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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Fannie Bay

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I seek leave of absence for the Chief Minister, who is on a trade mission to Korea, Japan and China.

Leave granted.

VISITORS
Nightcliff Middle School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to welcome some students in the gallery from Nightcliff Middle School. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Madam SPEAKER: I understand there is a Noah in the gallery; we will be watching you, Noah. We also have Alekna here. We will be watching you too. Please give us a report card on your parents. They are the Member for Sanderson and Member for Johnston's children. Do a report card for me.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL
(Serial 4)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Before I start, I, too, welcome Nightcliff Middle School; it is a fabulous middle school in my electorate. It is great to see you all. I look forward to catching up with you a bit later on.

The purpose of this Bill is to make consequential amendments to various Northern Territory laws, including correcting syntax and typing errors, inserting omissions, updating superseded sections and generally tidying up ambiguities and inconsistencies within Bills.

None of the amendments constitute substantive changes to government policies or programs.

The Bill follows the general pattern of Statute Law Revision Bills by revising and correcting the law of the Northern Territory in minor respects. From time to time the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel will draft an SLR Bill as an ongoing process and produce a new Bill as often as required.

The Bill provides for the provision of a very large number of Acts and Regulations, and I would refer honourable members to the explanatory statement for a more fulsome list of legislation affected by the Bill.

A majority of the amendments in this Bill are relatively self-explanatory. However, the following amendments are of particular note.

Several Acts have been amended to comply with the Parliamentary Counsel's standardised drafting of the clause included in Acts which applies Part 2AA of the Criminal Code. These amendments ensure that the way in which the criminal responsibility provisions of Part 2AA is applied in a uniform manner across all legislation. The affected Acts include:

- the *Domestic and Family Violence Act*
- the *Legal Profession Act*
- the *Local Government Act*
- the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act*
- the *Surveillance Devices Act*

- the *Unit Title Schemes Act*.

The *Correctional Services Act* and the *Land Title Act* are amended to improve the function of various sections which, while otherwise fully operational, are clarified by the inclusion of additional words or subclauses. These amendments do not change the operation of the section; however, they serve to improve the clarity and utility of the section in accordance with the object and intention of the Act.

The *Medical Services Act* is amended to replace the references to 'Secretary' with 'CEO' to refer to the correct title for the head of the Department of Health.

Previously, a definition within the Act identified the Secretary as the Chief Executive Officer of the department, which created an unnecessary duplication. These amendments eliminate the redundant definition and help to simplify the Act.

The *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act* and Regulations are amended to refer to 'Scheduled substances' instead of 'regulated substances'. Scheduled substances allow for uniform reference to all substances in the schedules of the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act*.

Several changes are also being made to a number of Acts following the passing of the *Territory Insurance Office (Sale) Act 2014*. All references to TIO are removed as it is no longer relevant to the operation of the following acts:

- the *Agents Licensing Act*
- the *Associations Act*
- the *Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Act*
- the *Charles Darwin University Act*
- the *Commercial and Private Agents Licensing Act*
- the *Law of Property Act*
- the *Menzies School of Health Research Act*
- the *Public Trustee Act*
- the *Salvation Army (Northern Territory) Property Trust Act*
- the *Superannuation Act*
- the *Unit Titles Act*.

Amendments to the *Animal Welfare Act* include omitting section 17(1) and inserting a new subsection (3). This is being done to standardise the definition of 'poison' by removing an outdated reference in section 17(1) and substituting a new definition in subsection (3).

Other amendments to the structure of section 17(1) and 17(3) ensure that provisions are drafted in accordance with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel's modern drafting practices.

Section 17(2) is also amended by inserting a penalty clause at the end of the subsection. The penalty has not changed, but is being included in subsection 17(2) rather than in a general penalty provision which is in keeping with modern drafting practices.

Section 32 of the *Racing and Betting Act* is being amended to omit the whole of section 32(2) and insert a new subsection (2) which is written in a clearer language to simplify the operation of that subsection.

Section 32(1) is further amended by inserting a penalty provision at the end of the subsection. The provision is redrafted in accordance with the Office of the Parliamentary Council's current drafting practices.

There are no changes to the amount of penalty that is being provided for in section 32 of the *Racing and Betting Act*.

In addition, section 145A of the *Racing and Betting Act* is being amended to omit the whole of subsection (1) and insert a new subsection that operates in the same way but corrects a series of references that have become outdated by revisions to the *Racing and Betting Act*.

A number of other Acts have been similarly amended to correct referencing errors that have entered the legislation over time due to revisions or drafting amendments. These include:

- the Cross-Border Justice Regulations
- the *Information Act*
- the *Local Court Act*
- the *Personal Violence Restraining Orders Act 2016*.

Finally, several Acts that were enacted for a particular purpose have been repealed as that purpose has now been fulfilled. Removing them from the statute book simplifies the body of legislative work and assists in accurate representation. The repealed Acts are the *Places of Public Entertainment Act Repeal Act 2013* and the *Year 2000 Information Disclosure Act* of 1999.

The Bill remains essential to ensuring the Northern Territory's legislation remains accurate, reliable and of the highest possible standard.

I commend the Statute Law Revision Bill 2016 to honourable members and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

Debate adjourned.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS, FILMS AND COMPUTER GAMES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 2)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* to reflect recent amendments to the Commonwealth classification legislation, made in response to recommendations by the Australian Law Reform Commission to reform the National Classification Scheme.

The National Classification Scheme is a cooperative arrangement between Commonwealth, state and territory governments underpinned by an intergovernmental agreement on censorship and supported by a legislative framework comprising the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*, hereafter the Commonwealth Classification Act, and complementary enforcement legislation in each state and territory.

In 2011, the Australian Law Reform Commission reviewed the National Classification Scheme. A report entitled *Classification—Content Regulation and Convergent Media* was released in 2012. This was the first comprehensive review of censorship and classification since 1991 and it recommended significant changes to the regulatory framework and structure of the National Classification Scheme.

Australian classification ministers agreed in April 2013 to carry out reform of the National Classification Scheme in stages. This would be commenced with a first tranche of reforms to the National Classification Scheme in the short term under the current scheme.

The initial reforms are intended to benefit consumers, reduce administrative red tape and regulatory burden on industry, and increase industry compliance with classification laws. This is intended to improve the effectiveness of the National Classification Scheme without prejudicing an ongoing program of major structural reforms.

As the Commonwealth has the main role in classification regulation, the reforms required substantial amendments to the Commonwealth Classification Act.

The *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Classification Tools and Other Measures) Act 2014* amended the Commonwealth Classification Act in relation to exemptions, modifications, decision-making instruments and markings.

The reforms that have been made, particularly those in relation to exemptions and modifications, require consequential amendments to state and territory legislation.

The reforms to the Commonwealth Classification Act broadened some of the existing exempt film categories, established additional exempt film categories for certain films covering natural history and the social sciences, and created exemptions that allow for unclassified content to be screened or demonstrated at festivals or special events by festival operators or cultural institutions.

The most significant element of the exemption reform is the simplification of exemption arrangements for festivals, events and cultural institutions and to allow for self-assessment.

The previous film festival scheme was complex and required event organisers to apply for exemptions for classification of each event. It was also difficult for organisers to screen late entries, amend event programs or to add and change venues.

The amendments to the Commonwealth Classification Act require Part 10 of our *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* to be repealed.

Part 10 of the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* allows organisers of festivals and other events to apply to either the minister or the national Director of the Classification Board for a formal exemption to publicly exhibit unclassified films, computer games or publications. This part of the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* is no longer required.

The Bill seeks to facilitate the system of conditional cultural exemptions through clauses 3, 4, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

Schedule 4 to the Commonwealth's *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Classification Tools and Other Measures) Act 2014* expanded the exceptions to the modifications rule so that films and computer games which are subject to certain types of modifications do not require classification.

Prior to those amendments, if a film or computer games was modified, whether before or after being classified, the modified version became unclassified.

Certain exceptions to this modification rule existed for modifications that occurred after classification, including the addition or removal of advertisements, addition or removal of navigation functions, and addition or removal of certain descriptions or translations of audio or visual content.

The Commonwealth's amendment added format changes from viewing 2D to 3D, or vice versa, to the exceptions, gave the Commonwealth minister power to prescribe additional exceptions, and applied the exceptions to items modified before classification, as well as after it.

This Bill seeks to ensure that our *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* is consistent with the Commonwealth Classification Act in respect of all exceptions provisions, including those relating to computer games and films.

The *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* currently fails to apply any of the exceptions to the modification rule in respect of computer games. A similar anomaly existed in other state and territory legislation. All jurisdictions that have made amendments to apply the reforms contained within the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Classification Tools and Other Measures) Act 2014* have similarly remedied this issue.

This Bill seeks to facilitate the modification rules through clauses 5, 6 and 11.

One of the major changes to the Commonwealth Classification Act was the move to enable certain content to be classified using classification tools, such as online questionnaires that deliver automated decisions.

This was prompted by the significant and rapid advances in technology that have occurred since the National Classification Scheme was established in 1996.

The significant majority of computer games available on mobile devices and online were not classified under the National Classification Scheme prior to being made available to Australian consumers. The Classification Board was unable to classify the vast volume of this type of content.

The introduction of classification tools is intended to assist the Classification Board to classify content, such as mobile and online games, which are currently unclassified and readily available in the Australian market. The structure of the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* and the way it interacts with the Commonwealth Classification Act ensures that most of the provisions relating to the classification tools will automatically have effect in the Northern Territory.

However, the Bill seeks to make necessary amendments to eliminate minor inconsistencies through clauses 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13.

In summary, this Bill makes a variety of minor amendments to the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act*. These amendments ensure that the Northern Territory enforcement legislation is consistent with and supports the principal legislation administered by the Commonwealth.

It will ensure that the National Classification Scheme continues to operate effectively and will apply important changes to the Northern Territory. The changes made by the Commonwealth and reflected in this Bill are an important first step in moving toward a modern and integrated classification scheme that is able to respond more effectively to rapid changes in technology.

I commend the Bill to honourable members and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION **Note Statement – Jobs**

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the Chief Minister's remarkably disappointing jobs statement yesterday. If this statement is the best that Territory businesses and working families can look forward in regard to job creation and a sustainable infrastructure plan, then we are in serious trouble.

It is deeply concerning that, after two months in government, Labor has no coherent plan around the economy. The Labor government that spent years in opposition, and the past two months bashing the Country Liberals for economic mismanagement, is now using our budget. If it was not so embarrassing it would be quite funny.

Labor is waiting for the outcomes of its economic summits to craft a plan which, to me, seems like a cop-out for making the tough decisions it will have to make to fulfil its election commitments. As I outlined yesterday, Treasury pointed to a \$220m gap between the Budget and its costings. This is the Gunner gap, a black hole that the government will have to make some really tough decisions to fill.

While it works out ways to juggle the books to close the Gunner gap, Territory businesses remain uncertain about their own prospects. So far the measures the government has taken are about creating political jobs, not real jobs in the outside world. It has given all its backbenchers jobs. Instead of being called backbenchers they are now assistant ministers. It has given two of its failed election candidates liaison-style jobs that will provide them with a platform to recontest their seats next term.

Labor has recruited many of the same staff, locally and from interstate, who were part of the team that mismanaged the Territory economy previously and saddled us with a \$5.5bn debt. It paid homage to its union mates by forcing penalty rates upon small businesses. We have not heard boo from the Chief Minister about the shedding of 450 jobs at INPEX. What does the jobs statement do about retaining those workers in the Territory should they wish to remain? This has had the counter effect of reducing jobs, with some of the Territory's leading restaurants saying they will not open their doors on Christmas and New Year's Eves.

The most sensible part of the Chief Minister's statement was his commitment to, 'deliver existing government-facilitated nation-building and Territory-building infrastructure and investment projects like the luxury hotel and the shiplift project'. In other words, work done by the previous Country Liberal government.

In his statement the Chief Minister talked about being 'agile, smart and flexible', but in the first 60 days of his government we have not seen any of the skills he talked about. He talked about openness and transparency, but where was the openness and transparency in his so-called partial public holidays?

His moratorium on fracking is a handbrake on the economy, and I look forward to that handbrake being disengaged as soon as possible, as we all know it will be.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs. Supporting all members of our community to fully participate in the Territory's social and economic opportunities is something I am passionate about. It is why we stand for political office.

As an educator, I know how important it is for our children to receive a quality education that equips them with the skills and capabilities they need to confidently engage in our economy. There is nothing better, as an educator, than to run into one of your past students and hear of their successes in life. I define success in the broadest of terms—success as in finding a place in the world, a belonging and a connection. Belonging and connection, for the majority of us, involves employment or voluntary work, or working in or with your community.

International research shows that successfully completing school has a significant lifelong impact. It means individuals have the capacity to care for themselves and their family, manage a budget, live a healthier, longer life and get a job or start a successful business.

Despite all the evidence that shows the importance of education to the prosperity of the Territory, the CLP government made drastic cuts to Territory schools. At a time when most other states and territories were increasing their investment in schools, the CLP applied millions in saving measures and efficiency dividends. In its four years of government it cut \$144m from the education budget. These cuts have seen a drastic reduction in the number of classroom teacher jobs and jobs that provide important support to our schools, teachers and students.

Between 2012 and 2016 the Department of Education workforce decreased by more than 500 full-time equivalent staff. This included a reduction of more than 300 teachers in our schools. With over 70% of government schools located in remote and very remote areas in the Northern Territory, these cuts impacted on local job opportunities for Indigenous Territorians.

This government believes in listening to Territorians and investing in our community. I have heard from educators and families across the Territory about the challenges our schools face—the challenges of meeting the complex needs of students and delivering a curriculum that ensures they have the skills and knowledge for the jobs of the future, with fewer resources and less support.

This government has listened and we have a plan to better support education and create Territory jobs. We are investing an additional \$124m in funding to schools over the next four years. This includes:

- \$80m directly into school budgets
- \$32m to reinvest in early intervention to tackle challenging behaviours in the classroom and provide support for our most vulnerable children, those with disabilities
- \$8m to create a program of school sports, arts, music and health across the Territory to engage students and enrich their learning experiences
- \$4m to support school business managers, reducing the administrative burden on principals.

With an additional \$20m a year in their budgets, schools will have the capacity to employ up to an additional 164 classroom teachers. That is 164 more permanent teachers in the Territory. Teachers are great citizens and they will invest in the Territory. They will buy houses and cars and will put down their roots in the Territory. They will be the customers at coffee shops and restaurants. With an additional \$20m we will be able to employ an additional 164 classroom teachers, support staff or counsellors in our school system.

The schools will be able to recruit more specialists and support staff so teachers and principals can focus on their primary roles as educators. As well as building the future workforce, we are also creating jobs and stimulating the economy through the building better schools initiative. We will provide \$300 000 in minor new works to every remote, very remote and urban Territory school, government and non-government. We will also provide \$5m to improve the 26 homelands schools operating across the Territory. By providing that money we are stimulating the economy and providing work for people across the Territory.

That funding will be allocated over the next four years and we will roll it out to a number of schools very soon. That will allow schools to properly plan and maximise opportunities for local businesses to undertake work in their region using a local workforce. We want our students to learn and our teachers to teach in high-quality facilities. Overall, we have high-quality education facilities thanks to programs such as Building the Education Revolution, but there is more work to be done.

Investment in our schools, teachers and students will not only create more job opportunities, it will also mean there are more people ready to work and create the jobs and future wealth of our community. Investment in education presents a key opportunity of jobs for Indigenous people, especially in remote and very remote areas, where the majority of Territory schools are located.

The Department of Education employs the largest number of Indigenous people in the Territory. Some of these are school council employees as well; school councils use some of their funds to employ people, and in our remote areas many of those school council employees are local Indigenous people.

We need staff who bring firsthand knowledge and valuable expertise in Indigenous culture, but also the knowledge of their community. Many of those Indigenous employees have been in the community for a long time and have have 30 or 40 years of experience. The Member for Arnhem was very fortunate yesterday—and I am sorry I could not attend—to attend the ceremony to present Cherry Daniels with her Order of Australia medal. That is an amazing achievement and we are very proud. I am glad the Member for Arnhem was at Ngukurr school for that.

It is wonderful when someone like Cherry Daniels chooses a school to be the place where she receives her Order of Australia medal. In cities like Sydney or Melbourne it would be held at Government House, or somewhere like that. When we hear of a Territorian like Cherry wanting her medal to be presented at a school, we can be very proud.

This term the Department of Education has launched the Indigenous employment and workforce strategy to increase the number of Indigenous staff in our schools. An Indigenous reference group will guide and monitor the implementation of this important strategy. The Department of Education is working collaboratively with the tertiary education providers—Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute—as well as schools and Indigenous community organisations to promote career pathways in education and identify and attract prospective Indigenous employees. This must be done.

In about 2009 the Minister for Education at the time, Marion Scrymgour, the first Indigenous Minister for Education—one of her clear platforms was about growing our own. It is about growing Indigenous teachers, but it also needs to be more than that. There needs to be career pathways for our remote Indigenous teachers across the system. We need to work on making sure there are Indigenous people in leadership positions across the Department of Education. This strategy will maximise the employment opportunities for Indigenous Territorians from our additional investment in education.

Investing in children and their education can create positive outcomes for whole communities. This has been clearly demonstrated by the Families as First Teachers program. I often talk about this program because we need to acknowledge that it is working and continue to support it. As with any program, we need to continue to grow and tweak it to make sure it continues to be a success.

Families as First Teachers provides a quality early learning program that engages parents and strengthens children's early learning, giving them the skills to participate and succeed at school. Children who regularly attend early learning programs are more likely to regularly attend school and achieve a good education. To me, there are often things in education that are common sense but are sometimes overlooked.

If children start from a very young age to get into the habit of getting up, having breakfast, brushing their teeth, washing their face and then heading down to the learning centre with mum—we can all imagine how intimidating and hard it is at two, three or four years of age to go in to that school environment. Families as First Teachers provides the opportunity to get into the habit of attending school regularly, with the support of grandma, uncle, aunty or somebody else.

One of the key outcomes of Families as First Teachers is getting kids to school regularly and building those lifetime habits. Whether we like it or not, in the long term we all have to get up and go to work most days. It is about starting those early habits and behaviours. This, in turn, increases their options and opportunity for employment. But Families as First Teachers does more than that. It provides local Indigenous people with meaningful employment opportunities.

Each of the FaFT teams includes one family educator who is a qualified teacher, and a family liaison officer who is a local Indigenous person who helps run the program, engages with the families and works with other service providers in the community. It is great to have the qualified family educator, but the value of the family liaison officer cannot be underestimated, because they have connections in the community. They know the families and can encourage the mothers to attend. It is a true partnership when things go well. The family educator and the family liaison officer having a great partnership makes a big difference to the quality of the Families as First Teachers program.

Studies have shown that parents who participate in meaningful employment not only have increased self-esteem, develop new skills and increase their economic outlook, but they are role models for their children. For our children to see us working—the discipline involved in getting up early, working with other people and going to work every day. It is about being a great role model.

Families as First Teachers is currently operating in 28 remote and very remote school communities across the NT. The government is expanding this excellent program to an additional five very remote sites and five urban sites in 2017. In our urban setting we have a drift of families from the bush into town, and we need to be able to provide wraparound support in our urban settings.

In my electorate of Drysdale I am very fortunate to have a child and family centre. The Larapinta Child and Family Centre is just about to open. I have not visited that centre, but when the Chief Minister was last in Alice Springs he went there, and I am hoping to do that before the end of the year. The Member for Braitling was also able to attend. It is about providing that support for families—it is not just the children. It is for the mums, dads, aunties, uncles and grandparents. We can be very proud of those facilities.

This government knows that by investing in children and families, and their education, health and welfare, we can overcome the significant long-term issues that have challenged the Territory for decades. That is vital.

That point was lost on the last government. If you look at the figures as a result of the cuts to education, health and welfare—the numbers grew in the Department of the Chief Minister in areas like marketing, promotions and advertising. The numbers did not grow where they needed to. There were cuts to education, health and children and families. If we are focused on overcoming the significant long-term issues and challenges for the Territory, we need to focus on those areas.

We know there will not be quick wins. It may take 10 years, but this government is up to the challenge. That is what we are here for, long-term, sustainable changes to benefit Territorians.

As the Chief Minister said, the previous government continued to cut social investment in education, youth services and the support that Territory families need. This has resulted in a slow economy with low growth rates and people moving interstate.

If you cut 300-plus jobs in education, of course those people will move interstate. They have to chase work. If you are a qualified teacher and you cannot get a job in the Northern Territory, you need to go elsewhere. That is a fact. We are tackling this problem by creating jobs and supporting working families in the Territory to keep them here.

The importance of keeping people in the Territory is well known in the education sector. Recruiting and retaining a quality teacher workforce is an ongoing issue. This is an area where the CLP took its eye off the ball. Far too many teachers and support staff are on contracts. This needs to change and we need to be able to give those people job security.

If you are on a short-term contract you are always concerned about buying a house or a car and making an investment. You are even concerned about whether you should bother planning for a holiday. Maybe you need to put money away. We need to give job security. The majority of the education workforce is made up of mums and young females, and we need to give them job security.

One of the key things I will be doing is working with the department and looking at options for permanency for our staff. Instead of being permanent to that school they might need to be permanent to the education system or the region, but it at least gives those people the security to stay in the Territory long term. There is a high turnover of teachers in the Territory and we need to change that.

A concerning and growing body of evidence indicates that as many as 40% to 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The loss of teachers in the early stage of their careers results in increased teacher shortages and loss of time and money invested into schools, not to mention the lack of continuity for students throughout their education.

We will do something about that. This government has thought about that issue and will address it instead of ignoring it. To support new teachers in the early stages of their career and retain them in our system in the long term, this government will implement a program where experienced teachers become mentors to new teachers, passing on their valuable skills and expertise.

Any decision I make around education will be based on evidence and research to be able to make sound judgements and use taxpayers' money in a sound and sensible way.

John Hattie, who is an expert in education research, says the biggest difference you can make in developing a teacher is in their first few years. We all know that after four years of university you do not necessarily come out as the world's greatest teacher. You might have all the theory, but you have not had as much practical experience—the Members for Barkly and Arnhem, all of us who have been teachers, think back to our first couple of years in teaching. We probably cringe at how ill-prepared we were and how much of a steep learning curve we were on.

This government will invest in early-career teachers so they feel confident in their role—if they feel they are doing a good job, then they are doing a good job—and are enjoying their workplace and careers, and that can set them up to then become long-term Territorians and teachers in our system. It is about developing them to be our future principals and leaders, if that is the career path they choose; if they are choosing to move along the exemplary teacher path they can do that as well.

We need to make sure our early-career teachers are here for the long term. It makes economic sense as well. It costs money to recruit teachers and take them out to remote communities and set them up, but if we have a high turnover of teachers it is not great for our schools. Children like having those connections; they want to stay connected to their teacher. They want to see the same teachers in their schools for the long term.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms LAWLER: I also note that the figures from Deloitte Access Economics, provided to the House by the Chief Minister, found that opportunities for career progression, amongst other things, are an important factor in attracting and retaining people in the Territory. We can all understand that. If you want to develop your career, you need those opportunities. We do not want people feeling that they have been promoted and do not have the right skill set for the promotion.

This government will deliver a nation-leading school principal leadership program. Aspiring principals will receive training and support to prepare them for this critical leadership role. Again, this is a critical issue in schools. Across Australia and the Western world there are fewer people putting up their hand to be principals. It is not seen as an attractive job. What can we do to make that job an attractive one, as well as prepare our assistant principals and senior teachers so they are willing to put up their hand and take it on as a great job opportunity?

It is the same in the Territory. Years ago, when principal jobs were advertised you had 20 or 30 people applying for those roles. Now, when jobs are advertised, we find it hard to attract people to put up their hand—local people who are moving along with their career progression. How do we otherwise bring new principals into the Territory?

Being a born and bred Territorian, I am a firm believer of growing our own and developing our workforce to include local principals. I am also aware that we sometimes need input of fresh ideas and new people in

the system. It is a balance; you do not necessarily want new principals to all come from interstate, as sometimes they do not have a clear understanding of the context of the Territory.

We need to make sure that people coming to the Territory put up their hands for principal jobs. We also need to make sure our assistant principals are also aspiring to be principals, because then there is a knock-on effect. You can then recruit a teacher behind that position, as well as an assistant principal and so forth. We want to keep them in the Territory long term.

When schools have the funding they need, and when teachers and principals have the access to the right specialist support, our students then receive the very best educational experience, and that is what this is all about.

The CLP has left a huge task for the new government, and Territorians, to reach a surplus by 2019–20 and to support and create jobs in challenging economic conditions. This government is up to the challenge. Developing our economy and creating jobs is everyone's business and everyone has a role to play. This government will back Territorians and listen to them through the economic summits and forums planned between stakeholders and government. We are a government that will listen to Territorians. We will not rush in and bulldoze things through.

I will continue to work the educational stakeholders—the Council of Government School Organisations, the Australian Education Union, the Principals Association, the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools, CDU and Batchelor Institute. I am firm believer that we cannot do these things alone; we need to take people with us and work as a whole. All of us together can make a change, not just me or this government individually.

Those were some of the clear messages I heard in my first few weeks in the position—I know there will never be 100% agreement. At times our relationships with some of our stakeholders might be strained and tight, but, to me, it is about continuing to have open lines of communication and to continue to talk about issues, because it is only through all of us working together that we can make those changes and be a progressive government.

As the Chief Minister said, we are supporting jobs through a range of measures. We are keeping contracts and money flowing, supporting jobs through improvements to the Buy Local scheme; the first home buyer support; a sensible, balanced and funded forward works program; improving job satisfaction by providing rewards for employees for their efforts at important times, such as Christmas and New Year; and restoring their rights under a proper *Return to Work Act*, something that is very dear to my heart.

We are providing \$100m as a stimulus over the next two financial years, working with business and the community to create long-term plans that deliver sustainability, certainty and confidence for the economy and jobs. We are doing that because we believe in supporting Territory families to have good jobs that pay well and will maximise their capacity to engage in our economy.

If we are to attract and keep families in the Territory to meet workforce and productivity needs, education is the key. If we want families to stay in the Territory and for more people to move to the Territory and make it their home, improving the quality of our schools and the outcomes for our children is critical. I am a mother and now a grandmother; many of us in this House are. One of the key things about having a happy family is that the children are happy with their school. If kids are happy with their teachers, the families are happy because their kids are getting a great education. That is one of the key influences when choosing to stay in one place.

If your children are at a great school and are getting a great education, families will try hard to stay. Nobody wants to uproot their kids and for them to have to make new friends. One of the keys to keeping people in the Territory is ensuring that we have quality schools where families want to make the extra effort to stay. Every parent wants their child to have a great education, be taught by quality teachers and have their wellbeing and learning needs met. They want to know their child will finish school with the skills and knowledge to access further training, study or employment pathways.

We know the jobs of the future will be more complex than the jobs of today, and we will need a workforce with high levels of education and technical skills. According the OECD, communities that prosper economically invest in education and skill development. High-level skills and the ability to analyse complex information, communicate effectively and think creatively are increasingly important in employment opportunities. I am reading from *Designing Local Skills Strategies*, a 2009 OECD report.

Our students will need to be proficient in coding, the language and text of the modern industrial world. Our government is introducing coding training into primary and secondary schools so students will have the skills they need to participate in the workforce now and in the future. We will be a progressive government. We need to push those things that may be seen as extras in some schools—but there are examples of some great things happening in places like Nakara with regard to coding. We need to push that across the system because they are the skills of the future. We do not want Territory kids to be left behind.

We are also supporting schools to challenge and stretch the skills and abilities of our students through the high achievers program, which recognises high-performing students across schools and can lift the results of others. With my years of experience working in schools, I think it is very important that we work across that bell curve—across all levels. As a community we also need to extend our high achievers. Our exceptional kids need that additional support as well; they are our future leaders. We need to make sure we are also putting resources into high-achieving students.

A well-performing and properly resourced school system is fundamental to a prosperous future for the Territory. Labor's investment in our schools is an important step in supporting all members of our community to fully participate in the Territory's social and economic future; creating more jobs in the education workforce, especially for Indigenous Territorians; and resourcing our schools so they can support students to gain the skills and knowledge they need to confidently engage in our economy.

Investment in education, and the government's jobs and economic initiatives, will attract and keep families in the Territory to meet workforce and productivity needs now and into the future.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to the Chief Minister's jobs statement. Yesterday the Chief Minister spoke about the long and proud tradition of the Labor Party in implementing policy that creates more opportunity and a productive society. He said that with a straight face; it is absolutely ludicrous and laughable.

Just to correct the record, the Labor Party has a history of creating more red tape, slowing growth, killing business and kowtowing to its very influential union mates. This has been crystallised and reiterated nicely today by the *NT News*. It noted that the government has now employed its former candidate for Spillett to be Labor's union representative.

The Labor Party does not know the first thing about improving productivity and clearly knows nothing about job creation. That is evident from these two weeks of sittings, where there has been a giant void of anything coming out of this government—a vast empty space where nothing is coming forward to Territorians from this government.

I am not even aware that the Chief Minister has ever actually had a real job since the time he stopped stacking shelves in his teens. He found himself, very quickly, in the back room of the Labor Party and he has been a product of the Labor Party system ever since. Even his own side recognises that he is the quintessential Labor apparatchik. What the Chief Minister knows about having a job, let alone job creation, is left to be desired.

If we take a step back and look at the Chief Minister's record so far—he has introduced a mining moratorium, creating enormous uncertainty and killing confidence in one of the most promising industries on the horizon for the Northern Territory. He has flip flopped on land use planning on one hand, with a spectacular backflip on the Blake Street development, and on the other hand with a weak review on the well-thought-out and thoroughly consulted dual occupancy provisions introduced by the Country Liberals. The development industry cannot operate with confidence with this kind of uncertainty.

Mr Gunner has stalled the infrastructure program, and that was made explicitly clear in this House yesterday. It was stunning, last night, to hear from the Treasurer that the new government does not have a plan. It is like it turned up after the election, on 28 August, and thought 'Oh, okay, what will we do now?'

Mr Gunner has taken a day off during his very first sittings as Chief Minister to head off on his very first overseas junket, with no clear plan but plenty of colour and movement to create the impression of activity.

Mr Gunner has introduced a big, expensive new talk fest, another cynical exercise in colour and movement.

The Chief Minister has also, without consultation, substantially increased operating costs for hundreds of businesses across the Territory overnight, at the flick of a pen and on instruction from his union masters. He has introduced two massive hits to small businesses through his surprise public holiday announcement.

This goes to the heart of the approach by the new Labor government—so much pretence about the interest of the worker while it is completely ignoring the businesses responsible for creating the jobs.

This is the point: Labor deferred a consultation because it genuinely has no grasp of the issues at the core of business and jobs. When it comes to its union mate it is only too willing to act quickly.

Mr Gunner has spoken with great sentimentality about his heartbreak at seeing his friends leave the Territory and his strong desire to have them stay. It will take a lot more than sentimentality to create the economic environment necessary to ensure growth of business and real job creation.

It beggars belief that the Chief Minister talked about attracting workers to the Northern Territory when he bent to the will of the unions on these new public holidays. It was a disingenuous excuse, and an exercise in cynicism that he would attempt to make that argument.

Tell us, Chief Minister, how exactly the Territory is a more attractive place for workers when those businesses are closed on Christmas Eve and there will be no one working that night because businesses have to close. How does that make sense? We have already heard that the Pearl, Hanuman and Little Miss Korea will all be closed. There is no work, Chief Minister. You just killed it dead.

This new Labor government is a real worry. Local businesses are worried; the Territory economy is at a halt and we are all very concerned for Territory jobs.

In summary, I will give the Gunner government its report card. So far you have killed tradie jobs by axing the \$2000 trade voucher scheme; 450 jobs at INPEX have gone and we have not heard a peep from the government; 150 people at a minimum—I know from speaking to people at the Palmerston Markets—have left the mining industry as a result of your moratorium on jobs, and jobs are gone on New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve, thanks to your surprise union announcement about public holidays.

The only jobs this government has created in two months, and probably will create in its whole term in government, is jobs for its backbenchers—calling them assistant ministers—and jobs for the boys upstairs.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Madam Speaker, it is fantastic to follow after that inspirational speech by the Member for Spillett, the Deputy Opposition Leader.

I am very happy to talk about jobs for Territorians and the growth of those jobs. It is interesting that the so-called opposition members are not in here to listen to any of this. They just came in to throw some accusations and ill-informed opinions about the new government.

I will not be saying 'a new government' for much longer because we are getting on with the job. We have been given the opportunity by Territorians, and we respect that. Unlike the former government, we care about Territorians. We want to show Territorians, through our actions—and we were conscious of that through our campaign and our term in opposition. Instead of pushing our own agendas, we brought the issues and voices of Territorians in here to hold the government to account. I am sure the Independents will more so be the true opposition at some stage and will hold this government to account. That is their job. We took that job very seriously for four years. It is a job where you have to bring the community's voices forward.

We are an elected government of 18 members. I have already stated many times during this first sittings that I am very proud to be a member of an 18-strong NT Labor Party government. We are getting the job done.

In opposition I said many times that I hoped when ministers were saying, 'You did nothing for four years; you did nothing at all', that in two years' time they would not still be blaming us. I said, 'Before you realise it, it will be the last year of your term, and you are still blaming us. That means you are not getting on with your own job.' That certainly was the case over the last four years. We are very conscious of that.

The change of politics we have seen around the country, with one-term governments in Queensland, Victoria and the Territory, sends a reminder, and almost a threat, to all political parties in Australia that you must firstly tell the voter—in our case Territorians—what your plans are for your four years if you are elected. You must address their issues through consultation, sell that to Territorians by listening and saying, 'Is this what we want to achieve?', and when you get into government, as we have—on the first day we were working on the plans we told Territorians about.

Do we have to make tough decisions? Yes. That is what governments do. The previous government made tough decisions. Will we bring Territorians along for that journey? Yes, as much as we can, because we will consult with them. Over the next three or four years we will hear many times, as we have already, about the open and transparent government we will be. We will be faced with some issues; that happens in government. Decisions will be made on a daily basis that not all Territorians will agree with, but at least we will have listened to them.

Everybody in Cabinet's door is open, as is mine and each other member's, but not in the way of the former Member for Fong Lim. He said, 'If you donate to my campaign, my door is open for you'. We are very conscious of that. We have already started setting up an ICAC, which will create jobs in the Territory, which I am here talking about. It will create jobs.

I will speak, firstly, on the portfolios I have been given as the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. I am proud to be in Cabinet. I am the Member for Johnston and I take that very seriously, and, once again, I thank the people of Johnston for having faith in me.

The Michael Gunner Labor government has stressed to Territorians that we have three key commitments around children, restoring trust, and jobs. We have already hit the ground running and we are working on those three areas.

My key role is the maintenance and creation of jobs across the Northern Territory. Why is a job so important? Having a job is important not only to Territorians, but to anyone around the world. We always underestimate the therapeutic benefits of having a job—feeling part of something and being proud of yourself, whatever that job entails. Your job could be getting rid of buffel grass in Central Australia or working in a cafe in Darwin, Timber Creek or Maningrida. We do not focus enough on the therapeutic benefits of having a job. We all know that if you have a job you can bring money home to the family, which puts food on the table.

Having a job also gives you opportunities and choices, such as where you want to live and where you can buy a home. Sometimes it is about if you can buy a home. I am very proud of this government for reinstating the First Home Owner Grant for existing properties, giving people an opportunity to get into the market. We were astounded that the previous government introduced it for new properties. At some level, after talking to people, I understand why they introduced that policy. Many hard-working Territorians were not able to get into the market. That is not what a government does. We should encourage everyone to have the opportunity if they want to buy a home in Alawa, Moil, Jingili, Tennant Creek, Braitling, Ngukurr or Numbulwar, wherever they want to buy a house ...

Ms Nelson: Or Katherine.

Mr VOWLES: Or Katherine. Sorry, Member for Katherine.

You have that choice to buy your home—and what you can afford. I thought it was outrageous that your job could determine where you live. If you want to enter the market, have saved hard by doing a job that is not very highly paid, or maybe it is highly paid, but you do not have the choice where you live—in regard to our policy on reinstating the First Home Owner Grant, we have already heard from the Treasurer that there are 29 applicants already. That is a fantastic outcome in just 60 days of government.

I have talked about the therapeutic benefits, but it is not just that; it is about having a sense of purpose to get out of bed in the morning and high self-esteem. We talk about role models in jobs—I remember working for Batchelor Institute and then in community education and community justice policy in the Department of Justice, under a fantastic director who is, sadly, not with us anymore. When I got there it was, 'Let's get an AFL player, someone we can take out to remote Indigenous communities where the kids will aspire to be footy players; they will tell them how good it is to have a job.' I used to think we were on the wrong track. That might work sometimes, but we will end up with aspiring footy players who can kick a ball for 90-odd minutes on a Saturday. What does that relate to in Aboriginal communities in regard to jobs?

I used to think we should have a local role model who has a job. It could be the local Aboriginal Community Police Officer or a local, born and raised resident who is working as a teacher's assistant, or even a teacher. How about we highlight them as role models, not some fly-in fly-out AFL player who does not even live in the Territory.

Let's change this up a bit. I was fortunate that Charlie King came on board and we worked on the No More campaign together. Let's get local role models. We had a lot of issues in communities that we needed to

talk about and we just needed the model and the opportunity to do that. That was a real turning point, especially in the way I looked for role models to work with us.

Let's look at someone in the community who has a job, who was born and raised there and has all those family commitments, the good and bad, which happen not only in remote communities but across the Territory, and let's get them on board. We can talk about their journey of growing up in a remote community and the issues and the advantages, and what that means.

What a story to tell. 'I grew up in Papunya. I was born here, was sent to Alice Springs to make sure I was all good then I came back to the community. I went to the local school and I loved school so much. I thought it was important that we keep the pool open. We provided the opportunity for our young children to learn how to swim so I did a swimming course and now I have been employed by the local council to be employed in that area.'

I think it is more beneficial hearing those stories from role models than it is to listen to some footy player who is earning \$500 000 a year and flies out on a charter. I have always stressed the importance of local role models.

Now I move on to my area, my portfolios, especially the mining sector. I am responsible for mining and energy exploration and production, as well as the primary industries of horticulture, forestry, fishing, pastoral production, export of primarily cattle—but now we have seen a growing market. The previous government worked quite hard in this space and I will give it credit for that. It worked quite hard on growing and establishing ...

VISITORS
Nightcliff School Students

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of some more lovely Nightcliff school students. I hope you enjoy your time at Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr VOWLES: Are there any names so we can shame people we know up there?

Ms Fyles: Jonty is up there.

Mr VOWLES: Jonty. He is pretty tough, we hear.

Madam Speaker, it is important that those students are here, listening to what this Labor government plans to do in regard to jobs. In a few years, after they finish university or a program somewhere, they will have opportunities, a vibrant community and a strong economy that is run by a strong government which is not afraid to make tough decisions for their future. Enjoy the rest of your tour, children.

I was talking up the former government and speaking about the hard work it did in establishing and trying to grow the buffalo market into Asia. Mr Zhung and his export company received the biggest shipment of buffalo from the Territory into Vietnam last month. That was a real step forward. I think it was 500 buffalo that went across.

Across resources and primary industry we account for \$5bn. I think one-fifth of the Territory economy comes out of resources and primary industry. My key contribution towards creating and maintaining jobs for Territorians will be to facilitate development of these key industries. If industries grow, more jobs will be created for Territorians.

Consistent with the commitments we made, it is not just what you do as a government that counts but how you do it. Unlike the CLP government, this government is committed to listening to and engaging with Territorians through key strategic initiatives, such as economic summits. As well as my strong engagement with sectors and constituents, I will make sure I listen to the ideas and thoughts of the community—and the best way to create jobs within my portfolios. It is not just about facilitating an environment where more jobs are created. We need to ensure the existing jobs are maintained.

A strong mining and gas sector means more jobs for Territorians. The Michael Gunner government is focused on supporting and advancing growth in the mining and gas industry in a responsible way that engages regularly with industry and the community.

I will give you a personal example of employment and the mining industry. My brother, Robbie—I am very proud of him. I will not say he was wayward in his youth, but he enjoyed himself as a young fella, and he found his way. He found a fantastic partner in Tara and they have two beautiful kids, my niece and nephew. I am very proud of them. The Clare Martin government brought INPEX to our harbour, which has allowed my brother to work in that industry without leaving his home, the place where he was born and raised, and which he loves. He is able to drop his children off in the morning.

Mr Wood: He goes there without leaving his home? How does he get to work?

Mr VOWLES: He does not have to leave the Territory; his home is the Territory, Member for Nelson. His home is Darwin.

Mr Wood: I just thought that would be a bit difficult.

Mr VOWLES: I know it is a bit difficult, but he is a very skilled young man. He probably could try that.

My brother, Robbie, wanted to get into that industry and was able to because we have a strong mining sector here with INPEX. He works there—so he can go home after work and tuck his children into bed. That is important.

I have a 22-year-old, a 17-year-old and a 15-year-old. If they want to enter that industry they do have to fly somewhere else; they can study here at Charles Darwin University and then go on to work in the Northern Territory. That is a fantastic opportunity for not only my family and my brother and his family, but all the youth who are here. They have those opportunities and do not have to fly interstate or internationally to get those credentials. They can do it here in the Northern Territory and then work in the Territory.

There are many ways we will grow the mining and gas sectors. Stacking the odds of finding minerals, oil and gas in your favour makes a much more attractive exploration environment. We will focus on generating new information about the Territory's prospectivity that will open new areas for exploration and increase the likelihood of identifying previously unrecognised resources. To do this we will provide more detailed data sets to industry, which will enable them to direct more funds to a well-targeted drilling program, increase drilling and geophysical surveys in greenfield areas through co-funding of innovative exploration projects, and continue the efforts to attract large-scale investments in exploration and resource development from key international markets.

The above activities will stimulate the economy in the short and long term. Exploration activity in itself will create jobs. However, the bigger job outcomes will occur when commercially viable deposits and reservoirs are found and sites go into production.

The above activities will create jobs across the whole of the Territory, including the town I am about to talk about, the iconic Tennant Creek ...

Mr McCarthy: Hear, hear!

Mr VOWLES: ... which the Member for Barkly proudly represents in this Chamber. The Member for Barkly travels a lot around his enormous electorate. A key initiative of the Michael Gunner government is to support Tennant Creek's progression ...

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

Madam SPEAKER: I agree, Member for Barkly.

Motion agreed to.

Mr VOWLES: I am talking about Tennant Creek, why would he not? I will only give you another two minutes on Tennant Creek. That is all we could negotiate.

Tennant Creek is an important part of the government's plans. We want to make it a mining and service capital of the Northern Territory. We want Tennant Creek to grow as a vibrant and iconic town, which can only occur if there are sustainable, long-term jobs available for Territorians.

We give this undertaking to the Member for Barkly; we will try to do that. We will work together to have more people working in Tennant Creek, which will stimulate the economy for people who reside there.

We hear in the Territory, especially from interstate visitors, 'I am only doing three months here', and they are still here 20 or 30 years later. I think that will happen when people go to Tennant Creek, which is my cultural backyard. I am very serious about creating jobs in Tennant Creek.

The most sensible way to stimulate Tennant Creek's economy is not to reinvent the wheel, but to leverage off the existing and planned mining and gas initiatives as a means of creating and growing critical mass, thereby attracting other private investment into the area. Investment means jobs, which is what this government wants to do.

In addition to the mining and gas industry development initiatives mentioned above, we have identified a number of specific ways to create jobs in Tennant Creek—develop a plan to ensure 70% of the value of all contracts is awarded to local companies.

The estimated value of contacts around Tennant Creek over the next three years is between \$3m and \$5m. We will develop a plan to ensure 40% Indigenous employment for contracts associated with legacy mines programs in the Tennant Creek region.

Another key initiative of the government is to develop Katherine as an inland port focused on agribusiness, and we will work with the Member for Katherine on developing it as an inland port. I have the support of my colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, and will work on planning for significant investment in transport and logistic links in the region. The realisation of Katherine as an inland port, and investment, will create jobs in Katherine.

In addition to my ongoing work with the pastoral industry, which has formed one of the backbones of Katherine's development, my contribution will be to assist the development of the agribusiness sector. That will see more jobs. We want the industry to grow.

It is recognised that the agribusiness industries are to be key drivers in the Northern Territory economy and the creators of jobs. We need to undertake a strategic approach and rigorous analysis of which markets should be targeted for development, not the thought-bubble policies we have seen over the last four years. To grow the industry and create jobs we will research individual commodity demand and supply trends through Asia and opportunities to exploit our competitive advantage. We will identify the policy protocols and logistics hurdles that will need to be addressed to participate in identifying markets of interest.

In partnership with the industry, we will implement a market development plan across the various commodity groups and identified markets. It is about getting the produce to market, and if we cannot make that an attractive investment—there is no need to say we will make Katherine the inland port and Tennant Creek the mining capital of the Northern Territory if it is not commercially viable and will not get your product to the market at a price that will be competitive with the rest of the country. This government is serious about identifying and creating new markets.

Let me talk about fishing—\$50m into a recreational fishing infrastructure program over the next four years. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition will ask me that question about Dundee boat ramp again. 'What are you doing to finish Dundee boat ramp?' We will finish it! That is what we will do. I will not give a date yet, but it will happen soon. I will invite the Leader of the Opposition when we open it because I know he wants that boat ramp completed. He supports it. Unlike the previous government, we will not play little petty games by not inviting them and not acknowledging them at functions—when I am sitting here and they are there with members of their team.

We want an open and transparent government. What does that mean? I will invite the Leader of the Opposition, the local representative for Dundee, and anybody else who wants to come along. The opening of Dundee boat ramp will be a magnificent announcement because it opens up better opportunities for recreational fishers and families to enjoy it.

What are the spinoffs from spending \$50m? I am about to run out of time, but there is a long list of things. We will upgrade the boat ramps at Channel Island and Shady Camp; build the Dundee boat ramp; install

CCTV cameras and new toilets at Dinah Beach; upgrade parking at Middle Arm boat ramp; put in artificial reefs and attraction devices; and increase land fishing platforms around Darwin and Palmerston.

What are the spinoffs from spending \$50m on recreation and infrastructure? These are spinoffs for tourism. The government had a fantastic initiative with the Million Dollar Fish campaign. Right off the bat we said we would support that, and we will continue to support it. We have seen the growth of that initiative; it is going well. More people want to come here and fish. They are filling their boats up at service stations, buying ice and bait, and getting their cars and boats serviced.

There are other areas that need to be addressed. If someone hits a reef and they need to fix their boat and service the trailer—there are lots of spinoffs. We might only be investing \$50m in infrastructure, but that means more people will use facilities and other businesses. We are very proud of our commitment and I am sure recreational fishers in the NT are happy with that.

We recently introduced our Buy Local plan, which means these packages will create more jobs for Territorians. These jobs will be created in the short term during the planning and construction stages, and in the mid-term through spinoffs arising from increased visitors to the NT.

I want to touch on Indigenous employment. I think it is important for us to keep focused on increasing the number of Indigenous people in jobs not only in the public sector, but across the Territory.

The mango industry is looking for people to work, or else their crops will rot on the ground. We need to encourage people to look after our industries. The therapeutic benefits of having a job far outweigh the negatives.

The Department of Primary Industry and Resources has an Indigenous employment rate of 6.8%. We need to do better there. The previous government wanted the same outcomes and we will push for that. I would love to see 20%. I think we have 10%—we said we will create 500 more jobs for teachers and nurses as well.

Our new government needs to ensure, as did the previous government, that we have a plan. We do have a plan. We have Indigenous cadetships—in December 2015 we had three trainees graduate and commence full-time employment within the department. We have jobs in aquaculture, sea cucumber ranching in open sea, and rock oyster and clam farming. The Fisheries Division has 12-month contracts with Charles Darwin University to support a trial rock oyster project on the Tiwi Islands.

This is how the government is creating jobs. We have a plan to get more Territorians working. We will do everything we can to make that happen.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs. As the Minister for Territory Families I know that investment in our Territory families is an investment in our future for the quality of life for our Territory kids, to strengthen our Territory families, celebrate our unique Territory multiculturalism, grow strong men and women, keep our older Territorians here with their families, and for the growth of the Territory.

Before the election Territory Labor promised it would provide certainty of funding to NGOs through five-year grants. The non-government sector provides vital support for some of our most vulnerable Territorians: those with disabilities; young Territorians; older Territorians; mothers and babies; and women and children at risk from violence. The NGO sector helps Territorians who are often at the most difficult time of their lives, who have had life throw them a curve ball and need a helping hand. These are the Territorians who are most vulnerable to falling through the cracks. Those who are most likely to be supported by the non-government sector are those who are least likely to seek support from government services. Territorians trust our NGO sector.

I am proud to have spent the last portion of my career in the non-government sector. Before entering the Legislative Assembly I was a social worker, most recently running the Alice Springs Women's Shelter for eight years. I still consider myself a social worker, only now I am making my contribution to our community as a proud member of this Territory Labor government.

I say this from firsthand experience: five-year funding will make a massive difference to employment in the NGO sector. It will significantly help NGOs serve the most vulnerable people in our community. NGOs rarely have enough people to do this important work. Believe me, NGOs know how to make every dollar go a very long way.

Too often NGOs start work on important programs and make a real impact with early momentum, only to fall short in the long run because the funding runs out. What tends to happen is NGOs are told either they have lost the funding for the coming year or that the grant they are receiving is finished. This then leaves the leaders of our NGO sector spending their time stuck in offices, writing submissions, instead of delivering services to the people who need it most.

The first thing I did at the start of every November was review the contracts coming up the following June and plan how I would manage regaining or losing that money. This was an enormous part of my work; in fact, I would say I spent half my year managing and advocating purely around funding. For the majority of the eight years I ran the Alice Springs Women's Shelter, the majority of our funding was spent on one-year contracts. Every year I spent six months chasing dollars that I could have been spending with my team on developing innovative responses to women experiencing domestic and family violence, evaluating what we were doing and doing real work, not paperwork.

With no surety of funding, how can you engage with vulnerable Territorians who have seen the programs come and go? Believe me, people have seen programs come and go. More importantly, how do you retain high-quality, passionate staff? Those of us who have worked in the NGO sector are all too familiar with the excessively high turnover in the sector.

I cannot tell you the number of times in the NGO sector that I have encountered this familiar scenario. You recruit a brand-new worker—shiny, fresh, excited, engaged and wanting to make a difference—and they are thrilled to be in your organisation. You hire them in a role that has a particular line of funding. This new worker takes training and support at first, but you invest in your worker because you want the clients to receive a high-quality service. Over time they become valued members of your strong team. This worker builds strong relationships with the community, clients, stakeholders and networks across the sector, developing invaluable knowledge of key issues. Then the funding contract comes up for renewal. Sometimes it might be informal; sometimes you just do not know; sometimes you are not signing contracts until June.

You have a responsibility to tell the worker that their job is on the line, even though you might not be sure. There were certainly times where I would think, 'Surely the government will not refrain from giving the Alice Springs Women's Shelter money', but you still have to be up front with your staff and say, as a responsible employer, that you are not sure what will happen on 1 July. What do workers then do? They find a more secure job. Therefore, they take those skills and relationships, which you have invested in, to another job or a different industry, state or territory. The Territory then loses good people. It loses their social and intellectual capital. This is a brain drain.

Let us not forget that the vast majority of NGO workers are women on low wages. This was very clear in one great Australian services union—of which I am a proud member. It determined that the equal pay of that area was purely because of gender. Community services workers were paid less because it was a predominately female workforce. That was a really important decision by the Fair Work Commission. Many of these women are at an age where they are planning to start a family, buy a house and settle down.

We want to keep these workers in the Territory. We want them to build a life in the Territory, put down roots in our communities, start a family, build and grow those non-government organisations and grow our community with their skills, time and commitment. These are the people we want in the Territory, people who are committed and care about what they do. They care about others and their community. These are the Territorians we want to invest in.

This Northern Territory Labor government's decision to sign off on five-year funding for two of our peak NGO bodies will go a long way to help people who work in the sector to stay in the Territory permanently and put down roots. It means our most vulnerable will continue to benefit from their experience, skills and expertise.

It is not only good social policy, it has significant social impacts. The Member for Blain said yesterday that he thought our social policy was pretty good. I find it interesting that he separates out the social policy from economic outcomes, because we know good social policy drives economic outcomes.

In short, the surety of funding for NGOs means new, stable jobs and that you have workers who are prepared to put down roots. This is important, alongside our first home buyer grant, because not only do people know they have a contract for five years, they also have the opportunity to invest in a new home. Young professionals in Alice Springs have told me that the new first home buyer grant we are investing in, which provides stamp duty relief, as well as the \$10 000 to spend on renovating an existing home, is an

important part of their decision to stay in the Territory. Those workers are often locked out of the property market in the big cities of Melbourne and Sydney, but they might be able to afford a home in Alice Springs, and have good, strong career prospects. This will help people stay in our regions, which is vital.

Last week my colleague, the Deputy Chief Minister, announced an additional \$340 000 a year in funding and two new NT government-funded policy positions with the Northern Territory Council of Social Services, or NTCOSS. The response from NTCOSS has been quite humbling to our government. Those workers know the impact their work has on Territorians and the future of the Territory. They know that the investment in the work they do will have far-reaching ramifications for those Territorians who are often left behind, and that their work is likely to lead to better outcomes not only for the current generation, but the next generation and the generation after that.

We know about the strong social outcomes that grow from engaging people in work, investing in children in their early years, supporting young women and girls to reach their full potential, providing adequate support for people with mental health issues, and supporting Territorians with a disability. We know good social policy drives the economy.

Last week we also funded the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, or APONT. APONT does a fantastic job, representing the issues and needs of Aboriginal organisations across the Northern Territory. APONT comprises the Central Land Council, the Northern Land Council, NAAJA, CAALAS and AMSANT. APONT will receive \$250 000 per year for the next five years so it can keep up its great work in providing cross-sector responses to the very real issues facing Aboriginal people in the Territory.

We have to do better in the area of service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Territory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have worse legal, housing, educational and employment outcomes than other Territorians. We need the skills and knowledge of this non-government organisation to stay in the Territory and we need secure jobs to do that. This government is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal owned and operated organisations. That is where the skill is on the ground, and we are committed to that, especially in Territory Families.

Let us not forget the valuable contributions made by our seniors. All around the world we have seen the valuable contribution to national economies of senior citizens. This NT Labor government values older Territorians and the contributions they have made to building the Territory and, indeed, continue to make. Let us not forget that we are talking about the people who, in many cases, helped rebuild Darwin in the wake of Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Day in 1974. We owe a great debt of gratitude. Darwin would not be what it is today if it were not for them.

Before the election we made a commitment to senior Territorians to reduce the cost of living and improve wellbeing and lifestyle; although, it is hard to improve on this great Territory lifestyle. We will make it better for senior Territorians because we value them and the contributions they make not only to the workforce as workers, but also in supporting workers through unpaid childcare for grandchildren and other relatives. Senior Territorians are carers; they may not need to be cared for. One of the main reasons people leave the Territory, as pointed out by the Chief Minister, is to be closer to their family.

As someone with a young child and not always having backup for childcare, I understand the temptation. In Alice Springs I know many people who have chosen to go back to where they grew up because of that support. It seems to be the second child that tips people over the edge. The first they can manage, but then they have the second and they are out the door. We need to make sure we keep the grandparents in the Territory. If we do, we will also attract families back. Several members of our staff on the fifth floor have come back from interstate, saying it was the second child that tipped them over and they are really glad to be here and get the support from the grandparents.

It is also about the important relationship children have with their grandparents. I was fortunate enough to grow up next to my grandmother; that was a very important relationship for me. It is a relationship we need to value. If we have Territorians staying and retiring here, the grandchildren will stay.

We need to provide better retirement options for seniors if we want them to stay and not go down south. We need to provide different options for different people. In my electorate one of the big concerns is that women who have been on lower wages throughout their life do not have as much access to superannuation, particularly if they have been renting all their life. That transition to retirement is quite difficult because they cannot afford to pay rent on a pension. There are some difficult transitions. Many of my colleagues who run homelessness services on the east coast have told me that the biggest growing

group is older women as they leave the workforce and lose the ability to pay in the private rental sector. We need to provide a range of flexible options for people when they head to retirement.

Importantly, one of our commitments was to increase the concession for senior Territorians. From July 2017 we will increase the current \$500 travel concession for Territorians to \$700 per person every two years. This scheme will also give senior Territorians greater freedom to use the \$700 in a way that meets their needs. It can be used for travel, power bills or motor vehicle registration. We will work with senior Territorians to look at the range of things they want to spend that \$700 on.

We aim to help senior Territorians with the cost of living because they are significant in the Territory. We need to support senior Territorians and make the Territory an attractive place to live. We want to retain people here. It is important for us to realise that senior Territorians contribute to the economy. They are not shopping on the Internet; they are going to the shops and buying things from local traders. That is an important part of our economy.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move an extension of time for the member.

Motion agreed to.

Ms WAKEFIELD: The idea of keeping experienced, older workers in the workplace has been embraced around the world. It is about making sure we are taking full advantage of their valuable knowledge, skills and expertise, particularly to share with the younger generation of workers. It makes complete sense. We need to embrace the concept in government and the private sector.

When seniors want to retire we need to provide suitable pathways to transition to retirement. Investing in our seniors is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. We are really looking forward to working with COTA NT on this project. I spoke with Graeme Bevis this week, who is such a strong advocate for seniors in the Territory, and I am really looking forward to having a productive relationship with him.

Finally, I want to talk about the economic benefits of multiculturalism. We need to grow our population. We need new Territorians to come to the Territory, and many of those new Territorians were born elsewhere. That is a really important economic driver and one of the ways forward for the Territory.

My experience of living in Alice Springs over the last 12 years is that I can see the face of Alice Springs has changed—and I think we have done it very well. We are very accepting of people. People have really embraced our fantastic Territorian lifestyle and, with both hands, grabbed the opportunities that are here in the Territory across the board.

New Territorians have put their roots down in Territory soil, which is very encouraging and positive for our future. New Territorians will work in our schools, for government and in the private sector. Many people have started their own businesses, and I think that is an important driver of our economy because we understand the importance of small businesses.

I am very proud to be responsible for men's and women's policy as part of my portfolio. Gender equity has been an important part of Labor governments across Australia, and it will be an important part of this Northern Territory Government. I am immensely proud to be part of the first female-dominated Cabinet in Australia. I think that is fantastic.

Mr Wood: Dominated does not sound like a good word.

Ms WAKEFIELD: Sorry, majority female-led government.

Research shows that businesses with strong female leaders and representation on the board do better economically and cope with changes, and there is a reduction in the gender pay gap. This is important. After listening to comments this morning—one of the most common themes that I heard from women while we were running the election was that they were sick of the boys' club run by the CLP. Very conservative women came up to me and said, 'I have voted CLP all my life and I cannot tolerate this boys' club mentality'. I am very proud to be part of a team that will get rid of that. That is important because female participation is an important driver of the economy.

This is not just about feeling good; this is about the evidence which shows us that the more women participate in the economy, the better the whole economy is. I am looking forward to helping to deliver flexible workplace practices, ensuring that both men and women have the opportunity to parent. It is very important that we have as many fathers fathering as possible and flexible workplace practices to enable that.

The other important thing to recognise is that supporting women through domestic and family violence often keeps them in the workforce. Many women experiencing domestic and family violence are in the workforce when they experience the difficulties and stress of domestic and family violence. Quite often it spills into the workplace, where they are put under significant pressure not to attend work or are harassed in the workplace. This is a very important thing because once women fall out of the workforce through domestic and family violence, getting back in is very difficult.

We need to make sure we intervene early and support women to be part of the economy, because that is part of the recovery from domestic and family violence. I want it to be clear that Territory Families is an important part of the economy and the future of jobs in the Northern Territory. We need to make sure we keep a lens on the department, and that it is not a cost to the budget but an important driver of the economy.

If we want a strong and healthy workforce moving forward, and to have the workers who are able to do the jobs we need them to, we need to make sure we give them the right support not only early in life, but throughout their lifespan. That is what Territory Families is all about.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Braitling. I listened carefully to what she had to say and I agreed with most of it. If you asked me what I did not agree with I probably could not tell you, but I want to make sure I have a bit of room to move. I do not want to be held up for everything she said. I would get really embarrassed if I did not agree.

I come from a different point of view. I have seen many of these documents come before parliament from all governments. I sometimes wonder if we should get back to basics about jobs. Jobs come from the government. In the Territory we live in a bit of a fool's paradise because more of the money that employs us comes from the GST, from taxpayers across Australia. Budget year after budget year in the Commonwealth you will hear the richer states complain about the amount of money the Territory takes compared to other states. We receive a much higher amount of money per capita from the Commonwealth than any other state. I do not think we can live in the sort of regime that believes that will continue forever and a day.

We have to develop an economy that produces its own revenue. We talk about NGOs, which are funded by the Commonwealth, indirectly or directly. Many of our Aboriginal communities, if it was not for Commonwealth and Territory funding, would not exist. Well, they would exist but they would not have employment or a lot of other things. Even though people have jobs—they might work at the local shop, garage or building site—generally speaking, it is only because the Commonwealth puts money into the NT.

We have to make sure people, especially those in remote communities, understand that this money does not fall out of a tree; it comes from other parts of Australia. That is not to say other parts of Australia are not willing to give that money. I would be the first to say that in areas of low economic development, like some of the remote communities where you have to develop industries slowly, you have to invest. There is no doubt about that, but where do we start to produce our own revenue? Where will the jobs come from that are not reliant on Commonwealth funding? We should focus on that area when we talk about jobs.

I worked on Aboriginal communities for a long time and my job was dependent on Commonwealth funding. I worked at Nguiu shire council when it first started and all the money came from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs; it was dependent on that. If the Commonwealth did not give us money we did not have a shire; then neither the local people nor I had a job.

I am interested to see from a government's point of view how you will develop an economy that is not reliant on Commonwealth funding. We look down the long path and see the risk that other states might gang up on the Northern Territory and say, 'Enough is enough. We have poured money into the Northern Territory; we keep doing it and we do not see any change in the way the economy operates from a private perspective versus a government perspective.' That is an area we need to look at.

The problem is that sometimes we think the Territory should be left in a pristine state. I used to grow vegetables. I hated knocking down trees, but did it anyway. I have always said that if you have a good

reason to produce a farm that grows vegetables and fruit, then that is fair enough. It is not about the amount of land clearing or damage you do; it is the quality. In other words, you do it for the right reasons and in a way that will not cost future generations.

Everything we do will have an environmental impact. If you think the Territory will stay as a pristine national park because that is how you think it should be—it is very hard for the economy to grow unless it develops the Northern Territory. If it is about tourism—the Member for Katherine was worried about a skywalk. I was going to say to her that I went to a couple of national parks around Vancouver last year, and they develop those parks to encourage more people to come. They had a wind turbine in one park where you could walk around the top of it and view the whole of Vancouver city. They also have zip lines going across valleys. Having a zip line across Katherine Gorge would be interesting.

Ms Nelson: As long as it does not cost \$10m.

Mr WOOD: That is right, but you also have to invest; that might be in mining, tourism or horticulture.

I heard the minister for Primary Industry's speech and I agree with him; jobs are therapeutic. Jobs give people pride in themselves and in their community. I have said, many times, there should not be unemployment in the Northern Territory. The council should receive the funds that go through the government's training groups as well as NGOs. Our local councils have great opportunities to be the main employment agencies for places where there is no economy—I am talking from a private point of view—and where there is a need for jobs. Our local councils have a major role in doing that.

The Territory is rich in agriculture, mining, national parks and beautiful landscapes. We cannot hope that will encourage or grow our economy as it is; we also have to develop those parts of our economy in a proper way. But we have to start to grow an economy that will not be reliant on the Commonwealth.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

MOTION **Note Statement – Jobs**

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, before lunch I was talking about development of the Northern Territory. I mentioned that, even though we all love the Territory, if you are to develop it there will be some changes to it. Some of these changes can affect the environment, but if we are to develop industries and have less reliance on the GST from the Commonwealth Government, then we have to start looking at other ways of encouraging our own economy to stand up on its own two feet.

The Tiwi Islands are a classic example. They have had their ups and downs and a bit of government support. It has not been that easy, but the Tiwi Islands have used their land to develop a woodchip industry. If it is run properly, that should be a sustainable industry for many years.

There was a fair bit of controversy when it first started. The environmental people were concerned about land clearing and the original company went broke. But it is now up and running.

Some of Nhulunbuy's issues go back a long time. Nhulunbuy's bauxite industry has had some environmental issues because it required land to be cleared, but you would also hope that land will be rehabilitated when mining finishes. It has also brought benefits to the community. There has been discussion about who should receive those benefits, but it has brought forward those benefits in the form of royalties.

In Jabiru the uranium mine is not necessarily on Aboriginal land per se, but land in the area has been used by the mining company that is owned by the traditional owners. For instance, there is a boarding school at Jabiru which was funded by ERA. People do not know that. So there are benefits for people when developing their own land.

We have to look at the big question, which is that we fund a lot of communities in the NT that have no economic base at all. They are there because it is people's country and they want to live there. We have to be careful that there is no expectation that the government will fund those forever and a day. There is no

guarantee the federal government will continue to fund the NT the way it is funded today. Even though we might think it should, politics comes into it because states have a fair bit to say in the way Commonwealth funds are distributed.

Instead of waiting for something to happen, we need to make sure we are working proactively to develop industries in the NT. We talk about onshore gas, which is an important industry. If it can be done in a way that will not affect the environment, then we should look at it as a possibility.

I interjected when the Member for Barkly was speaking yesterday. We will have a pipeline going from Tennant Creek to Mount Isa, and there has been some discussion about the phosphate mine and the possibility of using that gas to develop the phosphate into a product the company can sell. That creates employment.

I am concerned that we have a head-in-the-sand attitude to these types of changes. People see them as a threat to the environment and, because of that, we should not do it. Instead of being clever enough to say, 'Hang on; in this day and age we have the technology. We should have learnt from others' mistakes that we can do things correctly.'

If we want to put our hand up as a smart Territory—we are saying we support development and jobs—we do it in a way that will not cost future generations a lot of money because we will put in the right controls and look at the science to make sure there is as little risk as possible. No one can say there is no risk; that is just silly. A plane could land on top of this building. You do not expect it to and you can think the risk is not there, but theoretically it could happen. You can say there is no risk, but that would be stupid.

We have to look at developments. It is good to see, for instance, Indigenous cattle stations. That is fantastic. I visited the one at Mistake Creek, and there are a couple of others out towards Edith River. They are good things that should be promoted. The live cattle industry is important as it is making money for the Northern Territory. Aboriginal people should be part of that. If they can use their land to be part of it—they own 50% of the NT under inalienable freehold title—we should encourage that.

I think local communities should take some responsibility for building their own houses. The minister for Housing talked about a big program the government has introduced, but I have asked before why we are not promoting Aboriginal communities to take control of building houses out of their own materials. We do not need a pile of blocks or timber to come from Darwin on a barge.

There is a sawmill in Nhulunbuy, or close to it, where they produce some of their own timber. Daly River used to build its own bricks at its local brick factory. If you go to Daly River today and look at the old houses which have been through I do not know how many floods, you can see they are still standing perfectly. They were handmade bricks from a handmade machine. They made the bricks with sand from the Daly River.

Somebody came along and said, 'You cannot take any more sand'. I do not know who made that bureaucratic decision, but if you know the size of the Daly River and the level of the floods each year—the small amount of sand they took from the sand bar was just a pimple. People get worried about the effects on the environment; I agree, but keep things in perspective, otherwise we will end up doing nothing. I still think we need to go down this path because, as with Aboriginal housing, it mainly focuses on large communities.

There are outstations—I went to the Emu Point outstation last year; some friends of mine live there and they invited me out. There are young people sitting around for half the day doing nothing. There are houses there with too many people in them, but because it is called an outstation it does not get any funding for housing. If there is some sand and gravel down the road, these people, with the right equipment, could start building their own houses. They are then employed and using some of their local materials, and they can build a house to their design. They would need a qualified person to make sure the house is level and does not fall down, but there are opportunities there which we are not using. There is no work in that community except for keeping the place clean.

I go back to what I was saying. You have these places with little or no economy. If you allow people to live there, at least create some artificial economy by giving them the ability to build their own houses. They used to have cattle there. I do not know if there were some political reasons for this, but Emu Point does not have cattle anymore. I am not fully knowledgeable of the facts behind that.

There are other concerns, and the minister for Primary Industry raised an important issue—not always a popular issue—about the mango industry. Why can we not get people from the Northern Territory to pick mangoes? Why are we relying on backpackers? Some of our communities out bush have a 14% to 20% unemployment rate; it is a worry. Why are those people not being encouraged to take up some of these jobs? It is only seasonal work.

I went past Ali Curung watermelon farm a couple of years ago and there was a sign out the front saying 'pickers/workers wanted'. I thought, 'Just down the road is Ali Curung community, and here is a commercial watermelon farm asking for people to work'.

I asked the CLC people involved in Centrefarm what the story is. They said, 'People do not want to do that kind of work. It is too hard. We want to grow pomegranates.' I asked why and they said, 'Well, that is a tree that only needs to be picked once and that is it'. The problem I have with this is if we are to overcome this disadvantage and be less reliant on the Commonwealth giving us money—if we keep doing it, to some extent it ends up being a cargo cult because people rely on it so much they forget that the money does not come from a bottomless pit.

As I said, politics in Australia might determine that the amount of money just goes down, and if we have not done the ground work with our own economy—a micro economy in a local community or a macro economy for the whole of the Territory—then we could be sitting high and dry. My focus is on the fact we need to create an economy of our own. We cannot just hope the future will rely on the taxation of the rest of Australia.

Another little issue—Nguiu is an example of where people have tried to buy their own houses. That is an option we need to work hard on. Leasing on Aboriginal land is not easy as it takes a lot of negotiation et cetera. If we say that people should have the same ability to buy a house in a town, then it has to be made a lot easier for them.

I have two Aboriginal communities in my electorate. Some of the houses are great and some are old; they have major social problems and there are issues about land ownership. I will raise this issue in the next sittings. The previous government completed two reviews about the town communities in my area. Nothing resulted from the first one; it just died. I wanted to be on that committee, or an observer, but the government would not let me, although I am the local member.

The then government then announced another review and handed it over to a company. I have not heard a thing about it. I asked some people, 'Have you been interviewed or asked about this inquiry?' They said no.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr WOOD: I am concerned about this because we are not getting anywhere. Until the ownership of that land is sorted out and people set up governance in those communities, the future of those communities will just go around and around, and it will not go anywhere.

People should be able to build or buy their own houses in some communities. We rely on the government to build public housing in most of our communities. Why can someone in that community not say, 'I lease that block of land. I will ask Abode New Homes to build a house for me'? They cannot. Why not?

Why should they not be able to say to whoever owns that house, 'Can I put my rent for that house into a fund to buy the house so I can gain ownership of it?' That keeps people in their community, gives them pride in their community and gives stability to the community. I digress slightly, but I was focusing on people building their own houses, if possible, because they creates employment, especially in the smaller communities.

In the Top End—I am not knocking the bottom end—we need to start placing emphasis on new technologies in the tropics. I have pushed for Weddell not only because I believe we should have another city, but it is an opportunity to build a city in the tropics that can be used as an example of how to build a sustainable and beautiful tropical city. We should be able to use our brains, and technology, to do that. That creates jobs in itself.

Down south we have the Desert Knowledge Precinct. Up here we should probably have a tropical savannah knowledge precinct that encourages new design in building. We have people like Alan Major, who owns a company called Tenax Energy and has been trying for some years to use tidal power in Clarence Strait off the Vernon Islands, and he has not achieved anything there yet. He has released some substantial information regarding what he thinks should happen there. He has been looking at using tidal power to produce hydrogen.

The Member for Barkly is interested in the idea of using solar power to produce hydrogen because it can end up as fuel for our vehicles, made from a renewable product. You could use tidal power, as this company wants to, to produce hydrogen and then send it to Japan—a clean fuel that Japan wants.

I have said a few things about communities and so on, but we have to lift ourselves up to a higher level and say, 'What is something we can think of that can be different for the Territory? What technologies can we look at in this part of the world that would attract people to come here?' Horticulture is the same—some years ago the Coastal Plains Research Station used to import varieties of cauliflower and cabbage from Taiwan to the Northern Territory. We do not see that anymore. Why not? Why are we not doing more work in hybridising crops that might be suitable for this part of the world? We seem to have lost a lot of the research powers that we used to have.

We have to be a bit more proactive in those sorts of things. People get worried and upset about GM. I am not one of those people; I do not believe all GM is good, but I believe in some cases it is good because it reduces the effect of things like insecticides on our society. I do not think it should be done without a lot of work beforehand, but it does have its benefits. We could at least be part of the work that can be done to produce crops that do not require as much insecticide or herbicide, and improve production.

It is difficult in the Northern Territory; we have Panama Disease and it has wiped our banana industry out, except near the Douglas Daly region. You can grow bananas there but it is much more expensive. We also have the cucumber mosaic virus, which has wiped out our crops in the Ord River region. We need an ongoing research and development centre in the tropics. This part of the tropics goes across the southern part of the equator and right across the world.

We have opportunities to use people from the university, scientists and so forth, to develop a research centre that can try to overcome some of these issues. We now have fusarium wilt in watermelons; I had never heard of that before. Now you have to graft watermelons—you used to put a seed in the ground and it grew a watermelon. It used to be easy to grow snake beans, but now you have to graft them because of fusarium wilt.

If we can overcome some of that we will reduce the cost of production and increase productivity. We will start to use our knowledge to sort our way through these issues and become a leader in this research and development. We seem to have gone away from how we were in the past. When looking at jobs, do not just look at them in certain areas, but look at other ways to attract people here because then we can become the centre of excellence in some of these areas.

I thank the government for its statement on jobs, but I do not think it has enough nitty gritty in it. It is about what we will do to address some of the issues in the programs we have, but if you make a statement on jobs you need to be a bit more concrete in what you are saying so people understand whether you are being theoretical or practical when talking about more jobs in the NT.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs. I will repeat what he said in his initial statement:

The Labor Party has a long and proud tradition of implementing policy that creates more opportunity and a more productive society. We believe that to create a stronger and more prosperous community we must invest in our greatest asset: our people. It means supporting all members of our community regardless of their social or economic status.

His opening remarks serve to reiterate sections of my inaugural speech, where I talked about breaking down barriers, as well equity and equality.

When my family and I immigrated to Australia in 1977 life definitely was not very easy. This was because we came from a country that was at war and had not progressed to the levels that Australia had, which meant my parents' skills were not on par with the skills of their counterparts here.

As I sat here over the last couple of days, listening to the Chief Minister and my colleagues speaking about jobs and the initiatives this Labor government will introduce, I could not help but think to myself, 'Imagine if we had a government like this in 1977, when we immigrated, that was investing in the whole community'.

I now turn to the economic future for Katherine. During the recent campaign, our leader, Michael Gunner, outlined a vision for Katherine as an inland port. We have heard it spoken about many times over the last couple of days. It is a centre for agribusiness, Defence and tourism, and is supported by infrastructure that provides strong links to the north, south, east and west. In recent decades Katherine has developed as a regional centre that contributes to numerous NT industries, including agriculture.

I commend our Chief Minister for acknowledging the potential of my wonderful electorate of Katherine. The Chief Minister has also outlined how we will develop a shared long-term vision for the Territory through the summit process that will include and grow our established industries, such as agribusiness.

One of our other industries is Defence. Over the years we have seen RAAF Base Tindal expand, and with that expansion we have experienced job opportunities for local businesses and tradespeople. With future investments, as has been detailed in the *White Paper on Developing Northern Australia*, I look forward to even more opportunities being made available for local businesses, and for tradespeople to be included in those projects.

In the tourism industry, iconic natural wonders such as the Nitmiluk National Park, the Katherine Gorge, Katherine Hot Springs—which has been further enhanced by new business ventures, such as the pop-up cafe. I have met hundreds of tourists over the last five years who have said that one of the many reasons they decided to come to the NT, and to places like Katherine, is for the natural, untouched landscapes such as Katherine Gorge and Nitmiluk National Park, where we have unencumbered walking trails, pristine swimming holes, unrestricted access to nature, and arts and culture, an industry which is very near and dear to me.

These are strong industries, but they will only grow with the support of planned and well-timed infrastructure improvements, such as the railway line to Mount Isa, which is opening new markets; the possibility of more airlines connecting us to Mount Isa, or even the new airport at Toowoomba in Queensland; and Project Sea Dragon, potentially the largest prawn farm in the world, which will see significant activity around Katherine.

The important outcome in this development is the use of local people as contractors and employees. This is what strengthens and grows a community, people being an integral part of the economic development close to them, not just being a spectator or a fly-in fly-out employee. This is what we mean when we talk about the Buy Local program.

I was delighted to hear the Chief Minister talk about supporting traditional owners, land councils and Aboriginal Territorians who want to start businesses and develop jobs on their own country. This is the type of partnership which will mean a great future for the Territory. For example, Enterprise Learning Projects established a clothing shop in the community of Jilkminggan. This government is committed to supporting those types of programs and social enterprise businesses throughout communities.

These are the discussions we need to continue, but, more importantly, it must be noted that these discussions around economic plans must include Aboriginal landholders and representative organisations such as the land councils. It is critical and a necessity to the future of the NT that every part of our community is engaged and participating in the growth of the NT.

I unequivocally support the Chief Minister when he says:

We make no apology for the breadth of this discussion and the time it will take.

Through the summit process we will co-develop long-term vision as well as short-, medium- and long-term priorities and actions to grow our priority established industries such as Defence-related industries, agribusiness, food processing and tourism. We will diversify our economy by growing emerging industry sectors such as health, especially tropical health, medicine and remote health service delivery; and creative industries, including art, culture and fashion, encouraging and supporting locally-based artisans to establish local businesses that will employ local artists.

The renewable energy industry will also diversify the economy through innovation and supporting our Territory enterprises to commercialise new products and services to increase trading investment, and strengthen attraction and facilitation of major projects.

We touch on supporting traditional owners, land councils and Aboriginal Territorians who want to develop jobs, businesses and industries on their own country and in communities. Our summit process will also help us to ensure we are upskilling and training Territorians for the jobs of the future. This government has put a lot of thought into these strategies. There has been a lot of discussion, consultation and research. We are not a shoot-from-the-hip government, nor are we a thought-bubble government. We will not be pressured into immediate gratification or delivery of demands as they come from across the floor.

We, as a government, will ensure we restore certainty to the economy. This government has made a number of undertakings to the community. We will create pragmatic policy based on evidence, and sensible policy based on consultation and cooperation with the community and stakeholders.

As much as members across the floor have criticised us on reviewing and consultation, and the amount of time it will take, once policy is determined we will not chop and change the policy without consultation. We will not rely on thought bubbles as a way to run government and we will ensure policy is being properly implemented.

Economic growth is the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life in many countries, which is very true for the Northern Territory. It encourages stability in our communities and keep people here in the Northern Territory.

We need to invest in our families, education for their children, and their health and safety. To do this we need to work on providing the right economic environment for the government and the private sector to create jobs and ensure people are able to be productive and engaged in our economy. It will also mean ensuring those jobs are safe, properly rewarded and sustainable. It even means that we will create new measures, such as creating legislation that makes Christmas and New Year's Eves count as half-day public holidays.

Happy employees equals better services being provided, better customer service, more returning customers and more profit. I cannot understand why anybody would have a problem with that concept.

This week our Chief Minister announced a further initiative for Territory Families, which was that 7 pm to 12 am on Christmas and New Year's Eves are to be public holidays. It is only fair that people who give up these nights to work, either for the government or private sector, deserve to be paid fairly and be rewarded.

As someone who has worked in the NGO sector for several years through frontline services like the women's legal services and shelters, I would have been so grateful if this was available at the time when I had to work on Christmas Eve or was called out to a job on New Year's Eve.

This government will definitely lead the way by ensuring that nurses, police, firefighters and others who work at this time are supported for doing so. We have heard a lot of criticism in this Chamber this week from the opposition and some of the Independent members about how this will put small businesses through harder times and make it more difficult. They forget that this initiative will be beneficial to our frontline services and the people who work in them, such as nurses, police and firefighters, and people who work in the women's shelters, which are open 24/7. It is not always just about small businesses.

This new initiative will cost approximately \$450 000 in additional wages for the government, but it will also keep more people for longer in those key frontline roles and help improve their job satisfaction.

If people are happy at work they stay longer. Retention is the key to keeping more people in the Northern Territory, which means that NT businesses, both private and public, are saving money in the long term by retaining experienced, qualified, trained employees. Anyone who has ever worked understands that one of the most costly expenses for any business, private or public, is human resources, recruitment, retention and training of employees. Why would you not want to ensure you are putting in place measures that keep people working in businesses in the Northern Territory who have that experience?

Over the last four years of announcements and promises without plans, we have learned that the only way certainty will be delivered is by providing the Territory with clear, long-term plans for the economy. That takes consultation, reviews, discussions with various sector experts and debate between ourselves. We will not apologise for that.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Chief Minister on his jobs statement and I support it unequivocally, 100%.

Mr McConnell (Stuart): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs and the policy direction on growing jobs in the Territory.

There is a lot of woe from the CLP and a couple of the Independents. I am excited about living in the Territory at this time, and the opportunities this new government will provide to sustain jobs in the Territory. We will have a stable government with a 10-year economic plan. We can know that ministers will not suddenly change. It will not be that you cannot go to bed at night because something might happen late at night. Things were continually changing under the CLP. We are a stable government.

Sometimes things in government cannot be done quickly. Sometimes we cannot give you the instant answer because it requires consultation with people and informed decision-making. You can only have informed decision-making if you go to the trouble of talking to Territorians and taking their information on board. That is what the Gunner government will do.

I can assure the Independents and the opposition members—please be confident about the next four years in the Territory. It is part of a plan for the Territory going forward, and we will be all right. It will be good; I can promise you that. We will do well. I look forward to being part of that team.

We must provide a stable and healthy business and community environment in the Territory to maintain and grow jobs. We must work closely with Indigenous communities to increase the labour participation of Indigenous people in the economy; that is my passion. Earlier today one of the Independent members spoke about Indigenous employment in the past. I grew up Napperby Station, which had an entirely Indigenous workforce when I was a kid. We are not talking about a proper long time ago, probably the early 1970s, so we clearly have something wrong with utilising our local Indigenous workforce.

This government has a plan to increase Indigenous workforce participation through stabilising the way we deliver remote Indigenous housing, under the great plans our minister for Housing has introduced, and the \$1.1bn investment in remote Indigenous housing. These plans have been thought out and will be delivered in a timely manner. They are not about sitting down and doing nothing, and then suddenly going into a panic and causing peaks and troughs in the way we have done things in industry—not just in remote Indigenous housing, but across the board.

I was involved in business before I came into this place. Trying to work under the regime of the CLP was nearly impossible. You did not know whether the work would go to market; if it did go to market you did not know if you would have a fair crack at tendering for that work. You did not know that you could not get a peak contractor who, because of the poorly-written local workforce or industry utilisation rules—you might get the head contractor from a local Territory contracting firm, but the next minute you find out all the tier two work has gone to an interstate company. Members in this Chamber have spoken about the steel industry; it was really suffering because that sort of thing was going on. Sometimes these products come from offshore and not just interstate.

To be a stable and healthy community environment we must first promise to keep down the cost of living in the Territory. We need to keep the cost of living down because it will always be expensive to live here; we have a small population. A responsible government needs to look at all the things relating to the cost of living.

The decision to all of a sudden—as happens in the lead-up to an election—roll out a program where you can get \$2000 worth of work done on your property was a good idea. Just about everything that gives money to someone is a good idea, but was it good for our economy? Was it good for helping people stay in this place? I think the jury is out on that one.

We also have to look at things like the cost of power, transport and communications infrastructure in this modern world we live in. A responsible government will always be looking at those things, and this will be a responsible government.

An appropriately-timed roll-out of government spending will also provide a more stable business environment. A 10-year rolling infrastructure plan with strategic and coordinated housing spending will lessen the boom and bust cycle which often drives small business in the Northern Territory. We have had some examples of that where there has been a massive building program in remote Indigenous housing—something I am very passionate about—and there was a hiatus in the work. Then, all of a sudden, there

was a massive amount of work. When you do that you increase costs and decrease local workforce utilisation.

We do not want to be part of a Territory where the fly-in fly-out workforce, which used to be in the mining and extractive minerals industry, all of a sudden becomes an industry that comes here, does work in the Territory and then flies out to Queensland or somewhere else simply because we cannot get our act together well enough to strategically roll out the infrastructure and spending plans of government. We will not do those sorts of things.

I am sure my colleagues will not make any apologies about taking time to consult; you need to consult so you know what industry capacity is, what industry is looking for and where there is a work shortfall, both actual and projected. You have to consult about those things. This government will consult.

Consultation is about us sitting around on the sidelines and waiting for someone else to talk so we have the opportunity to provide a stable place for people to do business so they can then employ people. We need government, big business and small business to work together, all with a shoulder to the wheel in the same direction, so we can deliver the jobs we need to deliver. This will benefit all Territorians—consultation and making sure things are done properly. I sincerely believe Territorians are looking forward to that.

I wholeheartedly support the move to extend to 30% local content beyond the construction industry in all government procurement. I am always aspirational; I would love to see it at more than 30%, but, being part of a stable government, making decisions and transitional plans, you cannot go too far at once. You need to be strategic in these things.

This is a very good target. It is very good to see that the Gunner Labor government is committed to 30% local utilisation across the board. That is great news. I congratulate Michael Gunner and his ministers on that.

It is important to get the tender assessment process right. As the Chief Minister has identified, local content throughout the entire project, including subcontractors, is important. One of the often repeated complaints is that a truly local company is engaged as a subcontractor then not utilised when the contract is completed. I know of many cases of that, and it is very concerning, particularly in structural steel. I know of some major projects where structural steel often goes to a subcontractor. That structural steel contractor was priced by the local suppliers and then they were not involved in delivering the project. We need to be responsible in changing the process to make sure those things cannot continue to happen.

Another key issue close to my heart is that I sincerely believe we need to pay far greater attention to Indigenous land and labour participation in the economy. This government is committed to that, and we will do that by working collaboratively and cooperatively with Indigenous land councils and corporations, and with industry that wishes to partner with Indigenous entities. That is really important.

We developed the Northern Territory and the pastoral industry, and all the things that have happened here since white settlement, by working collaboratively and cooperatively. I argue, and many have before me, that the pastoral industry would not have been established without working collaboratively with Aboriginal people, the first owners of this country that we stand on today.

There were a lot of inequities and things that went on back in that time. In the modern age this needs to be a true partnership. We can also acknowledge from that shared experience and history that whitefellas never would have been all right here without getting help from Aboriginal people. Let us continue to share those ideas going forward. Let us work with the Indigenous leaders now, under the Northern Territory Land Rights Act, which we should be proud of. All of us, as Territorians, should be extremely proud that we respect the rights of the first peoples here in the Northern Territory.

We need to work collaboratively and cooperatively with them and their interests. A lot of the time their interests are our shared interests. I think we often forget the fact there is one shared future. We are all very lucky to have been born in the Northern Territory, or to have made the move to live here. We have a shared vision here and sometimes we do not concentrate on that enough.

There are several strategies required to accomplish the sort of change we are talking about. We must honour the commitment to work closely with remote communities, local authorities and land councils to develop appropriate policy and program change instead of working with them to process—I should go off the top of my head. These notes are a waste of time. Although, I need to make sure I get my key points out.

Local authorities and land councils need to be involved in developing the way we will change policies and programs instead of just imposing them. There are too many backroom wheelings and dealings. I call it coffee table talk. 'Oh, we will do this and that and something else.' You expose that to the light of day and it does not work.

Immediately you have the resources of government, both the elected arm of government and the public service, going into a backspin, justifying a position they are holding which was not duly thought out. This government will not do that. There will be consultation and business summits. This work will be done; it takes some time. That is what being a responsible government is—taking the time to consult with people.

Not too many years ago, in stock camps, we had high Indigenous workforce participation. That participation did not make the transition to the modern pastoral economy. Previous Northern Territory and Commonwealth Government policies have led Indigenous people into the welfare trap, where some have remained for several generations. That is not easy to change, but developing the Indigenous workforce to participate in the Northern Territory economy is something we must do for the benefit of all Territorians. It is not just Indigenous-specific; it is for the benefit of all Territorians.

We must have a quality education system, and we must be innovative where we need to, such as with Families as First Teachers. It was great to hear earlier today that we will be investing a lot more in that program.

We need to demonstrate that there is more than one way of learning, gaining knowledge and forming an opinion on how we will go forward, and the only way we can do that is by consulting with the voices that will give us the alternatives.

You can learn traditional knowledge and the mainstream Western way at the same time, and that will benefit you. I need to take a step back here. I am trying to explain to the House that we need to ensure there is a quality education system in remote communities to provide the Aboriginal people living in those communities the opportunity to participate in a modern economy. That will not be at the cost of traditional knowledge if it is done properly, in consultation with elders and other leaders and experts, and is not just a knee-jerk reaction.

Students have already started following this path. Whether it is going to boarding school to access quality education and coming home to their communities in school holidays—we need to encourage people to make those choices if they are comfortable with that.

We need to make sure we invest in education infrastructure in the Territory to ensure that people who wish to stay in the Territory or their home community while getting their education are able to make that choice. I think it is very important that we are affording people the opportunity to make choices in their lives. The best way you can do that is by being exposed to an education. I say that with respect to the Indigenous people who have taught me a lot of what I know and are the very reason I am standing in this place.

It is very hard to survive in the modern world without a reasonable level of literacy and numeracy, and we need to work out a way in this shared future to ensure Aboriginal people have access to gain the skills they need to participate in the modern world, without detracting from their Aboriginal world. That is very important.

A key to achieving all these things is that you need a decent house to live in. The Gunner government's innovative policy on remote Indigenous housing will turn Indigenous housing into an economic driver, not an economic cost. Some of the things the Member for Nelson spoke about, such as making your own bricks and sawing your own wood, sound like the settler view. It worked and we got a lot of things built, but we have a modern world now. I am not discounting the great things that were done by settlers here and all over the world, but we are in a modern world now, and I proudly stand as a member of the Labor Party and say that people who do a reasonable day's work deserve a reasonable day's pay.

I do not care about whether someone is living in a remote community and building their own house; if they are doing work that is productive they deserve the same wages as everyone else. That really bothers me. It is really interesting that we recently celebrated two very significant things to Territorians and Australians: the Wave Hill walk-off and Indigenous land rights. The Wave Hill walk-off was about equal pay.

Ms MANISON: 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 McConnell: Isn't it interesting that we now have to argue with our conservative Commonwealth colleagues, the federal government, that Indigenous people in remote communities deserve the same wages as everyone else. We have people involved in CDP, working on projects that should be paying those people a fair wage. I am a member of the Labor Party and I believe we should be doing that. We just celebrated it in the Wave Hill walk-off celebration.

We need Indigenous people participating in the economy. We will not be able to do that if we say we are giving them lolly money. Indigenous people will only participate in the economy if they know they will get a fair wage. One thing Aboriginal people are really good at, if they do not like what you have to say, is disengaging with you and waiting for the next government.

We need to make sure we talk to Indigenous people. I find it reprehensible when people refer to Aboriginal people as separate because I do not see it that way at all. I see us as one group with one shared value: the best we can get for our family and the health of our children. The only way we will achieve these things is to concentrate on making sure people have the tools to participate in the economy. I do not think they do at the moment. I think there has been inadequate investment in the education system.

I was disturbed to hear from the Minister for Education that school attendance has gone down. We cannot have that; we need to put more investment into the education system. Investing in education is one way to create jobs. It is a way of bringing in people who want to contribute to the economy and start a small business or work for the housing team, whatever their aspiration might be. They cannot do that unless the government has invested in the tools to give them that opportunity.

It is very important for us to recognise that this stable economy will be a growing economy. We are transitioning from the INPEX project to greater tourism participation and pastoral opportunities. There is definitely an economy in transition at this time. This will transition into greater opportunity. Those opportunities will provide employment, which we are talking about today, but they will only do so if we have a stable government that plans and gives people opportunities.

It is interesting that there has been debate across Australia recently about the backpacker tax. It was interesting to hear that we utilise many people in the Northern Territory. I welcome people to the Northern Territory who are backpackers, who take the opportunity to come and work and contribute to our economy. They relax here and enjoy the great natural environment and other opportunities in the Northern Territory.

I sometimes feel bad about the fact we have such massive unemployment rates in our Indigenous population. The targeted policies of the Gunner government in its commitment to the jobs plan will give Indigenous people opportunities to participate in the economy to a greater degree than they have in the past. That will be a good thing. Local Indigenous people are not engaged on the cattle stations I grew up on or around, or in roadhouses or places the Member for Nelson has talked about where there is horticultural development. This government will not say it can fix this or solve that, but it will consult with people to develop the tools for them to be engaged in the economy that exists.

We still welcome backpackers and 457 visa holders to the Territory, but let us make sure we invest in our local capacity. That is a point of difference; many people want to reside in the Territory. That is one thing you can say about remote Indigenous Territorians; most will stay here. There are a few who might move away, but most people will stay. If we can get greater participation of Indigenous people in the economy it will benefit all people—the roadhouse, the cattle station and the tourism business.

These figures are really old, but I have heard that something like 70% of visitors to the Northern Territory wish to have interactions and experience with an Indigenous operator or business, and only about 3% or 4% of people leave the Territory having fulfilled that aspiration.

Let us work on that. There are some great policies in the Gunner government's plan for developing jobs in the Northern Territory. A lot of thought has gone into how to increase Indigenous participation. That is very close to my heart because Aboriginal people taught me most of what I know, when I was growing up. I also represent a predominately Indigenous electorate.

To get greater Indigenous participation you need a plan, and I think that plan is here. It might not be as quick as the CLP wants in certain aspects, but that is for a reason. The consultation has to be done.

It is great to be part of a new government and a new opportunity in the Territory. I am really excited about the way we are going forward. The pillars of what needs to be done are being put in place, and one of them is a jobs plan.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the statement by the Chief Minister in relation to jobs. I spoke at length, during my maiden speech, about the importance of the range of jobs I have had in my life, and the majority of the opportunities I have had made me very clear about what I did not want to do. However, it was crucial that I had the opportunity to give those jobs a go, even if it was just to put food on the table at a particularly tough time.

As I also outlined, as a teenager I was able to get a job at McDonald's. It is a proud family tradition; all my children have had part-time jobs whilst at school. We have a strong family belief that while school can shape a young person, external experiences balance a person out. It shapes their outlook on the world and gives them invaluable skills that simply cannot be obtained in the schoolyard.

Part-time, casual and full-time jobs are equally as important as each other, as are remote jobs in the bush, as we just heard from the Member for Stuart. Without doubt, jobs and joblessness equally shape people. I was listening to radio a couple of days ago and I heard that if a family experiences long-term joblessness, then 40% of the children of those families will reach the age of 20 and be jobless. Seeing a parent or role model engaged in employment, regardless of the type of employment, can have a significant impact on who we become in life.

Intergenerational joblessness is a significant issue and a great stress on our economy. I think nobody in this Chamber will disagree with that. I am very proud that this government and former Labor governments have always had a jobs plan. It is at the heart of our commitments and values. We have never shied away from setting clear targets. We know that jobs do not simply happen by accident; they require a plan. I think the Territory has been built off the back of three strong phases of jobs: pre- and post-Cyclone Tracy, and the jobs plans provided under the Martin and Henderson governments.

I have also said previously in this House that I have undertaken just about every job imaginable, from factory work to delivering pizzas, cleaning homes, waiting tables, umpiring netball, administration work and 20 years in the public service. While I did not find myself suited to most of them, the important thing was that I had the opportunity to try those jobs and move on if I chose. Unfortunately that is not the story I heard across my electorate during my recent campaign.

I heard regularly stories of people packing up their belongings—I heard it again last week whilst doorknocking—and leaving to find jobs outside the Territory because they have exhausted every option when looking locally. It was a regular story—to find people under great personal, financial and social stress because they had lost their jobs due to a downturn in industry and having to consider their options. Even relatively affluent suburbs within my electorate were not untouched by joblessness.

After four years of infighting and not moving beyond self-interest, jobs in the Territory have diminished and business confidence has plummeted. When confidence is diminished, business immediately gets nervous about taking on and/or keeping staff. When work opportunities are on the downturn, job numbers are the first things to be slashed. We saw that firsthand over that four-year period.

Sadly, during the lead-up to the election we saw the very public contraction of the great Territory business, Sunbuild Pty Ltd. I know the people there would not mind me mentioning them here. That business has supported many workers over a long period and took it very personally when it had to significantly reduce its workforce. I spoke to one of its recently retrenched workers whilst doorknocking a few weeks ago who, after 10 years with Sunbuild, was not able to find another job. Every job that was available had a very high number of applicants who are all in the same boat.

Following that very sad story, after the last four years, and even now, there continues to be a culture within major projects to employ interstate workers on a fly-in fly-out basis in trade roles, many of which could be undertaken by locals. Many of those workers do not contribute to our local economy, bring their families here, have their children in local schools or spend their money here. They simply fly home, stay home and spend at home. I have a friend from school who has been here for three years; he goes home to the Gold Coast every three weeks and that is where he spends his entire pay. We are not seeing any of it.

It is a significant step forward for our government to specify 30% local content in government procurement—a clear target. Local businesses hiring local people who spend locally—both of these

examples are a temperature check for our economy, and it is incumbent on us to get that balance right. I am heartened to see that we are on the way.

The Territory used to be known as offering adventure and opportunity. Our family's five-year working holiday has lasted over 20 years. But that is clearly no longer the case; the damage has been done, and it is incumbent upon this government to turn that around.

Our economy may be damaged, but I am confident this Michael Gunner-led Labor government is prepared to do the heavy lifting to repair it and make it prosper again so the Territory is an attractive place to live and work, a place where you can get ahead.

As we heard from the Chief Minister yesterday, this government is setting about providing the right economic drivers for government and the private sector to create jobs that productively engage Territorians in the economy. It was a key pillar of our election platform, one that all of us on this side of the House subscribe to.

We have a plan that will not include just one sector. Jobs are important in many sectors, including education, health and welfare. Yesterday we heard from the Minister for Education about her plan for jobs in the education sector. We need to employ more teachers and nurses. We need to provide job stability so those who come here feel safe to invest in things like their own home so they can stay here forever, as the Treasurer has told us over the last few weeks.

I have been involved in a small local business for over 15 years. I described it as 'fickle' during my maiden speech; sometimes it comes down to who you know and, often, how the economy is faring overall. But I did not go far enough to cover the impact of the incompetence of the previous government. I do not say this lightly, but the last four years have been pretty tough not only for small businesses, but for others we have engaged with.

As a small business you are reliant on two income streams. You have options; you may be able to provide jobs for others. You can apply for small or medium contracts within major projects, which often we see described as tier two contracts, or you can advertise and take on your own work. Each pathway is as important as the other to our economy. The issue is that people looking to build or renovate their homes or business premises need to know they will get a short- and long-term return on their investment.

Naturally, most local subcontractors require more than one person to tackle a job, and an amount of continuous work needs to be secured so that other workers can be taken on. It is a catch 22; you get more work, you need new workers. When work goes down, you lose workers, who, naturally, then go elsewhere to chase work. Unfortunately, in this cycle you often lose the best workers because they are in demand, and that reduces your capacity to seek new work. As I said, it is a catch 22.

Small businesses need a strong economic outlook and consistency of opportunities to create jobs, so to speak. That is what is missing. Territorians have been frightened of their futures and their jobs. They have not been investing in their homes or businesses—holding on to their savings in case they had to use them to survive as our economy spiralled downward.

As we know, an empty shopfront or a vacant rental property does not need any renovation. Contractors caught up in major projects could see no future planning for when those projects drew to a close. Savings needed to be kept firmly in their pockets, in their bank, under the mattress or wherever they were squirrelling them. They certainly were not spending them in the last four years.

Due to this contraction and poor outlook there was a double whammy. Small local businesses surviving on the home and business improvements sector—I refer to them as the bottom feeders in the construction industry—have suffered greatly to major contractors.

As the Chief Minister has stated a number of times in the House, we have grown tired of saying goodbye to friends and workers who have left simply to survive. We know that the Territory is not a cheap place to live, even if you do have a job, but if you do not it is so much harder and, in most cases, impossible.

I am heartened at the early work this government has begun to stop the alarming trend. I am pleased that local content is at the heart of projects right through to subcontracts. I am also pleased that contract packages will be broken up and into the right size for local businesses to be able to tender. Those things are very important.

I do not need to say this, but the implementation of a 10-year infrastructure plan is also very welcome. It will give certainty and the ability for industry to plan. It will increase local jobs, and the flow-on affect to small businesses, directly and indirectly, can only be good, with further opportunities for new jobs in that sector. I hope the drip-feed system will start to trickle down to the small home and business improvements sector very soon—the bottom feeders.

As I have outlined, the world of job creation does not start and finish with major projects and government. The flow-on is incredibly powerful and can assist in a big way to steer our economy back in the right direction.

I now turn to Indigenous employment, a matter close to my heart. Our small business has had a proud record of Indigenous employment, most of which has, fortunately, been driven through our connections through sport. I have taught a number of footballers who have returned to their communities with new skills, such as painting. If you visit those communities you can see the flow-on effect as people use their skills locally after spending some time with our business.

There is so much more to do. The Member of Stuart was bang on when he mentioned the need for jobs and people being remunerated at the right rate. This government is up to that task. Including Indigenous stakeholders in the conversation about jobs and our economic growth is a good start. Our target of employing an additional 500 Indigenous teachers, nurses and police officers over the next 10 years is very clear. We are not messing around. In our previous jobs plans we talked about apprenticeship numbers, and we were very clear about them. I remember celebrating the first jobs plan under the Clare Martin government, and not only hitting those targets but exceeding them. I am very confident we will do that again. We now have a 10-year plan, and it is a good start.

A 10-year plan goes beyond this term of government. We are setting the wheels in motion. It would be great to be back here in four years' time, but the plan is in place for subsequent governments to pick up and keep going, driving that plan forward to make those changes. Who you are, where you were born or which family you belong to should not determine whether you can get a job.

I have utmost confidence that the plan the Chief Minister laid out in this House yesterday, to create jobs across the Territory in this term of parliament, will achieve its aim. Previous jobs plans have smashed their targets. This plan will build not only build the right framework but the conditions for business to thrive.

It is not all about government. We have had rubbish thrown at us from across the Chamber around how we will do this and that. It is about confidence and people wanting to invest. If someone with a small business needs something done, getting in a contractor is as important as a major project like INPEX. It is vital to our economy that we can do that. You have to feel confident that you will have a job in six weeks' time if you are getting someone to fix the plumbing in your home. If you have to dip into your savings to get things done around the house it is critical that you know you have ongoing employment, and that by using your savings you will not fall over.

It bodes well, the plan we have in place for our children. It also bodes well for our public servants, who have clear parameters around how they will operate and what the expectations are around local content. It bodes well for each of our important industries, from construction to manufacturing and frontline services. You can feel confidence beginning to return. I work in that space; I communicate with people on a daily basis who are in small businesses. Most of our friends are in the small business sector. You can hear the talk has changed there; they feel enlivened.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the Chief Minister's statement to the House.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to commend to the House the statement on jobs brought forward by the Chief Minister. It is part of the platform that is important to all in this House. Jobs were an essential part of our platform and are of utmost importance to the Gunner Labor government.

For many, including me, who grew up here the NT has always brimmed with opportunity. Like my colleagues, I want to see it remain that way, a place where people want to stay, work and raise their family. I look first to my electorate of Casuarina, which is a hub in many senses of the word. It is home to the Territory's largest shopping centre—many people working in different aspects of retail. After school I was second in charge at a chocolate shop there; it is dangerous work, I can tell you.

It is also home to the Royal Darwin Hospital; Charles Darwin University; local schools; small businesses; many non-government organisations, including youth and community services; government divisions; the Casuarina Coastal Reserve; and the rangers who do incredible work at the reserve.

The breadth of professions and trades in the Territory, and in my electorate, is vast. It brings home the importance of our commitment to increasing investment in schools, which suffered a loss of staff under the CLP government; better investment in health; support for small businesses; understanding the importance of our non-government sector; and valuing our natural environment.

The Member for Stuart spoke a lot about the importance of stability and certainty. That message is imperative, and we have spoken about that a lot. We experienced four years of a government with very little stability and certainty. There was a rotation of ministers and it was an uncertain time for many businesses. I think we all heard from people in our electorates—small business owners or people who work in the construction or trade industry—who were experiencing a difficult time. Those issues were raised time and time again. Stability and certainty is imperative.

I agree with the Member for Sanderson that having some certainty around the infrastructure plan, where we will have more visibility of the work coming up in a range of areas, is so important to the small businesses that want to look to the work that is coming up and prepare their businesses, and look to potential partnerships to undertake those jobs in the Territory. The IT industry is very passionate about how we keep work here and increase the visibility of work so it can gear up as businesses, look to other people and businesses whose skills they may not have, and keep that work in the Territory.

I will now turn to my portfolio areas because jobs are a vital theme that runs through all of them.

The environment is a really good place to start. Good environmental policy makes smart economic sense. Good environmental policy ensures appropriate environmental checks and balances are in place before developments and major projects get under way so this does not become a future stumbling block, as we have seen recently with the Port Melville marine supply base on the Tiwi Islands. This is about providing certainty of employment and economic development.

This was a key driving factor in the environmental policy we took to the election, which has a strong focus on transparency and accountability. The Northern Territory is a land of opportunity and a great place for people to bring big ideas to fruition. We want to support and nurture this spirit and ensure new developments can go ahead. We recognise that new development is a boon to the local economy and local jobs, but it cannot be at the expense of our environment, which is another major contributor to our economy, particularly through tourism.

As we travel around the Territory in our jobs, it is hard to not be taken by the beauty of where we live, even as people who have been here for a really long time. We want to share that with other people.

We took to the election a policy that will see a robust regime of environmental assessments so when developments get under way they can be certain they have their environmental house in order.

The Gunner Labor government has already delivered on our commitment to ensure environmental considerations are front and centre when it comes to development and major projects by restoring funding to some of our environmental and social justice organisations. These include the Arid Lands Environment Centre, the Environment Centre NT, the Environmental Defenders Office and, in the broader non-government sphere, the NT Council of Social Services. I feel very passionately about NTCOSS. This funding provides certainty to the people working in those organisations. It supports the employment of policy officers and it values the work they undertake.

The former government did not give much confidence that it valued the roles of those organisations or understood the importance of them, not only in regard to the broader debate—but there are people working around the clock in community services, the environment, mental health and child protection, who are doing incredible work that deserves to be valued. They deserve the opportunity to go into those lines of work.

It is significant because it demonstrates that a contribution to social policy and discourse is valued by the Labor Gunner government. What is also significant is the move to five-year agreements. I have spoken on a number of occasions about my concerns regarding funding uncertainty for one-year agreements for organisations. There may well be some instances where one-year agreements are necessary, but they should not be the norm. In many cases they became the norm.

I heard stories from organisations where this uncertainty impacted on their ability to retain staff. We are talking about mental health organisations and youth services, which are working every day with some of our most vulnerable Territorians, having to give notice to staff because they are not sure when their next funding agreement will come through. They then get extended for another year and there is no ability to plan for the future of service delivery, let alone provide certainty for the people who work for Territorians. That was one of the most important commitments we made. One of the commitments I was most proud of was making sure we can provide more certainty for the amazing people who work in community services.

Our commitments also recognise the important work done in areas of research and, as I have mentioned on many occasions, the vital work of our Indigenous ranger groups. These groups provided invaluable employment opportunities—caring for country, on country.

Carbon emission abatement projects fit well with broader Indigenous cultural and land management aspirations, and we want to ensure they receive appropriate levels of support to get under way. They have the potential to generate significant employment opportunities for communities already engaged in looking after country and, in turn, support the development of remote infrastructure and leverage other employment opportunities in those areas. This industry is enormously innovative in terms of non-state funded economic activity in remote areas, and has the potential to underpin a new era of culturally-sensitive economic development.

I thank the Member for Stuart for his contribution today and his very important perspective and words. There is a lot of work to be done and we are committed to doing it, which is why we are backing the development of an Indigenous carbon strategy, and an Indigenous carbon unit, which will ensure Aboriginal communities and commercial partners are well placed to capitalise on carbon market opportunities and create sustainable commercial enterprises.

The potential to generate economic and new employment opportunities in the desert and tropical regions of the Territory is enormous. We will build upon our current ranger program activities and focus on increasing their participation in the emerging carbon economy.

Strategically, the Indigenous carbon unit will play a coordination role, supporting innovative partnerships amongst stakeholders, including unique service delivery models such as staff secondments, community alliances and corporate contractual arrangements. Early work is already under way on a potential service delivery model and structural design for this unit, which will be developed in close consultation with key stakeholders and communities.

Ensuring that there is a robust policy framework when it comes to protecting our environment, both land and sea, means that fairness and community voices will be returned to decision-making. It also means we can further safeguard economic projects. No one wants to see good ideas tied up, down the line, in uncertainty that can be avoided. We want to see ideas and jobs grow. We want to ensure that the Territory's unique environment is recognised and leveraged for its significant potential in driving economic growth and jobs.

The art and cultural industries are important economic drivers for the Northern Territory, and we are fortunate to have a history of exceptionally talented Territorians whose cultural, historical and economical contributions on the local, national and international stages cannot be understated.

Our commitment to the Indigenous arts trail and a national Indigenous art gallery in Alice Springs will have ongoing benefits for the entire Northern Territory. The arts trail will promote and raise the profile of Indigenous artists and strengthen the leadership in our museum and art gallery sectors. I look forward to working with colleagues on those areas, including the Members for Port Darwin, Stuart and Namitjira, ensuring we are hearing the community.

It was interesting to hear—I think it was yesterday—that the Leader of the Opposition thought it should have been done in two months or so. I have to ask why it has not been done already, if he thinks something of that magnitude can be done so quickly. We will be measured, and we will consult and work strongly with communities on these major projects because we want to make sure they work. We want to provide certainty for Territorians; we do not want to rush into major projects. Unfortunately that has gotten us into trouble before.

The Indigenous arts trail and national Indigenous art gallery will provide significant opportunities for local people and businesses, not only to contribute and showcase their own work, but it also supports increased visitation to the Northern Territory. It will become recognised as the place you want to be, where you want

to fully immerse yourself in culturally significant arts and become part of the growing ecosystem that is our vibrant arts scene.

Tourism is another significant economic driver in the Territory. I look forward to stakeholders being part of the economic summits led by the Chief Minister which will underpin the next Territory budget. I join my colleagues in saying that we will not apologise for involving Territory businesses and different sectors in developing the future plan for the Northern Territory.

It might not be an approach that was accepted or embraced by the former government, or that the opposition agrees with, but I think it is sound. Many people are looking forward to participating and having a voice in that process. There are some great minds out there who deserve to have their say on the economic future of the Territory.

We have seen recent growth in holiday visitation; it was up 18% last financial year, with 815 000 visitors heading to the Northern Territory. The growth was largely driven by the domestic market, much of which was business travel, while international visitation held steady. There is a lot more work to do in this space. That is why increasing holiday visitation, particularly international, is a key focus for this government in recognising the pivotal role of our tourism industry, ensuring a stronger economy and providing jobs across Territory.

To broaden our international horizons we are investing \$5m to build on work to attract more visitors from China and to explore opportunities for greater visitation from India. Currently the Territory attracts around 12 000 Chinese visitors a year. We want to see that increase, and attract a larger share of that market. Work is already under way to establish a direct aviation service from China, which has the potential to deliver a significant boost to the number of Chinese visitors to the Territory. When Chinese visitors arrive we want to ensure they enjoy their time and that their specific needs are catered for. As such, work is under way to prepare our tourism industry for more Chinese visitors, including ensuring that there are relevant tourism experiences and services on offer.

India is a growing tourist market for Australia. Until now it has not been a focus of the Territory. The Territory has good existing connectivity to India via SilkAir and Jetstar's international service through Singapore. We need to develop targeted product offerings that will appeal to Indian tourists. The first step is to undertake research to identify opportunities and then feed back to industry so products and services can be tailored accordingly. This work is ongoing and is vital to increasing visitation to the Territory, providing opportunities for businesses to grow in regard to their products and their teams.

I was pleased to speak to Territory businesses about, and work on in the lead-up to the election, our commitment to innovation and harnessing the opportunities that stem from technology in the Territory. A digital economic strategy that involves different sectors, including business and the community, will help us work to unlock the economic potential that the digital world affords us. It will provide the framework to align other ICT-related government initiatives that we will deliver, including our public data policy and our digital by default direction.

An open data policy will allow for the sharing of non-sensitive data, not only allowing government, business and the non-government sector to collaborate on evidence-based policy, but providing more opportunities for business to look at how the data can be used to develop and grow services and initiatives that meet the needs and desires of Territorians. We, undoubtedly, have some incredibly minds in the Territory who are already making great strides in their own businesses and in setting up collaborative spaces to work together, encouraging us all to back local ideas. That is something I am passionate about.

We have great local ideas that need some backing, mentoring and support. We, as a government, are prepared to do that. I am looking forward to seeing that area grow. We are working with people, technology and available data, and we are looking at exciting ways to deliver new services to Territorians.

Providing the data could well result in the emergence of more fantastic businesses and services as we understand more about the context in which we all work or live, assisting in the commercialisation of local ideas. In regard to developing our digital strategy, we will do that in close consultation with community and business sectors. We will prepare a draft discussion paper which we will aim to release in early 2017, and we will engage with the different sectors throughout this process.

Some of the things we will look at through this strategy include better access to affordable broadband Internet and mobile services; government services being easily accessible online and across multiple devices; more timely access to government services and more reliable government data; building the

capability of our ICT workforce; building a more competitive ICT industry by leveraging the benefits of emerging technologies; and boosting employment opportunities with high-value jobs in a growing sector of the workforce.

I was very pleased to launch the latest *Australia's Digital Pulse* report, from the Australian Computer Society, in the Territory. There is some incredible work occurring to look at the contribution to the digital economy that is occurring.

Opportunities for growth—I am interested in the participation of women in technology and IT and how we continue to encourage young women in that industry. Some of our initiatives around STEM and coding in schools will be very important in that regard. It will become an increasingly vital skill to have as a young person. We are going forward into a different kind of workforce. Places like the Foundation for Young Australians have done a lot of work around the jobs that will become automated into the future. We need to make sure young people have a good grasp of digital skills.

Mr KIRBY: 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 MOSS: This is a very exciting initiative that I am pleased to be leading. One of the great things about the Territory is its remoteness, but it presents many challenges for local businesses and the ICT industry, as we know. The digital economy transcends the tyranny of distance, making the possibilities and opportunities for local businesses, NGOs and local ICT innovators endless.

Part of our focus on growing our digital economy includes the adoption of a public data policy that will make relevant NT Government data publicly available via a single site. This will better enable businesses and ICT innovators to locate and access data that will help inform their work. An example of where we can start to use some of this non-sensitive data is in our work with children, making sure we are developing evidence-based policy for the zero to five age groups, which is so important. Another example is the environment, where there is a lot of interest in making sure we have robust regulatory systems.

As part of this process we will ensure Territorians' personal data is secure and people's privacy is protected. It is not about handing over personal data, but rather broad datasets and trends that will provide businesses, researchers, government agencies and the ICT industry with information that will help drive and grow their work.

We will deliver a digital by default policy that will require the primary channel for new government services to be digital and online. This will deliver cost savings to government, reduce errors and ensure better tracking of data. It will also benefit customers and businesses through greater convenience as well as cost and time efficiencies when interacting with government. I recognise that we need to do that carefully and make sure we do not leave any Territorians behind in the process.

Innovation and harnessing emerging technologies will be a key focus of this government and will provide a boost to our economy, better support for businesses to get on with their work and new, high-value employment pathways.

The sport and recreation sector provides great opportunities for Territorians not only through health and active recreation options, but also through infrastructure development and jobs. Sport and active recreation plays a crucial role in Territory life and culture, and there are many things happening in this area to boost our economy and create jobs. No pun intended, but it is a very active area.

The contribution of the sport and recreation sector to jobs is broader than people can imagine. Not only does it include the people directly employed by sports, but it extends to retail sports stores; physiotherapists and sport massage providers; greenkeepers and turf management staff; mechanics; veterinarians; event and hospitality staff; media; and caterers. There are many people in our community, right down to the grassroots, who benefit from a vibrant sporting community.

Broader still, we have recreation officers in local government and organisations such as the YMCA, including lifeguards and swimming pool attendants. It shows how important the sport and recreation sector is to the whole of the Northern Territory. It is wide reaching. It provides a range of opportunities, and when you consider the scope of how many sporting organisations there are in the Territory you begin to realise how much of an impact sport has on us all, even if you are not dreaming about cow bells, like I am.

Bringing back the Arafura Games was a key sports election promise for our government, and work is well and truly under way for their return. The last time the Arafura Games were held in Darwin, 1600 participants took part, including many from overseas, increasing the Territory's visibility and providing a significant boost to business, tourism and hospitality industries. Under the Labor government numerous infrastructure projects will commence, providing a much-needed boost to the economy and creating jobs in the process.

Northern Territory Rugby League desperately needs a new stadium, as we know. It was something the former government failed to accomplish and we will complete this promise. A large-scale build such as this provides great employment opportunities across a range of sectors. An estimated 170 jobs will be created over the duration of the build.

We saw the CLP bungle the rugby league stadium, time after time, not consulting with Territorians, trying to rebuild a stadium in Richardson Park that nobody wanted, and even going to the lengths of trying to steal space from a school playground without telling the school. It simply was not good enough. We will build a rugby league stadium; it is a commitment of \$25m and we will consult with Territorians. We will make sure it is a great facility and that it provides jobs for local people.

In Darwin we have committed to building a netball stadium. Again, a large-scale build of this nature will provide local jobs for local people for the duration of the build.

Also in Darwin, we have matched and will continue the former government's commitment of building a tennis centre in Marrara, an exciting development for the Northern Territory. It will bring us up to standard with the rest of the country. The employment opportunities that a build of this nature provides are significant.

Motor sport also has many exciting developments on the agenda, which include Hidden Valley drags lighting; \$1m for Top End Motocross Club lighting; toilet upgrades and other things at Katherine Motor Sports Club; club house facility upgrades at CADRA; Tatts Finke Desert Race master planning; Tennant Creek Speedway Club upgrades; and replacing Motorsport House at Hidden Valley.

There are some projections around the jobs involved in that, with the number of employees at 66; the number of Indigenous employees, nine; the number of apprentices, five; and the total number of people on the job, 82. This totals around \$13m injected into motorsport infrastructure across the Territory. The jobs and opportunities this sport provides are widespread, especially in places such as Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

It is just the beginning of what we will see when it comes to jobs and development across the NT. What we will see in Alice Springs includes a \$2m new athletics track to be built at Centralian Middle School, providing wonderful opportunity for local athletes; upgrades to the Alice Springs Golf Club, karting club, motorcycle club and off-road race club; Central Australian Drag Racing Association upgrades; and the netball stadium that just opened.

The job opportunities for local contractors here are endless. Most importantly, we are providing new and improved facilities for the people of Alice Springs and the Territory to enjoy. The Labor government is committed to providing jobs and creating economic growth. While often underestimated, the sports and recreation industry does a fantastic job and I look forward to seeing the results.

We will continue to listen to Territorians as we implement our initiatives. I look forward to continuing to provide updates to the House as we go along. I also look forward to hearing members' contributions to this statement.

I commend the Chief Minister on his statement.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for making this ministerial statement about jobs. I want to take up the last sentence or two from the minister for the Environment's speech—we look forward to consulting with people on this issue of jobs in the Northern Territory. Over the last week we have heard some conflicting messages from this government around jobs in the Northern Territory.

On Tuesday we were informed of the government's intention to make New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve public holidays, which therefore requires all employers to pay double-time-and-a-half to people working from 7 pm onwards on those evenings. That is not a plan to create jobs; that is a plan to cut jobs. We are

hearing that very clearly from the community and the business sector, which have not been consulted about this new government's policy.

I read, with great interest, in the *NT News* this morning a story written by Ashley Manicaros about two gold plate winning restaurants that will not open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve in response to public holiday changes. The article talks about how several very popular restaurants in Darwin are looking at not opening their doors on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve because of the cost of labour imposed by this new government. Is this a good jobs policy, cutting jobs within the first couple of months of coming to government? I do not think so.

The Darwin Turf Club is reviewing the implications of staff working past 7 pm as part of its post-New Year's Eve race day celebrations. It is expected to make a decision later this week—not a good sign. It sounds like it might not have its New Year's Eve event as it normally would.

Internationally recognised restaurateur Jimmy Shu, owner of the Hanuman restaurants in Darwin and Alice Springs, told the *NT News* that the extra cost burden was too prohibitive. I quote:

We'll be closing.

He said:

The public may have to rely on Maccas

Good old MacDonald's:

'I do not charge a surcharge because I believe it leaves a bad taste in the mouth of patrons. I would rather close than ask my guests to pay a surcharge to cover costs.

'I will have about 24 staff front of house and about 20 back of house and the minimum charge for staff would be \$52 per hour.

He said that closing would also result in less GST revenue collected and less taxation paid.

In other words, local restaurateurs in Darwin and Alice Springs are identifying that this change in policy, implemented by the new Labor government of the Northern Territory, to impose public holiday penalty rate on New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve will mean that jobs are lost. Business will be restricted and will not open during those times because this imposition is cost prohibitive.

This government needs to have a long hard think, early in its life, about how it will grow jobs. If this is the start of its policy on jobs in the Northern Territory, then we are in for a very bad time.

Another restaurateur is quoted in this *NT News* article:

Pearl owner Elle Kearns said trade was already down and now she would close on both days, cancelling a New Year's Eve dinner.

'Everyone is experiencing a downturn. Our trade is 27 per cent down on last year.

'... Giving a tiny fraction a leg up with a few extra public holiday hours doesn't make it ... more sustainable.'

The economic rationale around this policy is flawed. During the next month we have this Bill to amend the *Public Holidays Act* to be debated. If you are truly committed to creating jobs and growing the economy of the Northern Territory, you need to think about whether you will proceed with making these ridiculous amendments, imposing further pressure on businesses that are already doing it tough.

... the Australian Industry Group weighed into the decision to make Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve half-day public holidays calling for them to be capped at 11.

That is, rather than the 12-plus holidays it will add up to. It is not a good decision and it is not being received well. With your commitment to consult—you have already let yourself down as a government. You are not consulting with the business community. I heard the Chief Minister say he had spoken to the

Chamber of Commerce and the AHA prior to announcing the decision to create extra public holidays in the Northern Territory. I do not know if he consulted with them; he probably just informed them.

Tourism Central Australia sent out a media release this afternoon. It is entitled 'New Northern Territory government penalty rates will hurt businesses', dated today, Thursday 27 October 2016. Tourism Central Australia is disappointed with the lack of industry consultation prior to the announcement of this legislation. This decision has caught many business owners off guard as most restaurants and function centres have already set their prices for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. An extra 10 hours of penalty rates is unlikely to assist in achieving population growth, but will more likely reduce the number of businesses open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Chief Executive Officer Stephen Schwer believes that tourism, hospitality, security and many other businesses will be negatively impacted by this legislation. He said, 'It is disappointing that this move is being considered as businesses will need to consider whether they are open or not on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and have no ability to allow for increased penalty rates at such late notice. I ask that the Northern Territory Government reconsider its proposal to ensure that businesses will be able to afford to open on such crucial nights for the tourism industry.'

This is not being received favourably. If you want to try to build a reputation as being a consultative government, consult. You have not consulted on this issue. You have 30 days to come back to the Chamber with this. In the meantime, do some real consultation. I do not think that will happen, though, because, reading between the lines, this is a deal done with the unions—that is blatantly clear—and the decision has been made.

Last night I was extremely concerned by the comments made by the Treasurer on an apparent lack of an economic agenda from this government. In response to a motion brought before parliament by the Leader of the Opposition, Gary Higgins, questioning the infrastructure priorities of the new Labor government, we heard the Treasurer tell parliament, 'We do not have decisions right here, right now. We are not going to make these decisions at the drop of a hat.'

That is not the way to start a government. It is not the way to sell yourself and sell confidence to the business community. When you talk about jobs, you are talking about businesses. Throughout Australia, businesses employ most people, not governments. When you are talking about the economic and fiscal strategies for the Northern Territory, to say that you do not have one and are only in the process of forming a plan to invest in the infrastructure of the Northern Territory is not good enough. That alone has reverberated already throughout the Northern Territory. I have received several phone calls today from concerned people who are worried about their businesses and their lack of confidence in this government after the Treasurer clarified there is no plan in place—there is no mini-budget coming forward; we have confirmation of that.

There is no economic agenda being set by this government. That will affect job creation as well as the jobs that already exist, businesses and investment from within the Territory and coming from outside the Territory.

If you are really committed to job creation, you need to be mindful that the Northern Territory is in a vulnerable position, and not having an economic plan puts unnecessary pressure on the whole economy.

I was encouraged to hear the Member for Sanderson talk about her experience as a small business operator. That is a positive for this government. The Member for Sanderson understands, firsthand, what it is like to run a small business, the challenges, difficulties and, no doubt, sleepless nights. I listened to her with great interest and encouragement. She possibly needs to move around the Chamber—to the left of the Chamber at some point—and use her experience to its utmost.

I am not sensing, from within the Cabinet, a lot of understanding of business and how it operates. I am not confident that people in this government know what it is like and how tough it is to run a business. You need to get out and consult, as you tell us you will do. You need to talk to restaurateurs and business owners. I will set you a quota; you need to talk to at least 100 businesses that would normally open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and get their feedback on how the changes to penalty rates will impact on them.

It is essential you understand how adversely this will impact on jobs. You have some irrational idea that it will create stability in the workforce and grow the population. That does not stack up. We have heard from across the business sector—the Chamber of Commerce is unimpressed by this decision, and I have no

doubt other peak bodies will chime in over the next 30 days, between now and when this Bill is debated in parliament.

I realise your government is new, so I will be patient to some extent, but if you do not offer a carrot to businesses by providing more confidence in your policies—how you treat them and communicate with them—then you will find yourself in a whole lot of trouble. I know you have strong relationships with the unions; we heard that earlier in the week. That is natural for any Labor government. You are all members of unions; it is compulsory for all Labor members of parliament to have a union membership. I understand your allegiance and commitment to the unions, but you need to have an understanding of business, otherwise you will not function; you will fail as a government.

Time is ticking by. There is some urgency for you to correct your position. You seem to think there is ample time to put together your infrastructure investment plan. On the website there are no dates for the economic summits that the Treasurer referred to. She said that the Labor government could not possibly put together an infrastructure investment plan until the economic summits have been undertaken. The time frame on the website is very vague. It said the economic summits are supposed to start in October. I do not know if there has been one yet; there are only a few days left in October. They are due to conclude in March.

Does that mean we have to wait another six months to get an infrastructure investment plan from this government? I sincerely hope not as that is too long. The economy is under pressure. We have heard stories of the slowing economic growth of the Northern Territory. The INPEX development is coming to a close and things are looking stressed and under pressure. This is not the time to impose hideous public holiday penalty rates on any business, and it is not the time to cut employment as a result of that. You say it will create growth in population and the economy, but it will create the opposite. We have heard from restaurateurs, as quoted in the *NT News* today, that they employ dozens of people, but those people will not be working New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve thanks to the new Labor government.

I want to believe that, over time, this government will have a clearer vision on how to create jobs, not cut them.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this government's jobs plan because it was created to address the needs of all Territorians, which is the foundation of a good policy. The Chief Minister highlighted many key points of how the jobs plan will benefit Territorians, and I want to mention a few scenarios which I have experienced in my electorate of Karama.

The Chief Minister stated our commitment to invest in our children, restore trust and grow jobs. I am extremely excited by this approach, and I am sure I can speak for all my Labor colleagues in the same manner. These three important commitments can have a huge impact on my electorate of Karama.

I have five schools within my electorate; two are private and three are public. Each school works extremely hard to deliver the very best educational outcomes for children and their families. Our public schools were severely let down by the previous government, which slashed more than \$100m from the public education system during its term. These schools were impacted enormously by this funding cut, which was unfair, unwarranted and unacceptable.

The Michael Gunner Labor government is working for all Territorians, including our public schools. We have listened to Territorians and understand that the millions in funding that was slashed by the previous CLP government needs to be reversed, and we have committed to doing this. Our commitment to restore this funding will result in an additional \$124m being reinvested in education, \$80m of which will go directly into school budgets, providing schools with the capacity to employ up to 164 teaching and support positions in our public schools. I look forward to working with the Minister for Education to ensure the good people of Malak and Karama benefit from this commitment.

The next example I want to talk about is crime and antisocial behaviour. These two issues were the main concerns that were raised with me, time and time again, by the good people of Malak and Karama throughout my campaign. I spent hours talking with community members about the current environment in which we live as residents of these suburbs. More importantly, we talked about which initiatives are working, or have worked in the past, and brainstormed about potential solutions to improve our community together.

A key comment that shone through in many of my conversations with community members was their gratitude towards the police, who protect and serve us. Community members were united in their support

and acknowledgement of the tough and trying circumstance that police find themselves in on a daily basis, and their ability to express professionalism and commitment.

The Michael Gunner Labor government is focused on sustainable solutions to support Territorians. We are talking with Territorians about issues they face as individuals, families, communities and businesses, and we understand that successes in these areas may have been impacted due to crime and antisocial behaviour.

This government gave a commitment to Territorians that we will deliver on the 120 frontline policing positions, which the previous government promised but failed to deliver. Not only will our police workforce benefit from increased positions, but the potential flow-on benefit for our communities is enormous.

Businesses operating in the Malak shops were broken into a number of times during my campaign. It was absolutely heartbreaking to hear about these break-ins and even more so to learn about the impact on businesses with the damage and destruction caused by these repeated acts.

In regard to community safety, the NT Police website states:

NT Police work hard to promote community safety and works closely with community groups and other government agencies in helping to address issues relating to crime and other anti-social behaviour.

Police have a vital role in our community and I, for one, would like our police officers to have more opportunities to work proactively. A good example exists in my electorate, with the establishment of the Malak and Karama youth engagement committee. The committee was established by youth stakeholders who have seen the opportunity to address local issues through engagement with, and inclusion of, youth in our community.

I commend all stakeholders for putting their hand up to contribute to a local issue through a proactive and inclusive approach. Stakeholders include Darwin Community Arts; City of Darwin; Danila Dilba Health Service; Sanderson Alliance; Malak Re-engagement Centre; NT Police; Malak Primary School; the Smith Family; Sanderson Neighbourhood Activity Centre; and the CREATE Foundation. All stakeholders are working extremely hard to make a positive impact on our community and our children, and I will continue to support them in their endeavours.

I was privileged to visit the Santa Monica Police Activities League during a working tour of the United States of America in 2013. The program was established in 1987 by the City of Santa Monica to address a gap in the city's police services, being the lack of an accessible police presence in the Pico neighbourhood. The mission of the Santa Monica Police Activities League, or PAL for short, as taken from the website, reads:

PAL is a unique community organization that fosters trust between youth and the men and women of the Santa Monica Police Department in a safe and nurturing environment. Through cultural, recreational and outreach programs, PAL helps develop skills and self-esteem encouraging youth to reach their full potential.

During my visit I witnessed a high number of youth engaged in activities ranging from completing homework to participating in exercise classes, with a few young women even preparing for their group's participation in the upcoming Los Angeles Marathon.

The visit encouraged me to think about the approach being taken back home in my community. It left me feeling invigorated and motivated to make a difference for our youth, just like the Police Activities League does for the youth of Santa Monica.

The next issue I want to talk about is population growth. While I was doorknocking in my electorate I noticed a number of homes that were up for sale, and I was able to spend some time with residents, talking about the reasons behind their decision to sell. The key theme that underpinned all these conversations was that the Northern Territory was not valued as a place that Territorians wanted to live in. Residents raised their concerns about the cost of living, with power and water price hikes; insurance premium hikes after the sale of the TIO; and the lack of jobs available to them and their families.

That leads me to my next issue: employment. I want to use the example of one resident I spoke with twice during my campaign. Neither he nor his sons were unable to gain employment in their areas of expertise.

This gentleman raised the possibility of relocating his family down south so they could gain employment. Stories like these are far too common, which is why we need a significant investment in jobs for Territorians.

Senior Territorians is the next subject on my agenda. Earlier this week I was fortunate enough to meet the Council on the Ageing Northern Territory, or COTA NT. As a peak body, COTA does a great job looking after our senior Territorians. During this meeting, COTA representatives highlighted the importance of keeping our senior Territorians in the NT so they can contribute to not only our community, but also to our economy. When we lose our senior Territorians to other states they take with them their knowledge, pension and mortgage. We cannot afford to lose our senior Territorians as they are essential contributors to the Northern Territory on more than one level.

I also spoke with COTA about Labor's plan to support senior Territorians to continue working later in life and the benefits that can stem from this. It is vital that Territorians feel comfortable engaging in employment if they wish, including our seniors. As the assistant minister for seniors, I look forward to working with Minister Wakefield, the responsible minister, to support our senior Territorians.

Throughout my campaign I was encouraged to meet with business owners and hear their stories of how they were faring at the time. Unfortunately there was only one business of around 20 staff which advised me that the business was doing okay. I listened to stories and concerns about the state of the economy and the lack of trust and confidence that business owners had in the previous government. Business owners spoke of the challenges they faced in the tendering process, and the disappointment and frustration they felt when larger tenders were awarded to companies that did not fit in the buy local catchcry of the Country Liberal government.

I am pleased to now see the inclusion of a strengthened set of provisions for government in regard to the Buy Local scheme this time around. This ensures more of our Territory's money stays here in the Territory. These strengthened measures have been included to support Territory businesses and to help grow the Territory economy and jobs.

The previous government created turmoil and chaos on a daily basis during its term, and this impacted how we, as a territory, were viewed in regard to our ability to do good business. The Michael Gunner Labor government understands the importance of instilling confidence in the Northern Territory, and we have worked hard to achieve this since being elected.

The lack of respect for and trust in government was evident in not only my electorate, but right throughout the Northern Territory. Territorians raised their concerns time and again that the shenanigans of the previous government were damaging the Northern Territory's reputation, and Territorians felt embarrassed that their elected representatives were making headlines continuously for all the wrong reasons.

That was the main reason I put my hand up for parliament. I wanted to be part of a professional team that focuses on the needs of Territorians and works as a team to achieve outcomes. I also wanted to work with like-minded individuals who will continue to look for better ways of doing business.

I am extremely supportive of the Chief Minister's decision to appoint all backbenchers as assistant ministers, as this decision reflects all the ideals I signed up to, and I commend the Chief Minister for taking that approach.

I have heard the opposition continually object to the appointment of assistant ministers. Perhaps they do not see the value of having more opportunities for us backbenchers to provide our expertise, input and support to our team members. Nonetheless, I believe this appointment is a positive step, focused on delivering the best outcomes for Territorians as a wholly united Labor team of 18.

The final issue I want to talk on is this government's delivery of the First Home Owner Grant. I accessed this scheme when I bought my home 10 years ago, which, as the Treasurer spoke of in Question Time, provided me with an asset that helped set me up with financial stability, and I am extremely grateful for that.

I have many family, friends and constituents who would love to buy their own home. Alas, this was not a reality for them under the previous government, because they wanted to purchase the home they were living in and not have to build a brand-new house in a community they were not familiar with or were not living in.

A few weeks out from the August election a friend of mine told me, with a smile on her face and excitement in her voice, that she could not wait for Labor to win government so she could buy a home for her and her five-year-old son. That is the outcome we are looking for—to support our Territorians in buying their first home; to support parents in their dream to provide their children with a home to call their own; and to keep Territorians in the Territory.

The Chief Minister stated many benefits that will stem from the jobs plan, for all Territorians. I look forward to following the progress of this for the people of my electorate and beyond.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the Chief Minister's statement on jobs, detailing the government's plans for employment stimulation.

I have been fortunate enough in my time in the Territory—or, more to the point, through my early and adult life. I have worked in a number of different roles in a number of fields and industries. I started on farms around country South Australia with my family—to numerous cleaning jobs for pocket money, completing an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic, and then working my way into the electrical industry.

I am extremely proud of my journey and I have been fortunate enough to understand the importance of a strong employment market and training grounds. There is no doubt that jobs will come from business confidence, and confidence will grow from government stability. Over the last few years we have seen constant changes and turmoil eroding business confidence. Instead of planning for the years beyond INPEX some years ago, the new government has been left to do that at the eleventh hour. It is a challenge we will take on with great enthusiasm.

While we are on the subject of INPEX, there has been much chatter about redundancies from that area. I want to clarify that this has happened over the last three years at INPEX. It is an unfortunate but probable part of the major project industry. Instead of unions doing nothing about that, as many on the other side of the Chamber think, they are already in deep negotiations, landing on exactly how many people will be made redundant, what sets of skills are involved in that crew, how many locals are being made redundant and how many can be transferred to other parts of the project.

There is a very proactive role going on to make sure as few locals as possible are being demobilised or made redundant at times like this. They will ensure those people have the best opportunity to be retrained and give them the best possible chance of re-employment, either on other parts of the site or back in the community, as they reintegrate into the employment market.

Very few local workers will come back into the market because of the recent projected redundancies. However, there will, in the coming years, be thousands of workers coming back into the local market. This group of people has been terribly let down by no forward planning, and we will address that over the coming years.

One of the programs I am familiar with, which has improved the lives of young adults in the Northern Territory, is the apprenticeship program, which ensures young Territorians have the best opportunity to stay in the Territory. Some may leave at different stages of their lives, but they will always come back to the Territory if they have a good trade behind them, because this is where their family is.

In the 1990s, when I started at Power and Water, there were very few apprentices employed there. I, and some others, lobbied extremely hard to make sure Territory families had the opportunity to secure long-term ongoing employment in the Northern Territory. The flavour back then, unfortunately, was to employ tradesmen from southern states to save the cost of training apprentices. It was a very short-term view. The tradesmen from down south rarely stayed and the recruitment costs were quite high.

As I mentioned previously, I am extremely proud to have worked with business. At one stage, during the 1990s, Power and Water had over 80 apprentices in its program. They were all Territory families that were invested in staying here. They are all starting their own families now. This is a very significant part of investing long term in the Territory. These workers now have kids who are going to school, playing sports, and are invested in many other facets of our community.

This government was elected on its commitments to children, trust and jobs. To me, these three things are intrinsically aligned. Some of the announcements and policies will garner short-term benefits and some will take a lot longer to reap rewards, but they are all aligned with the core values of this government.

We cannot expect jobs to flow if we are not looking after our kids, if there is not enough appropriate housing and if there is no trust in our elected officials. They are the core values of this team, and I am extremely proud to be playing a role in delivering on those outcomes.

A good job gives a sense of pride and self-worth that is priceless to an individual and valuable to our community. None of this can be achieved without properly supporting businesses, especially small to medium businesses, which I believe are the backbone of our Territory's economy. I find it outrageous that the opposition members make sly jibes about our jobs plan, when in their four years we saw more empty shops through the city than at any other point.

We had the privilege of spending some time with the Manufacturers Council some months ago. My son is an apprentice fitter and he was devastated to see and hear about the number of fabrication shops through the Darwin and Palmerston region that were at the point of closing their doors, sacking their workers and having to walk away.

Unfortunately the previous CLP government had its head firmly stuck in the sand on this issue. While local businesses were asking to be listened to, nothing of any substance was put forward. The message from the industry was loud and clear: if there were tighter controls in place to make sure work stayed in the NT, many of these workshops and dozens of workers and families would not have had to leave the NT. I will speak with the people from that council again tonight to make sure the lines of communication stay open. I am sure they will be happy to update me on how some of the new programs are already panning out. As the Treasurer detailed in her speech, the Chamber of Commerce has already noted that some of the programs instigated are having a positive effect.

There will be emphasis on assisting communities to build on their social and economic status. There will be job programs concentrated towards ongoing jobs. They will ensure workers are properly rewarded, and education programs will support getting Territorians into employment positions where they may not have normally found themselves. These programs will be innovative and they will concentrate on not only traditional career paths, but jobs for the future.

A range of companies are excited by the future of the NT, and they will bring a host of new technologies, challenges and rewards to the Top End in the coming years. Most surprisingly, that does not happen by cutting support services, youth services and education programs. It happens by investing in new technology, trusting Territorians to take up the challenge, training them and engaging with frontline business.

The previous government did not plan for the future past the INPEX construction phase; that was one of its main and crucial jobs. Without going into the details—I believe we are all familiar with the previous government's antics. There were too many scandals and distractions, and too many people were more interested in themselves than the future of our economy and our workers. As I have mentioned, we will deal with that over the next 12 to 18 months and we look forward to doing that.

This government will aim to make as many families as possible stay in the Northern Territory. It will be a welcome return, as the previous government oversaw thousands of Territory families having to leave and relocate to southern states.

The Territory is, undoubtedly, known for being the land of opportunity. I am sure many in the Chamber can attest to that. I certainly would not have had some of the opportunities which have been presented to me in my recent life if I was in a southern state. I am very appreciative of the opportunities the Territory opens up. People have opportunities presented to them more frequently here than anywhere else across the country, and we need to promote that.

Supporting seniors to stay in the workforce longer will help them stay in the Territory. It will also help drive our economy, as a number of people have stated, to help families stay together. It will give our seniors the opportunity to babysit their grandkids, and it will give everybody the opportunity to stay in the Territory for longer. They have long been forgotten in the Northern Territory. We need to stem the flow of passionate Territorians who head south as soon as they retire.

Keeping our valued seniors here will ensure more families stay because the grandkids can visit their nanna and pop with a quick car trip, rather than a flight down south. This is so important in getting people to invest in the Territory, and the more people who stay the more our local businesses will be supported—an obvious and crucial element to creating and sustaining jobs.

This government's Buy Local campaign will see more businesses thrive through simple measures being implemented—local inclusions. That is one of the assistant ministerial portfolios that I hold, and I look forward to working with businesses that are benefiting from that commitment, ensuring the 30% local content right through all government procurement is enacted, properly overseen and audited—which is part of the reasons those programs have fallen down in the past. This now includes all government capital grants and controls introduced right across the subcontracting groups, which is traditionally where a host of the Territory businesses have been let down in the past.

The groups that have been continually let down over the last few years by a lack of auditing processes have made it clear to us that they are not looking for a handout; they are simply asking to be given a fair go at winning work that is released through the Territory. One of the starkest examples came from the Manufacturing Council some months ago. A body of work had been tendered for and there had been an appraisal. The overarching contractor had put a local contractor down as the supplier and won the body of work, but then did not use that Territory contractor. He sub-contracted it to a southern competitor because he was able to get it done about 3% cheaper.

At a time in the Territory when a number of metal fabricating shops were closing, it was heartbreaking for those people to see themselves listed on a contract, with no auditing being undertaken to prove they were being used as the contractor. In some cases they were even called back when the overarching contractor had complaints about the integrity of the work. But, essentially, they were missing out on that work and companies from down south were benefiting. A stronger auditing process will help to keep hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of work in the Northern Territory, and I look forward to working closely with these councils to make sure that happens.

Stimulus projects worth millions of dollars will be released across all regions of the Territory, and across all sectors. These injections will be designed to reinforce this government's commitment to and support of Territory values. This will involve well-thought-out policy, with sensible and stable introduction, and consultation with all stakeholders—not in a rushed fashion, as the other side of the Chamber has tried to encourage us to believe would be the best way to go. There are steady heads in the game at the moment.

Our message from day one was putting locals first, and that is what our government will do. Locals must come first to ensure the money flows locally, and that will further strengthen our economy. There will be a broad scope to work with. Defence, food and agribusiness groups, gas and mineral stakeholders, our tourism industry, education, arts and renewables groups will be heavily consulted and well looked after.

As the minister for Trade has explained, we want to see Territory products on shelves right around the world. While continuing to work hard in our traditional trades and other areas, we will focus on increasing training, upskilling and investments across all sectors.

There is a real balance to getting this right. There is no need for people in any industry to be unemployed if we can transition properly. There is a very strong commitment from this government to renewable energy; there is no reason that cannot be a growth industry. As one part of our industry starts to fall back and make people redundant, there is no reason they cannot be trained into industries that have an ongoing and sustainable future.

We have already heard from the Deputy Chief Minister about the substantial uptake of the First Home Owner Grant. This is only the beginning of this government's injection of funds and confidence into the Territory, which will spread beyond the housing market. More people will stay in the Territory thanks to this government's \$10 000 home renovation grant. More local tradies will get work, and that money will filter through our local economy. We are already seeing some relief through the Territory, which some would argue started back in August, when the previous government went into caretaker mode.

I welcome the announcement by the Chief Minister, and I look forward to working closely with business through my assistant ministerial portfolios to ensure all Territorians get a better chance to have meaningful, long-term careers in the Northern Territory.

I want to reiterate that we have steady hands at the helm and we will continue to take all the time needed to listen to Territorians, something that was sadly lacking over the last few years, and which Territorians have spoken to us about over the last few months.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak on a matter of great importance to Territorians which affects each of us—jobs, employment, economic participation.

As I mentioned in this Chamber last week, when we met for the first time, Territorians are at a crossroads. We have experienced and continue to experience an economic downturn in the Territory that has left many Territorians jobless, communities disempowered and places like my home, Alice Springs, struggling. People are struggling to make ends meet because of the lack of jobs, economic stimulus and planning for our economic future by the previous government.

On 27 August our community was given the option to continue with a government that had no idea how to conduct or manage itself in this Chamber, let alone manage the business of the Northern Territory. The choice was clear, and it was evidenced by the 27 August election result that Territorians made the choice to be empowered and supported, and to reach their full potential through economic support and development.

Some people may say that I am just here to talk and support my colleagues, and they may ask what this speech will achieve. This is a very important speech tonight, to make sure the voices of the people of Namatjira are heard in this Chamber and to ensure we continue our commitment to build a better, brighter economic future for them.

Many people in the electorate of Namatjira are asking questions right now. They do not care about politics or political agendas; they just want the opportunity to engage in meaningful employment and be supported, to have the opportunities to grow and to have confidence in the business sectors of our community. They have real-life concerns. Many people in Namatjira, particularly in the bush, have spent many months looking for work and ways to engage in the Territory's economic future.

These men and women who have grown up across the electorate of Namatjira, and the Northern Territory, grew up having confidence in the Territory's economy. That confidence has been eroded. I am confident, now that Territory Labor is in government, that confidence can be returned, the confidence the CLP removed after its devastating reign of power.

This government's commitment to and aspirations for Territorians is apparent. It is shown by our commitment towards growth in food and agribusiness to intensify beef production as a cornerstone of the economic future; introduction of a detailed reporting mechanism to those who have been unsuccessful in tenders and funding applications so they are able to improve for the next application; a major commitment to regional and remote towns that businesses will be able to have confidence in the government, surrounded by innovative measures that will continue to grow and support business; and implementation of a rolling infrastructure plan that supports the future, allowing local businesses to prepare for tenders.

This is leadership and innovation. This is a Territory Labor government. Territorians deserve confidence, which was eroded by corruption and lack of respect of the CLP.

I am delighted to hear that when Territory Labor took office we immediately reinstated support for first home owners purchasing existing properties by removing the payment of stamp duty on the first \$500 000 of their purchase. This will provide Territorians buying their first home with relief worth \$24 000, which can now be spent on their deposit, allowing them to get into the market.

Additionally, for the 2016–17 and 2017–18 financial years we have provided a grant of \$10 000 for home renovations and purchase of household goods, which will allow people to have the opportunity to complete minor works and add the comforts of home.

Our government will leverage the Northern Territory's unique strengths, combining the expertise from local voices and local Territory businesses to, together, build a bright Territory for all. Providing the best economic opportunities for everyone is very important for this government. We are committed to making sure job creation and economic growth continues to be a centrepiece of this government. We are serious about meaningful employment for all Territorians. This means making sure jobs are safe, properly resourced, meaningful and not tokenistic, and that they are sustainable into the future. A jobs plan is what the Northern Territory has been lacking for the last four years.

Our plans are clear, concise, smart and adaptable in challenging times. Our plans for jobs have been clearly articulated in our policies. Early childhood and remote housing are two areas that will greatly assist in the bush; they are intimately connected to growing our Territorians, personally and professionally.

We cannot expect people to hold down a job if they do not have appropriate housing, and, with the condition that some of these houses are in—that we have inherited—it is not surprising that people right across the Territory are unable to engage in meaningful employment. Some of the people in the electorate

of Namatjira do not even have a home. We are in the 21st century, and people in my electorate are, to this day, living in car bodies.

We cannot expect people to get a job if they do not have a good education. It is very important that all Territorians have access to quality education so they, too, can engage in meaningful employment. The option to aspire to their goals and desires—these are just some of the top priorities of this government.

Our government will boost the tourism industry, creating space and opportunities for local businesses to grow and bloom. Our plans for tourism will boost and encourage interstate markets and international markets, such as India and China. How will we do this? I will tell the Assembly now.

We will renew, refresh and create interesting tourist attractions. I am very proud to have the opportunity to be the assistant minister for the iconic national Indigenous art gallery in Alice Springs, an initiative that will not only create many jobs for locals in Central Australia, but a project that will showcase and recognise our nation's first Australians and the wonderful contributions they have made through songs, stories, culture and art.

We will bring back the Arafura Games. This, too, will engage with markets in Asia to make the event as big and effective as possible, bringing money and jobs to the Territory. I am very confident and proud of my colleague, the Member for Sanderson, Kate Worden. I am sure she will do a wonderful job in bringing the Arafura Games back to the Territory.

Boosting tourism attractions by investing \$100m is a commitment of this government. We will do that through our national iconic Indigenous art trails across the Territory. This includes \$50m for the iconic national Indigenous art gallery in Alice Springs; \$20m for an iconic national Indigenous cultural centre in Alice Springs; and \$30m for gallery wings in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land. We will link community galleries across the Northern Territory, showcasing the wonderful collection of art and work that is done in our communities and homelands.

Capital grants for community galleries—these projects will deliver major investments to the Territory across all the regions. I am confident this government, a government I am proud to be part of, will develop and grow jobs in the electorate of Namatjira and the greater Northern Territory. We will do this by working with Indigenous communities and their representative organisations to make sure our government and Indigenous people living in communities participate in economic development and economic growth, and contribute to making a vibrant economy that means they will all be involved in meaningful employment.

My electorate, in my eyes, is the best electorate in the Northern Territory and has many people willing, wanting and asking to participate in the workforce. We must not ignore their call. They deserve to have the same opportunities as people living in our towns and cities in the Northern Territory.

They deserve to participate in employment that is meaningful, not tokenistic. They deserve to have the opportunities to participate in shaping industries, business opportunities, Indigenous enterprise and partnerships, and under this government they will be consulted and heard every step of the way.

Indigenous communities will receive strong infrastructure spending programs, particularly focused on providing housing, to ensure opportunities for creating work in these communities occur. Labor will set Indigenous employment targets in key government fields.

I am passionate about Namatjira, and I am passionate about the Northern Territory and growing our economy; providing station owners in Namatjira the best possible opportunities to succeed in agriculture; providing rural residents of Alice Springs the best opportunities to succeed in economic participation; making sure home-based contractors are supported and have strong representation on local issues; and supporting and encouraging Namatjira's top tourism destinations to grow and adapt to evolving markets.

Jobs growth is in the interest of all Territorians; therefore, we must include all Territorians in the process. That means supporting working on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Economic growth is the key to providing a better future for all.

I will make sure our government works to give Territorians the opportunity to be innovative and to unleash the creative forces of the public and private sectors. Under this government the Northern Territory no longer has to suffer from the oppression of distance. The Northern Territory's proximity to Asia creates an opportunity for us to become a powerhouse economy to Asia.

This will be one of the many items this government will be focused on.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs, and I welcome his announcement on jobs.

It is clear that over the past four years the NT has suffered from a lack of economic growth and jobs, particularly in local businesses. I remember, earlier this year, getting on a bus with my Labor colleagues and spending the day visiting many local businesses in Darwin, Berrimah, Winnellie and Palmerston. The organisations we visited spoke about how they were large businesses four years ago, but now they have been reduced to near financial bankruptcy.

They spoke about the good times four years ago, when they employed 150 staff. They spoke about how it had changed and how they can now only afford to employ 20 local staff. They spoke about how they were employing local teenagers, trainees and apprentices four years ago, and now they cannot not take any local kids on board. It did not add up. I asked myself how this could happen when the NT was conducting some of the biggest developments in industries across Australia. It simply did not add up.

I recall one story from our bus visit to a Territory family-owned business. As we got off the bus a lady, who was a business owner, was very upset. She threw many heated questions towards our members. Our members listened to these concerns and then asked what she felt the solution was. The first thing she said was, 'No one has been listening to us. We have tried to tell our story to the CLP government, but nothing happens. We have put in for many contracts in the Territory; we work on weekends, and we used to at a good price. Still, we do not get local work in such a large market. This affects our family business, the local kids and the economy.'

Our Labor members explained our government's plan, which includes working together with Territorians in small businesses and ensuring local contracts include real local businesses, which supports the employment of local people and builds our economy from within the Northern Territory.

This lady went quiet. Her shoulders dropped and she looked relieved. Following this pause our members asked this lady a question. 'Can we ask how long you think your business can last under the current Country Liberal Party government?' This lady burst into tears. The tears rolled from her eyes and, as she cried, she said, after a very long pause, 'Maybe a month or two at most. We have been crying out for 18 months.' I felt gutted to hear a lifelong story of a Territory family business that had so many good intentions, and provided so much to the Territory, being treated by its own CLP government in this way. It was an insult to Territorians and local businesses.

This lady's name was Tracy, and I thank her for her honesty and frankness. I am sure everyone who was there that day felt her pain. Everyone who attended that day knew how much work we needed to do. Not only did we need to win government, we also needed to support our local businesses, people and families first, not second or third.

I am pleased to say we won government, and I am more pleased that our jobs plan will support local businesses and families.

Another story that comes to mind is when I was doorknocking in Gunn. I listened to many people and families on the doors. One was a lady who ran a small business in conveyancing. The topic arose of her local business and how badly it was going due to no houses being sold and the market dying. This was a locally-owned business which employed a staff component of 45 people, and it was now down to eight staff. I asked the same question, 'How long do you think you can last?' The lady's reply was, 'Just hurry up and get in to government. We want Labor in; you have a plan and you are listening to the people. Your plan to open up the housing market will create jobs and get our economy going again, as well as my business.'

There are many stories like that. We also heard of a real estate business that was suffering. Some of my friends work in this field and constantly told me how badly it was going under the CLP. Nothing was moving in the local housing industry, to the point where a real estate office closed in Palmerston and people lost their jobs.

Only 60-odd days in, this Michael Gunner-led government has already made some positive changes in the NT, many of which we have heard today, including reconfiguring government so we are all working together and saving taxpayer dollars; opening up the housing market for previously-owned houses; changing contract guidelines and practices to ensure locals are able to gain work tenders; investing in our skills; investing in children; commencing consultation and work on remote housing; rewriting of legislation in

the Territory Families portfolio; government increasing to a five-year cycle; the independent commission against corruption, which we spoke about earlier this week; and investing in tourism, with the new announcement this week that we are bringing the Melbourne and Adelaide Crows football clubs to Darwin and Alice Springs in 2017, which I hear is gaining a lot of interest from interstate visitors, and some have already booked their airfares.

All these changes complement each other, and there are more to come. They support a collaborative way forward in creating jobs, growing our economy and, most importantly, providing Territory businesses with local work and local contracts. It is simple mathematics—live here, invest here, spend here and grow here together. We are putting Territorians first. Investing in Territorians and long-term initiatives is a smart direction.

Territorians are very hard workers. We live in some of the harshest environments, and the people who are invested in the Territory are still here. They want to contribute, and they want quality education and good health for their children. They also want jobs for their children in the future, and this government is providing that direction.

I heard the Chief Minister talk about investing in children. I am, as are many of my colleagues, a keen supporter of investing in our children at all ages. As a father, and a junior footy coach, I cannot praise this approach enough. Engaging children from a very young age will give them the best opportunity in life. We all know the best way this can happen is through our frontline workers with children: teachers; support staff; and special needs staff.

We heard the Minister for Education explain to us earlier this week how the CLP cut jobs and significant funding to our schools, year after year, over the past four years—shocking, to say the least. How could any child have a chance when the foundations were being eroded by the previous government?

As we have heard, this government is bringing back teachers, support staff and special needs staff, plus it is adding funding to every school in the NT. To ensure our children have the best possible chance and are able to maximise their opportunity, they must be healthy, and engaged in learning from a young age. It will take time for change, as many of my colleagues have said; however, we must start somewhere, and we must not be confined by a term of government. These are our children and they are here for the long term. Our policies will reflect that we are here to support them for the long term.

The health and wellbeing of our children is also of the highest priority. As a health practitioner for 14 years, in some of the most confronting issues regarding alcohol and other drugs, I saw the devastating effects it has on families with little support and few avenues to take when it gets too much. It affects children in so many ways. I was very pleased earlier this week when Minister McCarthy pointed out the issues with housing. The social determinants and health of our children and families affects them in so many ways. Those things also affect us and our services. If we do not get it right it will affect our children in the long term. We are working on long-term approaches and good, strong foundations to build from.

We are investing in our children, local jobs and the local economy. We are united on this front. We make no apologies for wanting the best for Territorians and putting them and their families first. We have more to do and we are very keen to do it. This new government continues to listen to its people, and it will deliver. We know there will be hard times, but we will deliver and continue to support Territorians. Investing in the health, wellbeing and education of our children will deliver more Territorians who can work, and that will create the jobs and future wealth of our community.

As a new member of this parliament I am very lucky to be working in a Michael Gunner-led government. This government is a team, and it is positive and constructive. Many of my friends work in local businesses and frontline services or are public servants. They are pleased that they now have a voice and a government that is investing in them and their families for the future.

The stories I just told were told many times by Territorians during my doorknocking ventures. I am so pleased that we are taking positive steps forward while still consulting with the people and families of the Northern Territory.

I wish to thank the people and local businesses of Brennan for sharing their stories. I will continue to work hard to ensure our children and their health, wellbeing and future prospects in local jobs, businesses and growth in the Territory comes first.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement on jobs. As a born and bred Territorian I know how important it is to have opportunities and access to jobs that are home grown and attractive—that offer to keep people here.

I was personally introduced to employment long before I understood the concept. My parents taught my older sister and me the importance of contributing to our family unit through chores. As a young person I had chores that I loved, like feeding the chooks and ducks in the backyard, and the chores that were not my favourite, like cleaning up my room and drying the dishes.

After the early introduction into the work routine at home, in my later years, as a teen, I started to get a little more savvy about this work business, as most teens do, and then the chores were attached to pocket money. Doing home jobs for pocket money was my first real introduction to work life. What I realise now is that this simple introduction into the world of work gave me a foundational understanding of how individuals' actions can contribute to the wider good of the community.

I agreed wholeheartedly with the Member for Stuart when he said education is the key. Coming from a teaching background, this is what I agree with: there are many different pathways for our young people to go onto, such as apprenticeships, training, certificates and university degrees. It is about finding what works for that person, allowing them to contribute genuinely and productively to society.

I also acknowledge that there are gaps in the system. For example, when we encourage our students to attend and complete school, sometimes in remote communities there is little or no opportunity to gain a job after Year 12. What is the point of motivation to finish school if there are no jobs available to our young people? Our government will work hard to fix that. We will not be able to fix everything overnight, and we acknowledge that, but we will consult and work hard with Territorians to find locally-based solutions. It is not about reinventing the wheel; it is about looking at issues with an open and flexible mind. It is about listening to and consulting with community, and then acting with community.

With regard to education, it is said that at home, if there is at least one adult working, it is more likely children will attend school. The more adults working in a household the more likely children will attend school and aim for a job afterwards.

Some talking points that I want to share with the House in regard to jobs include some of the great work that is happening in my electorate of Arnhem. For example, in the community of Burunga, an hour south of Katherine, there are some great CDP programs working in the community. I have seen firsthand the results of some of this great work. Some innovative actions have been happening in the community, and there is a real sense of pride in that work.

For example, old 40-gallon drums have been turned into furniture—stools, seats, park benches—and this is creating a lot of pride in the community. Funky designs and great artwork jazz up the 40-gallon drum furniture. I have put in an order to get one for myself.

In Barunga there are also women working in the centre, learning full-scale upholstery skills and quilting art. I was amazed by the beautiful work the women in the centre were doing, reupholstering full couches, lounges and seats so they can take the furniture back to their own houses and teach the skills to other young women.

Also in my electorate, in Manyallaluk, also known as Eva Valley, some great woodwork projects have started, as well as gardening, in the hope of improving tourism in that small and beautiful community.

Our Labor government is extremely supportive of the expansion of the Indigenous rangers program. There are many jobs in this area around the Northern Territory already, and we want to expand this program so we can get more women and men into jobs—youth and seniors—and recognise that caring for country is a very hard job, but a very rewarding one.

Our remote housing policy—many jobs can be created through our policy, such as construction, administration and getting locally-trained maintenance and repair teams. I know the importance of local maintenance teams, as when I was living in the remote community of Numbulwar I had a giant hole in my bathroom for 17 months. I reported it through the correct channels, month after month, and nothing was done. In the end, in a local authority meeting with Territory Housing—the next day this ridiculous hole in my bathroom wall was fixed by a local maintenance repair team. The skills and knowledge, and the jobs attached to them, can be utilised in communities.

Roads and infrastructure projects—along the Roper Highway, in my electorate and across the Barkly electorate, there are some great maintenance and upgrades happening. I have seen many people from the Roper Ngukurr community involved in the infrastructure project, and this is talked about when you go to the community. A lot of pride is shown by the families working on those projects—local people doing local jobs for the local community.

You will not hear me say this often, but one thing the previous CLP government focused on which I agreed with was Indigenous economic development. I am proud to say our Labor government will continue that focus. Indigenous economic development is a massive part of our Territory future, and it is great to know the Gunner government will support that. We are looking at innovative ways to push that forward.

Our Labor government focuses on employment, jobs and opportunities for Territorians and those who are attracted to working in the beautiful place we call the Northern Territory.

Mr COSTA (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the Chief Minister's announcement on jobs for the Northern Territory.

I will talk about my experience working in remote communities. Over the past 20 years I have witnessed, firsthand, job creation in remote communities. In 1996 I ran the CDEP program at Pirlangimpi on the Tiwi Islands. We had a total of 96 participants placed in various jobs across the then Pirlangimpi Community Government Council. We had participants working in administration, workshops, rubbish collection, retail, bakeries, the golf course, forestry and other areas such as art centres. Back in those days the work ethic was very high. There was a sense of pride in the community. We were funded by ATSIC and, back then, if we had surplus funds we could provide top-up wages to participants who wanted to work hard.

TITEB, the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board, was formed on the Tiwi Islands as the RTO to service educational and training needs on the Tiwi Islands. That increased opportunities for Indigenous people to get qualifications and skills to move on and get better jobs. Working in partnership with various businesses in the community, we developed a pathway to employment for participants to gain skills so they could become more effective in their role. We created a labour market so the community could be sustainable.

During my time as CEO and Director of Community Development with the Tiwi Islands local government we had close to a rate of 85% Indigenous employment across both islands. We had real jobs for Tiwi people by supporting locals and encouraging them to work by awarding incentives to those who wanted full-time jobs. We had a total of 510 employees; 430 were on CDP, which was funded through the Commonwealth government back then, and 80 were employed by the NT Government through local government and NGOs.

Whilst working with the local government we, the council, introduced policies on succession planning. Where there was a non-Tiwi person employed, for example, as a manager, it was that person's role to find, train and mentor a Tiwi person to eventually take on that role. This had its ups and downs depending on contracts and timing, but in the long run it paid off.

We had road crews and housing crews. Our road crews mainly consisted of Indigenous men; they loved working out bush during the Dry Season. I can remember the smiles from one ear to the other come pay day, when people came to collect their pay, if they received full pay. That gave me a sense of pride.

Our housing crews worked tirelessly doing repairs and maintenance on our houses. Our mob gained certificates in housing construction and civil operations by utilising our local RTO, which was TITEB. The parks and gardens crews loved it when the Wet Season came; we would buy new equipment, such as ride-on mowers and tractors, or a new rubbish truck for rubbish collection. They felt a sense of ownership and took responsibility for the equipment.

We had intervention programs, which the Tiwi people ran. Our night patrol and early childhood programs were run by locals in all our communities; this still continues today. Our administration consisted of local ladies, senior and young, doing payroll, accounts receivable, bookkeeping and managing the office areas.

During my time in Health, I helped develop the new Tiwi health advisory group. This is a new way for our Tiwi people to move forward to a more community-controlled health centre. The Tiwi Islands have about 40 Indigenous identified jobs, varying from health practitioners, managers, AOD workers, engagement officers, private cleaners, strong women workers, mental health workers, trainee health workers and admin positions.

These jobs play an important role in the community; they provide support and education in the delivery of services from different programs from government and NGOs. By employing locals in real, proper jobs, communities feel safe and proud. I am a strong believer that by employing locals you build capacity and security so the community feels they have autonomy and ownership.

Things I would like to see 20 years into the future with this Gunner-led government—employment and opportunities are key issues raised with me as I travel around my electorate. A key issue is the opportunities available under Labor's \$1.1bn 10-year plan for remote Indigenous housing. We are determined to see more local decision-making, program design and employment opportunities for local people as a result of housing investment, including more local management of repairs and maintenance.

I am pleased that Labor has committed to a program that will see 500 additional Indigenous teachers, nurses and police over the next 10 years. I am also pleased that Labor has committed to supporting locally-engaged government employees with access to government employee housing—potentially more home ownership in remote communities.

Another important initiative is the Gunner government's commitment to five-year funding agreements with service providers, providing more certainty, budget commitments across the life of government and, most importantly, more capacity for service providers to train and develop their local skilled workforce. Creating jobs is not just about government funding; it is also about supporting enterprise and commercial at all levels. Industries like music—(inaudible) band, B2M. This also includes tourism—Injalak Arts, Maningrida Art Centre, Tiwi and Munupi Arts—as well as fishing, arts and craft, aquaculture, and pastoralism.

I am very much looking forward to the economic summits and discussions about the development of strong plans for enterprise on Aboriginal lands. I am pleased that the Gunner Labor government understands the fundamental importance of understanding the local values and priorities in supporting traditional land owners in developing their ideas and economic activity on their lands and seas. I am grateful that the Gunner government has already made a strong commitment to supporting our maturing land and sea management groups such as the rangers and sea rangers.

Strong local confidence in local people's own capacity to provide strong stewardship to monitor land use is important in expanding economic activity on our country. I am also mindful of the important role these groups play in regard to fostering local leadership and innovation, including small businesses based on land and sea resources in our communities.

Education is an important part of the pathway to employment. School attendance, more local control of schools and community participation in education is important. Local school leadership ensuring strong alignment between school-based education programs and local needs is also important. The introduction of marine studies at Milingimbi School comes to mind as a good example. I would like to make special mention of Esther at Gunbalanya, an example of local leadership, developing a local school board and changes to school terms to improve school attendance.

I also want to touch on infrastructure, enabling economic activity and connections to market—everyone getting a fair share. I am already having conversations in government about priorities in regard to roads, barge landings and, importantly, communications infrastructure. I am very pleased to see the commitment to a rolling 10-year infrastructure plan, providing transparency and certainty to local communities about plans affecting them, which provides opportunities to align their plans to maximise local benefits from that work.

One of the key issues I am acutely aware of is the need for transparency in the government arrangements being made to support business activity in Aboriginal communities. The Gunner government is all about rebuilding trust, transparency and accountability in government.

We will be a focused government, ensuring government investments make a difference. We will work to ensure the business community develops greater confidence in investing in enterprise in Aboriginal communities. Creating jobs, both in our bush communities and in larger centres, and providing good services are the core business of this government.

I thank my colleagues for their commitment to this objective, knowing that this is an essential pathway to family and community wellbeing. I thank the Chief Minister for the strong statement on jobs.

Debate adjourned.

PAPER TABLED

Select Committee on Opening the Parliament to the People – Green Paper on Parliamentary Reform

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, I table the Select Committee on Opening the Parliament to the People's report, Green Paper on Parliamentary Reform, and the related minutes.

The committee presents this green paper to the Assembly today to aid its call for public submissions on how to open the parliament to the people. This green paper proposes a number of specific reforms, and invites public comment and further suggestions.

Over a year ago Territory Labor released discussion papers on restoring integrity to our government and reforming our democracy, and Madam Speaker tabled a discussion paper on Assembly committee reform. The Standing Orders Committee of the previous Assembly also tabled reports earlier in the year which looked at a number of reform options which were deferred for consideration by this Assembly. The green paper brings together a number of those reforms and suggests a way forward in the one document. It proposes fundamental changes to the way the Assembly operates.

First and foremost, the green paper proposes making it ordinary process that the Assembly seeks public comments on Bills. The Assembly will refer every Bill, apart from those it declares to be urgent, to a committee to conduct consultation on the Bill following its first reading in the Assembly. That committee will seek public submissions on the Bill; the committee may also have public briefings from the relevant agency and conduct hearings to enable stakeholders to discuss their views. It will then consider the issues raised and report to the Assembly on its views on the Bill and any amendments it may propose. The next day, when the bill comes on, the member in charge of the Bill may move to adopt the proposed amendments, then move the Bill's second reading.

The second reading debate will be informed by the public consultation conducted by the committee, including any detailed explanations on the operation of the Bill from the relevant agency. Following the second reading, any further amendments can be considered in the consideration in detail stage of the Bill before its third reading.

The above proposal would open up the Assembly's law-making process to the people in a profound way. It differs from the current process in that community comments on proposed laws will be included as part of the Assembly's proceedings; consultation will become the norm; the consultation process will be public, with submissions and hearings subject to public scrutiny so the merits of the proposed laws can be critically examined; and the consultation will involve all parties, with government, opposition and Independent members asking questions and considering the evidence.

If this process were in place, any person or organisation with concerns about a Bill could make a submission to the committee and explain their concerns. That submission could then be placed on the committee's website, where anyone with an interest in the Bill could read it and make their own submission. The committee could then invite stakeholders to public hearings to elaborate on their views and respond to other submissions. This will open up the law-making process for public involvement, making stakeholders participants in the public debate.

The second fundamental change proposed in the green paper is the introduction of a portfolio-based scrutiny committee system. Each government agency will be allocated to a committee for ongoing scrutiny. These committees will have a broad remit, taking on the responsibilities of the Assembly's existing committees, consulting on Bills referred by the Assembly and a number of additional functions.

The roles of those committees for their portfolio areas will include any matter referred by the Assembly or a minister; the provisions of Bills and Regulations, also called subordinate legislation; the impact of Bills and subordinate legislation on rights, liberties and the institution of parliament; public accounts and Auditor-General's reports; the performance, operation and annual reports of government agencies; and the annual Budget Appropriation Bill and estimates.

As the government has organised its agencies into four clusters, it is proposed that there be two committees: one covering children and families and the central agency's clusters; and another covering the development, tourism, environment and culture clusters.

Dividing all government activity between just two committees will give those committees a significant workload; however, having just 25 members, one-third of whom are ministers, places a limit on the number of committees that can meet at one time. The green paper proposes two committees with seven members

in each. This would provide for committees that should be readily able to maintain quorum, form sub-committees for specific matters if required and allow for the inclusion of most members. Of course, members not included could still participate in hearings under Standing Order 193(2).

To assist public participation in the law-making process and better enable the committees to manage their workloads, the green paper also proposes allocating Wednesday mornings of sitting weeks to committee meetings. In effect, this will make Wednesday mornings of sitting weeks the time when the public comes in to the Assembly to participate in its proceedings by speaking at committee hearings.

It is anticipated that the standard Bill inquiry process will include a call for submissions soon after its first reading, any public hearings the Wednesday morning of the following sittings, and the committee's report and passage of the bill at the subsequent sittings.

Stakeholders will be able to plan their participation in the process around this pattern. Allocation of time to committees during sitting weeks will also assist the committees in managing their increased workload and reduce the cost that would otherwise be incurred through increased travel to Darwin to meet at other times. The committees may still need to meet outside sitting weeks for hearings outside Darwin or those that cannot otherwise be fitted in.

Allocating Wednesday mornings to committees is one of three steps towards ensuring Wednesdays are devoted to the scrutiny of the government. The Assembly has already introduced a procedure to allow only opposition and Independent members to ask questions on Wednesdays so time is not taken up with Dorothy Dixers. The committee seeks feedback on the effectiveness of this reform.

The green paper also proposes that the Assembly deals with General Business immediately after Question Time on Wednesdays instead of Government Business until 7 pm, at which time the Assembly would adjourn unless there was urgent Government Business to deal with. This would make one sitting day in three devoted to community consultation, scrutiny of the government and motions and Bills from private members.

I will also touch on the proposed changes to the estimates process outlined in the paper. The paper proposes two changes to the estimates process. The first is that, rather than establishing an Estimates Committee each year, the Appropriation Bill and Budget papers will be referred to two scrutiny committees which would consider the Budget appropriations related to their portfolio responsibilities. These estimates hearings would be conducted in a similar manner to previous years but would be held by the two committees.

The second reform is that, rather than having two weeks of hearings on the Budget, there would be one week on the Budget around June and another week on annual reports around November. It has been a frustration of the estimates hearings that they occur a couple of months before the release of annual reports, so they do not have access to the latest performance information. Moving a week of hearings to soon after the tabling of most annual reports will enable detailed questioning of those reports in a more timely manner.

Petitions are an ancient means by which people can raise an issue in the Assembly. The green paper proposes to strengthen the petitioning process by allowing the debate of petitions with 500 signatures to proceed with the support of four members, in a similar manner to the current procedure for matters of public importance. This will enable petitioners to influence the issues debated in the Assembly.

The green paper also makes further suggestions for reforming Question Time. One proposal is to relax the limitation on supplementary questions and the prohibition on repeating questions already asked. Allowing further questioning of a minister on their answer or to call attention to the lack of an answer should result in more relevant and meaningful answers.

Another proposal is to reduce the time allowed to ask a question. Allowing a full minute to ask a question gives time for additional narrative which invites debate. In the past, ministers have accepted that invitation to debate the issues raised. Restricting the time available should lead to more disciplined questions, which should, in turn, encourage more relevant answers.

The committee invites comments by Monday 28 November 2016 on these and any new proposals on how to further open the parliament to the people.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Fong Lim, would you like the opportunity to continue your remarks at a later date?

Mr COLLINS: Yes, I would, Mr Deputy Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today, in Children's Week, to talk about the 2016 Northern Territory Education and Care Awards.

On Tuesday 4 October 2016 I attended the Northern Territory Education and Care Awards. These awards recognise early childhood and school-age education and care services, as well as educators, that are innovative and exhibit outstanding commitment to delivering high-quality services to children and their families. The awards are open to people working in long-day care, family daycare, three-year-old kindergarten, preschool, outside school hours care, budget-based funded services, and other remote early childhood and school-age education and care services.

The event was hosted by the Early Childhood Australia NT Branch. I thank Maree Bredhauer, who is the Manager of Early Childhood Australia NT Branch, also known as the Mayor of Litchfield, for her time and effort in making the awards and the evening such a success.

I also thank the selection panel, which had the difficult task of identifying winners in each of the nine categories. This year a record 88 nominations were received. This signifies that the awards are growing in importance across the early childhood education and care sector.

The nine winners will participate in a study tour to New Zealand to learn about different theories, services and practices in the delivery of early childhood services, a prize well worth winning.

Please join me in congratulating the following winners:

- Murraya Children's Centre for Outstanding Achievement in Community Engagement and for Outstanding Education and Care Services in Long Day Care and Kindergarten
- Nightcliff Early Learning Centre for Outstanding Achievement in Sustainable Practice
- Katherine Isolated Children's Service for Outstanding Education and Care Services in a Budget-Based Funding Service
- Holy Spirit Outside School Hours Care for Outstanding Education and Care Services in Outside School Hours Care
- Alekarenge Preschool for Outstanding Education and Care Services in a preschool
- Melanie Smith from Nhulunbuy Childcare Service for Emerging Professional Educator
- Varn Baker from Milner Preschool for Outstanding Educator
- Christine Tayler from Darwin Family Day Care for Outstanding Achievement in Leadership.

The awards acknowledge the quality of education and care services in the Northern Territory, which enable families to be confident leaving their children as they meet their work and family commitments, so they can engage in studies and employment and contribute to the social and economic growth of the Territory.

The awards coincided with the Early Childhood Australia National Conference 2016, called This is Childhood, held in Darwin from 5 to 8 October. Almost 2000 people attended the three-day conference at the Darwin Convention Centre. The conference included international and national speakers, as well as showcasing local services and initiatives. Congratulations to Early Childhood Australia and everyone involved in organising this wonderful conference.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to put on the public record the fantastic work of the Nakara Primary School students who just took out the Language Literature Honours medal at the Australasian Pacific Finals of Tournament of Minds on the Gold Coast. That was a mouthful.

First, it is important to recognise that many students participated in the Tournament of Minds on a Territory level. The Minister for Education had the great privilege of meeting many of those students and seeing some of that fine work.

What a great competition! How incredible, at their age, for these young people to take a problem, solve it in a limited amount of time and then present their solution to a forum. It is a brave thing to do and there was some real talent on display.

The team that went to the Gold Coast from Nakara Primary School was made up of Clarissa Blum, Ashley Hughes, Trudy Francis, Journey Kelly, Gabriella Francis, Evie Ferdinands and Zoe Francis. There are some sisters in there. The team was called the Minds of the Round Table. They are passionate students and I am privileged to have met them on a number of occasions. I was pleased to provide them with some support with their fundraising efforts to get to the Gold Coast. They should be commended for their fundraising efforts. Many raffle tickets were being pulled out at assembly for the captive parent audience, which was very generous, and many were sold over the course of the fundraising.

The team had to work on a creative idea about a myth or legend and come up with a story about how it impacted on modern society. I know they did a good job. Tournament of Minds is aligned with the national move towards STEM—science, technology, engineering and maths—but also includes literature and language. That was the area taken up by the Nakara students.

I want to put on the record some of their words. They said they:

... did not 'myth' a chance to grab the honours medal—literature-ly.

I had trouble saying that. Remember that they wrote it:

They were competing in the primary language literature division, against teams from all over Australia, Thailand and New Zealand.

I am glad they are talking about their experiences with the rest of the school. I wholeheartedly congratulate those students for their hard work and achievement.

While talking about Nakara Primary School, I also thank the Minister for Education for visiting the school with me last fortnight to see the Move More Learn More program in action. It was developed in conjunction with the NT Institute of Sport. Many of the classes at the school take breaks to do a number of exercises that build strength. They inspired me; they can do more push-ups than I can, which is not hard. It was amazing. It is a really good way to build appreciation of the importance of moving and for kids to learn about what their bodies can do. The strength work is great. It is also a good opportunity to give them a break from work and get active. I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of that. The students know the importance of a well-balanced lifestyle. It is a great program and I look forward to working more with the school.

I give a shout-out to Ms Roestenburg, who went to the Gold Coast to do some incredible work with those students. I look forward to seeing them around Parliament House, as I often do. It is a fantastic school with fantastic students. I am very proud of them.

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about the exploits of the many wonderful people in the rural area, particularly young people, when they go about their business of engaging in sports and recreation activities.

The National Interschool Championships were held at the equestrian centre in Sydney and we had a Northern Territory team there. They were selected—they are the best of the best—from all the competitions over the Dry Season. I congratulate Emily Hubble, Olivia Ruzsiscka, McKinlay Beasy, Jamee Dean, Georgia English, Finess Beasy and Kasey Fullwood, who were part of the Northern Territory team.

They rode exceptionally well, bearing in mind we are a small jurisdiction when you compare us to the New South Wales and Victorian teams, which have a much bigger pool to draw upon. They genuinely tried their hardest and showed great sportsmanship, which they have done in previous competitions, towards their

teammates and all other competitors. It was the smallest team in regard to numbers, but it was complimented by organisers and other people on its presentation, team spirit and how it went about participating in the competition. I congratulate them.

A lot of people think I am a horse person; I am not a horse person. I have a lot of horses in my electorate and many people in my electorate own horses. They are nice animals; I know how to look underneath to see if it is a boy or a girl, but that is it. They are lovely horses, though; they are beautifully looked after. It is a challenge in the Top End to look after horses in the heat, particularly in the Wet Season. There is a thing called 'the puffs' that horses can get, so they need a bit of extra care and attention here in the tropics.

It is one thing to have a horse with a nickname, but I want to place on the record the names of the horses these young people rode. Finess was on Captain Lightning Bolt. Emily was on Little Paddocks Concerto, known as Cherti. Olivia was on Warrego Dumbledore, or Wizard. Jamee was on Croyden Park Cool Ace, also called Ace. Georgia was on A Littlebitildo. Kasey was on Secret Account. McKinlay was on Swiftlight Pelli.

Some of these families drive down; they make the commitment to take their children. It is not cheap, taking a couple of horses in a float and camping. It is a real family commitment, and I compliment the parents and families for doing that. The students do not just go about it themselves; their parents also attend, and there is a team manager, an acting manager and a show jump manager. Ann Marie Cruickshank was the manager for the team; the acting manager was Natalie Bradley; and the show jump manager was Karen Ruzsiscka.

Congratulations to them. These are all working people who have given up their time and are probably taking their holidays in order to go. We go every year so the NT can compete in the competitions. We do not finish last, and we did not this year. We beat the Tasmanians, which is good. They obviously do not have the right horses or equipment. Sorry to my fellow Speaker colleague in Tasmania.

Congratulations to those young girls and fellows; they are great kids and great families.

I also want to talk about a function that was held in the rural area on Sunday 9 October called the Blessing of the Animals. It is in commemoration of the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. He is also the patron saint of ecology, which I did not realise until not long ago. He is probably the patron saint of other things as well, but he is particularly known as the patron saint of animals.

The actual feast day is on 4 October. A couple of years ago I asked the Anglican Church at Bees Creek if we could organise such an event because it had happened in the past when my mother was a member of parliament. They are very popular and fun. We had three ministers in attendance, which was lovely, as well as a full church of humans, and lots of animals.

This Saint Francis fellow was a really interesting character. He was one of seven children; he was born in 1181; his father was a silk merchant; and he was what you would call a very naughty young man. His father was wealthy so he was a classic son of wealthy parents. He lived the high life of excess, probably the wine, women and song, but along the way he started to transform and he helped people. Then he relapsed and went to war, and then he finished at war. When he came back he got into trouble and was thrown in gaol. When he came out he gave away all his father's cloth so he got into trouble from his father. His father was cranky—sounds a bit like children these days actually.

He then spent a lot of time helping poor people, beggars and lepers, and moved in to a life of work with the church. He traveled extensively and preached the word of the Bible of the day. He morphed into this wonderful human being, not that he was not wonderful when he was younger, but along the way he became the patron saint of animals and looked after animals on his travels.

At the event that we have every year we have dogs, cats, chickens, snakes, lizards and a lot of friendly mosquitoes. They were all blessed. This year the one-eyed duck was not there. I am not sure if it has been cured from the blessing last year and has its two eyes back, but I am hoping it has.

We put the snake on one side of the church and the chickens on the other side so they were away from each other. The horses from last year were not there this year because they were down south, competing in the competition in Sydney, which I mentioned before. They stay out on the grass usually because they do poops out there. They will probably be back next year.

I took one of my dogs, a well-behaved crossbreed which was dumped and abandoned. He used to be very manly but little bits were removed. He whispered to me, asking if, when the blessing came along, he could ask the minister to give his manly parts back. I said, 'God is very clever and generous, but I think you really need to talk to a vet about that'. He was happy to be blessed; he is a good dog.

It was a great event; I want to put my note of appreciation to Minister Ian Macdonald, Minister Phil Zamagias and Minister Margaret on the record. There were three there—it was a wonderful morning tea that the church put on. The Litchfield Lions people came along and helped with the a sausage sizzle; there cannot be any function in the Northern Territory without a sausage sizzle.

People hung around, the volunteers at the church were lovely and it was a beautiful morning—a bit warm, but that is what happens. None of the dogs fought each other, and the snakes and chooks were apart. Hopefully they will be back next year with great blessings. I am sorry to my dog—you will not be able to get the bits you wanted to get back.

Congratulations to the church and everyone who attended that function. It was a lovely morning.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Goyder for her entertaining story. It is very nice to hear what is happening in the rural area.

Yesterday I was granted leave from parliament to attend a rare and unique event in the community of Ngkurr, in the electorate of Arnhem. Yesterday, Wednesday 26 October, Ms Cherry Wulumirr Daniels was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in Ngkurr community at an event held at Ngkurr School.

His Honour the Honourable John Hardy OAM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, was accompanied by his wife, Mrs Marie Hardy, to present the medal to Ms Daniels in front of hundreds of family members, friends and community members. I wish to share with the House the reasons for the OAM investiture as stated by His Honour yesterday, and the reasons Ms Daniels received the OAM:

*Appointed the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division on Queen's Birthday Day 2016
Cherry Wulumirr Daniels OAM*

For service to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

Ms Cherry Wulumirr Daniels is an elder of the Ngandi people of the Northern Territory.

For over 70 years Ms Daniels has tirelessly worked to promote Aboriginal culture, development and cross-cultural interaction at local, Territory, national and international levels.

Ms Daniels is a highly regarded cultural ambassador, local leader, keeper of deep customary knowledge, advocate of women's Indigenous and family rights and as a community educator with incredible generosity and dedication to Indigenous people and her community.

In 1999 Ms Daniels founded the Yugul Mangi women rangers and later co-founded the group which is now known as the Yugul Mangi Rangers and the Yugul Mangi Land and Sea Management Corporation of Ngukurr. Under Ms Daniels leadership, this organisation has gone from strength to strength.

Ms Daniels taught at the Ngkurr Community School and Ngkurr Language Centre and provided advice to community members based on her experience and formal studies.

Ms Daniels has also been instrumental in working to establish the proposed 20 000 square kilometre South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area.

I felt honoured and privileged to be able to attend the awards ceremony for Ms Daniels, who is not only one of my constituents in the Arnhem electorate, but also my relative. In our kinship way I call Cherry my mum. To have a family member of such calibre gives me a great sense of pride and inspiration. It inspires me to make sure I work hard in my new role as the Member for Arnhem, and gives me strength to work towards a better future, knowing the path I walk has been cleared by strong leaders such as Cherry Daniels.

I acknowledge Mr Warren Snowdon MP, the federal Member for Lingiari, for arranging the travel to attend this historic occasion. Mr Snowdon has known Ms Daniels for 32 years and calls her a long-time friend. They have known each other a year longer than I have been alive.

I also acknowledge Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, who could not attend the ceremony in person; however, she took the time to wrap and send Ms Daniels a special gift in recognition of her momentous achievement.

I thank the Ngukurr School principal, Ms Lynda Pascoe, and the school staff at Ngukurr for their organisation in hosting the OAM award ceremony for Ms Daniels. It was an impressive event for a remote community to hold, and the school and community pulled it off brilliantly.

In closing, I reiterate my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to my mum, Ms Cherry Daniels, for her amazing lifetime achievement in receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about an important part of my electorate, the Alice Springs rural area. Namatjira is a diverse electorate and is often described as a bush electorate.

While the bush and its concerns and issues are very much my focus, the rural residents of Alice Springs make up more than one-fifth of the residents of Namatjira. I committed, in my election campaign, to advocate the issues and concerns of rural residents in a unique part of the Alice Springs community.

The area south of the gap is the only space that provides rural residential living in Alice Springs. It is where two-acre, 20-acre and 50-acre blocks are placed. Residents are discreet about the integral part of this community. The Ilparpa, Connellan and Ross areas—to give them their proper name, but you will often hear old timers refer to them as the ‘farm area’—are tightly held enclaves where residents enjoy the sense of space and nature that comes from rural living. Some have horses and others use their blocks as wildlife corridors. Some love the freedom it gives the kids to play around in the bush. Some keep chooks, grow vegies or just enjoy the great outdoors.

Residents are protective of their rural zonings and I have pledged to do my utmost to keep the rural area rural. Rural residents deserve to have certainty about their lifestyle and amenities. I value the wonderful space and peace of the rural areas and will work hard to ensure our planning system provides more certainty. I was previously an Alice Springs Town Council alternate member of the Development Consent Authority. It was a valuable learning experience about some of the strengths and weaknesses of our planning processes.

Under the previous government it often seemed as though ad hoc decisions were made, affecting planning and people in the Alice Springs rural area. The previous Chief Minister, who does not seem to make his home in Alice Springs anymore—I am not sure if he ever really did; after all, home is where your heart is—did a lot of talking and promising in regard to land development in Alice Springs, but failed dismally to do anything about it.

His failure to address the need for reasonably priced commercial land has impacted directly on our rural residents. The number of rural residents using their properties to conduct business continues to be on the rise. There is a provision in the *Planning Act* for home-based businesses, but when does home-based contracting become a fully-fledged business with impacts on neighbourhood amenity?

In Alice Springs there are cases of road transport businesses being run from rural blocks, with all the noise, traffic and disruption this causes to rural neighbourhoods. There are also serious issues about road safety in these cases, which I believe need to be addressed.

The creeping industrialisation of the rural area is an issue that is affecting families and lifestyles in the rural area. The lack of teeth, or will, of agencies like the DCA and loopholes in the *Planning Act* are seeing escalating disputes.

The rural living zoning should be enough to protect the rural area. Neighbourhoods would not be pitted against neighbourhoods if this was the case. The Chair of the DCA, Mr Denis Burke, a former Chief Minister, has admitted in the past that there are issues with enforcement across the NT. I believe we need to do more to strengthen our planning provisions and educate people about what they and cannot do on their rural blocks.

I look forward to working with the Planning minister in the future around options for commercial land release in Alice Springs.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.