and most well-run meeting I have ever been to. It was fantastic to see all eight positions filled by eager parents who are looking forward to a productive 2017.

I now want to talk about the achievements of Malak Primary School. In the evening of 21 February I enjoyed a sausage sizzle with staff, students and parents at the annual meet and greet. It was a fantastic opportunity for parents and families to meet their child's teacher and enjoy the sausage sizzle. I watched as parents and families visited classrooms to meet those teachers and engage in conversation.

Malak Primary School council meeting was held on 13 March, where seven enthusiastic parents were elected to the council. These dedicated parents join four dedicated staff members to deliver for all students this year.

I congratulate all school council members and student leaders of Manunda Terrace Primary School and Malak Primary School, and I wish them the very best in their endeavours for the 2017 school year and beyond.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I wish to talk about an issue that will affect many of the most vulnerable in our society, an issue of justice.

Community Legal Centres provide vital services to Territory community members. Many people cannot afford legal representation and face this horrible fact at times when they are most in need. The Community Legal Centre network, which includes women's legal services, is one of the few avenues of support. It is the first and often only port of call for vulnerable people seeking legal assistance, and it plays a pivotal role in supporting and protecting victims of family violence.

Yet the federal government has Community Legal Centres in its sights, and Malcolm Turnbull is sharpening his scissors. From 1 July this year Community Legal Centres are facing a 30% cut to their Commonwealth funding. Many Community Legal Centres, including in the Territory, such as the Central Australian Women's Legal Service, are foreshadowing cutting back their services and turning women away, leaving vulnerable people without legal representation at times when they most need it.

The ripple effect of these cuts will be huge, as family violence victims will have to face their abuser without legal representation and without additional support. The effects of these cuts will be felt as soon as next month as services start winding back their services, cutting back staff and programs. As in most cases, it will be regional and remote communities in places like the Northern Territory that will be hardest hit by these disgraceful cuts. These are places where access to justice is already difficult, but now Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull wants to make it harder.

It has been calculated that the average Australian lawyer is already donating a week of work for free, pro bono, but even this is not enough to fix our legal assistance funding crisis. That is thousands of free hours donated every year by lawyers around the country.

The sixth National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference, which is being held in Adelaide today, heard a grim picture of our community legal services, already struggling to meet a growing need.

Scheduled funding cuts to Community Legal Centres will amount to a loss of \$35m between 2017 and 2020. These will be cuts to an already chronically under-resourced sector.

According to Law Council of Australia President, Fiona McLeod, last year Community Legal Centres were forced to turn away 160 000 people seeking legal assistance. The forecast cuts will lead to 36 000 fewer people assisted.

These are real people, not just figures. These are real Territorians who are in serious enough situations to seek legal help, who otherwise would not get it.

The Productivity Commission stated that the preventative focus of Community Legal Centres means they:

... can prevent or reduce the escalation of legal problems, which in turn can mean reduced costs to the justice system and lower costs to other taxpayer funded services.

That includes areas such as health and housing.

A reduction in CLC services will put more pressure on the justice system over the long term. How many of those who have already been turned away now have worse problems, problems that spread within families and communities?

The Productivity Commission has called for an extra \$200m for legal assistance because research shows these problems cost us long term, both in monetary and human costs.

I call on the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and the federal government to reverse these cuts. They do not make sense economically, let alone common sense.

The Community Legal Centre networks Australia-wide will be ramping up their campaign about the impact of the federal funding cuts. I hope my colleagues in this House, regardless of their political position or party alignment, will support Community Legal Centres and oppose the senseless cuts.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.