

CONTENTS

VISITORS	905
Rosebery Primary School	905
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.....	905
Refer Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 (Serial 15) to a Select Committee	905
CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS, FILMS AND COMPUTER GAMES AMENDMENT BILL.....	909
(Serial 2)	909
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS) (NATIONAL UNIFORM LAW) AMENDMENT BILL.....	912
(Serial 3)	912
RESPONSES TO PETITION	925
Petition Nos 1 and 2	925
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS) (NATIONAL UNIFORM LAW) AMENDMENT BILL.....	926
(Serial 3)	926
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT	928
Economic and Social Agenda for 2017	Error! Bookmark not defined.
DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.....	928
Fay Miller	928
PAPER TABLED	973
Travel Report – Member for Goyder.....	973
MOTION.....	973
Note Paper – Auditor-General of the Northern Territory’s Report to the Legislative Assembly November 2016.....	973
ADJOURNMENT.....	975
STATEMENT BY SPEAKER.....	993
Names of Children in Care Expunged from Parliamentary Record	993

Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Rosebery Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of two year three/four classes from Rosebery Primary School, accompanied by their teacher, Lindsay Clarke. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
Refer Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 (Serial 15) to a Select Committee

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent me from moving a motion to refer the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill 2017 (Serial 15) to a select committee comprising three government members, two Independents and one opposition member and that the committee report back by the next three meeting periods.

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The government is not aware of what the Member for Nelson is doing. Can you advise us on the process?

Madam SPEAKER: The member has the call. He is moving to suspend standing orders. He moves that then sits down; it is circulated and then other members have the opportunity to speak. Other members can speak and then it goes to a vote to suspend standing orders.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, I have introduced this motion to suspend standing orders on urgency because I believe we simply will not have time to debate the issue of whether the Termination of Pregnancy Law Reform Bill (Serial 15) should go to a select committee.

The only discussion we have had is through Question Time, through letters I have written to the Chief Minister and the Minister for Health, and from personal contact with the Chief Minister. It has been very difficult to move from a position of 'no' to a position of reasoning from a process point of view, which is why this bill should go to a select committee.

I am asking for a suspension of standing orders to allow that debate to occur because there simply will not be any other time in these sittings for that to occur. The government has said it is an open and transparent government. The government has brought forward its policy on opening up parliament to the people, and part of that was to set up a select committee, which has already brought out some preliminary recommendations in regard to bills being sent to a parliamentary committee.

Recommendation 3.7 says that the referral of bills to a committee should be the norm. We need to have that debate now because after these sittings there are only 30 days in which we have time to look at the implications of this very important bill. This bill has ethical, legal, medical and social implications that need to be discussed.

I understand that we are arguing, in this case, for the right to suspend standing orders to enable that debate to occur. I am asking for that suspension of standing orders because we need this debate; this debate affects us all. It also concerns me that we have not consulted everybody.

I sat in the cafe yesterday with Marion Scrymgour, the ex-deputy leader of the Labor Party, and she told me the Tiwi people do not know anything about this law. That concerns me greatly. That is why I am arguing, if I am allowed to suspend standing orders, that a select committee, similar to what happens in Queensland, would go to the communities and not only consult, but listen.

Sister Anne, the Senior Australian of the Year said, 'You have to listen to Aboriginal people'. How come the Tiwis do not know anything about this? Do the people at Wadeye know anything about this? I am asking this parliament to give us some time to look at the very strong reasons that this needs to go to a parliamentary committee.

The government promised it would open up parliament to the people. It is no good saying we have debated it previously; this is a brand-new bill. The old bill did not repeal the *Medical Services Act* side of abortion

laws. This bill is new and it needs to be discussed in the community, through a parliamentary committee, which is the government policy.

The government said it would take the parliament to the people. A discussion paper is not the same as what was presented yesterday in this parliament. The bill is what we need to debate. The discussion paper was a view of the Department of Health. It received submissions and I am very concerned those submissions are not available as they should be. The discussion is now about a new bill that has serious implications which need to be looked at and debated.

This is the only chance I have to debate how this bill will be dealt with before it comes up in the March sittings, on 21 or 22 March. In that time you will not have carried out your promise to take this to the people. Under the Queensland system, which we are looking at, the bill would automatically go to a select committee. It would go out to the communities. They have recently had a debate on abortion. That select committee took hold of that bill, discussed it and allowed three meeting days for that select committee to find out what people thought.

All I am asking today, Chief Minister, is that you approve the suspension of standing orders on the basis of an open and transparent government, and that we have a proper debate on the process for what is probably the most important piece of legislation I have seen in this parliament as long as I have been here. It relates to some very important issues that people have passionate and differing ideas about. It should not be steamrolled through in 30 days. It needs a Chief Minister who will get up and say, 'I understand this bill needs to be taken to the people'.

If the Tiwi people do not know anything about this bill, what about other communities? Could I ask the Member for Nhulunbuy? Do his people know anything about this?

Ms Fyles: That is your responsibility as a local member.

Mr WOOD: No, it is not. It is partly my responsibility, but it is also your responsibility because you have promised to take parliament to the people. You have promised to set up a system, which your select committee has already put in place, saying:

The Committee proposes that referral of Bills to a committee be the norm.

Recommendation 3.8 says:

These changes will make community input an integral part of the legislative process. They will strengthen the Assembly's ability to have conversations ...

There was no conversation with the Tiwi people—the people who represent and give detailed consideration to vital public issues. You could not get a more important issue than the termination of pregnancy bill. It is a vital public issue and you have not had a conversation with 30% of the people in the Territory who need to be consulted and listened to.

All I am asking, Chief Minister, through the suspension of standing orders, is to allow a debate to occur that would allow me and anyone else who may even disagree with me to convince you that we need to take this bill to a parliamentary committee. It is a fundamental plank of your policy ...

Ms Fyles: That we went to the election with.

Mr WOOD: I am talking to the Chief Minister this time. It is a fundamental plank of your policy to take parliament to the people. You have set up a select committee, which has brought out some recommendations. Will you please stick to the recommendations and allow people time and consideration so they can make an informed decision about the future of this bill.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not support the suspension of standing orders and I will talk you through why.

First of all, while I recognise your passion on this issue, we are not debating whether abortion, or a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy, is legal. I do not see it as that. We have a bill before the parliament that provides doctors a greater ability to treat patients, form treatment plans and expand the options that are available for an existing right in the NT.

We had this debate last term. This is not a new issue to the Chamber or to Territorians. With the utmost respect—I recognise the Member for Nelson is very passionate about this, and he views the issue differently to me. I do not believe at the heart of this, Member for Nelson, that consultation is what you are seeking. You want to stop this bill. I respect the fact that is your view on this issue. You are finding a reason for further delay on a topic—the Territory has fallen significantly behind the options available to other Australians. The doctors in the NT are restricted in what services they can provide people in the Territory compared to other Australians.

I believe that what the Attorney-General has done through her consultations, and what the other members of parliament should do, in the time it will take before the next parliament, including the consideration in detail stage of the debate—I believe that the second iteration of this bill—this is something we talked about before the Member for Goyder introduced her bill. Over time, as parliamentarians, we have been negligent in our duty by only getting to this now.

We need this bill to come before parliament—and I will not presume the outcome of the vote on this bill, but if it is successful it will finally provide Territorians the same rights as every other Australian. This has been a constant topic of debate in this Chamber—the rights of Territorians being the same as the rights of other Australians.

I do not support the suspension of standing orders. I believe it is beyond the time for us to allow doctors broader options when it comes to how they work with their patients. Member for Nelson, I recognise that we have a complete difference of opinion. I am sorry for that, but that is my position. I thought it was important, as Chief Minister, to explain where I stand on this issue.

The Member for Goyder was denied the resources of government in the drafting of the bill in its previous version. I believe this allows for a much more robust process and a better-drafted bill. That is no reflection on the Member for Goyder; it is just a reflection on the capacity of government. We are in a better position than we were last time round and we now have a better bill. Many in the community have their eyes on this parliament, so we will not rush this, but we also will not delay it.

I do not support the suspension of standing orders.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the opposition in relation to the Member for Nelson's motion to suspend standing orders. I think the Chief Minister blurred two lines there. We support the suspension to the extent that it is procedural and the Member for Nelson has the right to have his debate heard. It is not actually the debate on whether the bill should be sent to a committee.

From a purely procedural perspective we support the suspension of standing orders so the debate on referral can be had.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, we are talking about the procedure of our parliament and the suspension of standing orders. This is not the time or place to do this.

Yesterday we introduced a significant bill into the Northern Territory parliament. Yes, Member for Nelson, I understand that, fundamentally, you are opposed to that bill, but a day later is not the time and place to suspend standing orders, when we have legislation before the House.

This is a procedural motion that the government will not be supporting. We found out about this five minutes before parliament resumed. If you were genuine about your need to suspend standing orders you would have contacted me, as Leader of Government Business, well before the resumption of parliament. To simply stand up and propose to suspend standing orders is unacceptable. We have a procedure. We have standing orders to follow. The appropriate time for this debate to take place is after the second reading speeches.

A lot of work has been done in preparation for this bill, but a lot of questions could not be answered until we had that bill. Now we have a bill that has the resources of government, and the Department of Health and a lot of expertise and clinical support around it in order to put it in place.

Members in this House deserve the right to go back to their communities and consult. It is unfair when you stand here and use comments about electorates on this issue. We were all elected to represent our communities. We all have around 5000 people we need to consult with. As the Minister Health I will take that across the Northern Territory more broadly.

It is our responsibility, now that we have clear legislation, which is now well overdue. Now people can consult with their electorates. They can ask questions. We will then come back into this House and everybody will be afforded at least 30 minutes to talk about this bill. We will then go to the consideration in detail stage, which is where questions on the technical aspects of the bill will be asked of me, as the minister who introduced the bill to the House.

It would be appropriate, if you felt so at that stage, to delay this even further and push it to a committee. Now is not the time and place to propose to suspend standing orders, five minutes before parliament resumes, when we have bills before the House. We need to allow this to go through parliamentary process—the legislation sits on the Notice Paper for 30 days and then goes through the normal process in March.

In regard to saying the government is not open and transparent; this was an election issue that was hotly discussed in the lead-up to the election. Every member here and every candidate was asked for their opinion. Some were very forthcoming; others were engaging with their community and wanted to hear their community's opinion. To say we are not being open and transparent when we are following parliamentary process and this issue has been talked about—it was a key election issue and there was a commitment from the Chief Minister that this legislation would be introduced to the House.

We have spent considerable time on the work the Member for Goyder did, without the resources of government, in preparing a bill. I clearly outlined to the House yesterday why we took the approach we did in the bill. Now each member can take that and consult with their community.

I understand that this is an emotive issue and a highly personal issue for some people. As the Minister for Health I offer my support to any member who needs information or for me to go and speak to people if it is more culturally appropriate.

We will not support the suspension of standing orders. We do not want to set a precedent every time a bill comes before the House that, a day later, a member who does not like that bill proposes to send it to a committee. We have processes for a reason. For the bill to be introduced yesterday and the member to walk in this morning without informing government members, or the minister, that he wishes to suspend standing orders is unprecedented.

The government will not support this process, but we will allow members to speak with their communities, as per their job to represent them, and the bill will come back to the House. We will then allow that process to take place in March. The bill will sit for 30 days and then it will be considered by the parliament in the consideration in detail stage of the debate; I imagine you will take it there. We want scrutiny of the bill through the proper processes.

Madam Speaker, the government does not support the suspension of standing orders.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. When there is confusion between two matters—this is not a debate on the substance of the bill; it is a debate on the process that has already been determined by the government.

This is not an ordinary bill; make no mistake about that. That is why there are references to it being a conscience vote. That needs to be considered properly because that is a person's moral view on what is right and wrong.

What I am offering to government is something I believe would be of assistance to government, because you do not often come across bills such as this. To refer to it already being debated in previous parliaments—many of the current members of this parliament were not members of the previous parliament. This is a new parliament. This is a significant position that has been taken by government.

Mark my words, whether the matter you have chosen to support as a government is supported or not is, in some ways, immaterial. When it comes to an issue such as this, how it is managed and approached is the issue. It will ultimately set a standard and a view of the nature and personality of this government if you do not take the time to respect the depth and the quality of the underpinning concerns people may have about this bill. If you do not allow them to be represented, respectfully engaged and brought into the conversation you will be doing yourself damage.

I understand the principle of might is right; you have adopted the position, you believe it is right and you will march on on the course you have determined, but this is not a normal course. This is not a normal

situation. You have determined a process and there are many voices that seek to be, at least, respectfully engaged in this.

We are speaking about an appropriate process that recognises the nature of the decision that this parliament is facing. As a pragmatist I accept that it is a popular opinion, but also that it will be accepted. If you think it is an unpopular position then you might manage it in such a way that you reduce your exposure so the community does not have a chance to weigh deeply the underlying issues we are being asked to decide on, and what effect they may have in this jurisdiction, which is an unusual jurisdiction. It is not like all the other states.

There are many communities here that need to be respectfully engaged and brought into this. Allow them the opportunity and the respect to be brought into this, then make the decision. This is a process that you have determined and it is my view that it would be damaging to the government if you do not recognise the nature of this type of decision and how it may affect the sensitivities and views of others.

As you have already said, it is an emotive, ethical issue; that is why there are very few occasions where these sorts of matters are brought before the parliament, and they need to be handled differently.

Ms Fyles: You want to bypass the normal process!

Mr MILLS: You have set the process.

The Assembly divided.

Ayes 5	Noes 16
Mrs Finocchiaro	Ms Ah Kit
Mr Guyula	Mr Collins
Mr Higgins	Mr Costa
Mr Mills	Ms Fyles
Mr Wood	Mr Gunner
	Mr Kirby
	Ms Lawler
	Mr McConnell
	Ms Manison
	Ms Moss
	Ms Nelson
	Mr Paech
	Mr Sievers
	Mr Vowles
	Ms Wakefield
	Mrs Worden

Motion not agreed to.

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

Continued from 27 October 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, the classification regime in Australia is complex. The currently National Classification Scheme has been in place since 1996. Technology and the sheer volume of content have evolved considerably since then.

The current scheme is difficult for the community to understand and even more difficult for industry to comply with. This bill introduces changes which will provide consumers with more classification information and simplify the scheme by removing complexity and reducing cost for business.

The National Classification Scheme, or NCS, is a cooperative scheme under which the Classification Board classifies films, computer games and certain publications. The scheme is designed to provide consumers with information about publications, films and computer games which will allow them to make informed decisions about appropriate entertainment material. It is based on the principle that adults should be able to

read, hear, see and play what they want while recognising that minors should be protected from material likely to harm them, and everyone should be protected from unsolicited, offensive material.

Procedures for the classification of publications, films and computer games are set out in the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act 1995*.

Apart from the introduction of an R18+ classification for computer games, the National Classification Scheme has not had any significant changes made to it since it was established in 1996. Yet, since its introduction, classifiable content and the way in which it is delivered to consumers has changed dramatically. For example, consumers now have ready access to classifiable content on a variety of platforms, such as the delivery of computer games on mobile and other online devices. Given these developments in technology, media convergence and the global availability of media content, the National Classification Scheme was reviewed by the Australian Law Reform Commission in 2011.

The commission handed down its report in March 2012 and made 57 recommendations for fundamental changes to the regulatory framework and structure of the scheme.

Reform of the scheme is being approached in stages, commencing with a first tranche of reforms that was agreed by classification ministers at a meeting of the Standing Council on Law and Justice.

The first phase of agreed reforms includes broadening the scope of existing exempt film categories and streamlining exemption arrangements for festivals and cultural institutions; enabling certain content to be classified using classification tools, such as online questionnaires that deliver automated decisions; creating an explicit requirement in the Commonwealth Classification Act to display classification markings on all classified content; expanding the exemptions to the modification rules so that films and computer games which are subject to certain types of modifications do not require classification again; and enabling the Attorney-General's department to notify law enforcement authorities of potential refused classification content without having the content classified first, to help expedite the removal of extremely offensive or illegal content from distribution.

These reforms will deliver benefits to industry, including streamlining administrative processes and reducing the regulatory burden whilst ensuring that consumers continue to receive useful and accurate classification information.

Several of these reforms are particularly significant. The first significant reform is the introduction of classification tools. Classification tools, such as online questionnaires, might be developed by government, industry or other classification bodies overseas. These tools represent an effective and efficient way to classify the significant volume of unclassified online and mobile computer games available in the market today.

Currently, the Classification Board does not have the capacity to classify the vast amount of content that is available on mobile devices and online. As an example, last year the Classification Board made over 6000 classification decisions across all forms of content. However, the digital market offers hundreds of thousands of computer games to consumers, which presents significant practical, logistical and compliance challenges for the current National Classification Scheme.

This reform will facilitate innovative and technology-based solutions for classification in line with initiatives being considered elsewhere by classification bodies that are dealing with the same classification difficulties.

Enabling the use of such instruments will support and complement the work of the Classification Board, provide certainty to industry and increase compliance with Australian classification laws. Most importantly, this reform will mean that the Australian public will have access to more classification information than is possible under the current system.

There are a number of safeguards built into this reform. For example, a classification tool can only be implemented following its approval by the minister. In deciding whether to approve a particular tool, the minister will consider a range of matters, including whether it delivers decisions that are consistent with Australian classification requirements. The bill also provides the Classification Board with the opportunity to classify content even after it has been classified by an approved tool, if it considers that the decision is problematic. As a final protection, if there are concerns about the effectiveness of a classification tool, its approval may be suspended or revoked at any time.

Another important first tranche reform involves changes to the current modification rules. This will reduce the regulatory and financial burden on industry, the theme of today's bills, by removing the need to have classified content classified again when certain modifications are made to the content, providing that the modification does not affect the original classification.

For example, currently the 2D and 3D versions of the same film must be classified separately, incurring two classification fees, because the format change is considered to be a modification. It will no longer be necessary for both 2D and 3D versions to be classified, where the only difference is the changed format. In these instances both films must carry the classification marking assigned to the original film classified by the board. Existing safeguards, such as the Classification Board Director's power to call in content, will remain in place. This means that the director may call in content to be classified by the board where a modification has changed a product to the extent that it would likely change the classification, and the product is therefore unclassified.

The third key reform will expand the definition and scope of exempt film categories and streamline exemption arrangements for festivals, special event operators and cultural institutions.

Many of the existing exempt film categories currently state that a film must wholly comprise particular content in order to be exempt from classification requirements. These categories have been expanded to include films that mainly comprise particular content, similar to the New Zealand exempt film categories.

Two new exempt film categories have also been added. Broadening the scope of existing exempt film categories to better reflect contemporary film content will improve the utility of these exemptions by accommodating a range of documentary style content that is appropriate to exempt. The reforms will also simplify exemption arrangements for festivals by establishing a consolidated set of rules in the Commonwealth Classification Act, replacing the convoluted and inconsistent provisions that are currently set out in each state and territory classification regime.

Most importantly, the reforms will rationalise the administrative and regulatory requirements for festivals and cultural institutions by removing the mandatory requirement to apply to the Director of the Classification Board for formal exemption. Instead, exemptions will continue to be available to support the arts and cultural sector, but on a self-assessed, deregulated basis.

Safeguards similar to those currently in place for festivals will ensure the public is being protected, particularly children. Exemption conditions will include restrictions on the screening, exhibition or demonstration of unclassified content to a particular age group if it is strong or high impact. It will require that patrons be provided with warnings about the content they are about to see and prohibit content that is likely to be classified X18+ or refuse classification.

Training and registration facilities will be established to support officers of the Classification Liaison Scheme, who will monitor the operation of the reformed arrangements as part of their routine compliance and educational activities.

This bill also makes a number of minor and technical amendments to the Classification Act to improve the clarity of certain provisions, address legislative anomalies and enhance the administrative efficiency of the National Classification Scheme. For example, amendments will be made to the Classification Act to align the provisions relating to the Authorised Assessor Scheme for Computer Games with the provisions relating to the Additional Content Assessor Scheme, the Authorised Television Series Assessor Scheme and the Authorised Advertising Assessor Scheme. These amendments will ensure there is a consistent approach in the regulation of these assessor schemes.

In addition, the bill makes several minor consequential amendments to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

These reforms represent the first step towards modernising the classification scheme and demonstrate the government's commitment to a scheme that is better equipped to meet the needs of industry and consumers in the digital age. These reforms will help to ensure our classification scheme system continues to be effective, efficient and relevant in the 21st century.

The Country Liberals will also support sensible, sound red tape reduction measures, such as in this case with this piece of legislation. The job of an opposition is not to oppose for the sake of opposition but to be a critical pair of eyes, looking over legislation with the interest of ordinary Territorians at heart.

Given the current economic headwinds, we need a government that is responsive and agile. The Territory is a young and dynamic place and we deserve a government that reflects the natural enthusiasm and optimism of this place.

The opposition supports this legislation and commends its passage to the House.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her speech and the indication of support. I acknowledge that she has spent a great deal of time looking at this issue. I know that, with her background, it is important to her.

As outlined in my speech and the shadow minister's debate, the intention of the bill is to amend the *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* to ensure consistency with, and give effect to, changes made with the Commonwealth Government under its *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*.

The classification scheme is a cooperative arrangement under which the Classification Board classifies films, DVDs, computer games and certain publications. This *Classification of Publications, Films and Computer Games Act* provides for classifications. Whilst the states and territories are responsible for the enforcement of classification decisions within their jurisdictions, each state and territory has classification enforcement legislation that complements the Commonwealth legislation.

In 2014 the Commonwealth legislative reform, through the Classification Act 2014, went a step towards having a national classification scheme that is better equipped to meet the needs of industry and consumers in the digital age. We have seen many changes recently and will continue to see quickly moving changes.

As I have outlined in my second reading speech, the Commonwealth reforms streamline the exemption arrangements for festivals, other events and cultural institutions by establishing a self-assessment process through an online registration scheme, enabling certain content to be classified using classification tools, such as online questionnaires, and then delivering an automated response to expand the exemptions to the modifications of the rules so that films and computer games which are subject to certain types of modifications do not require classification again.

The consequential amendments proposed in the bill allow for the application of those new arrangements for the National Classification Scheme across the Northern Territory. These changes aim to reduce red tape whilst at the same time ensure industry compliance so that we can have a system that is workable in providing the community with up-front information around the classification and the nature of films, computer games et cetera, whilst at the same time having a workable scheme for industry. It is a very procedural piece of legislation in regard to enacting those Commonwealth changes.

I thank the member opposite for her contribution to debate and I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS)
(NATIONAL UNIFORM LAW) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 3)**

Continued from 26 October 2016.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for presenting this bill and for the briefing that the Leader of the Opposition received on this matter. The opposition is supportive of any legislation that protects Territorians and Australians from the threat of domestic violence.

Domestic and family violence is a serious and widespread threat that is often out of sight but is, very appropriately, at the forefront of Australians' minds.

Domestic violence is endemic in the community and affects people from all walks of life regardless of their age, culture, sexual identity, ability, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status. The 2012 Personal Safety Survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that nearly half of Australians have experienced violence of some form or another.

It showed that women were significantly more likely to have experienced violence and that most of the time the perpetrator was a partner or someone known to them, someone they should have been able to trust the most. Indigenous women and people with a physical or mental disability are also more deeply affected by domestic violence.

In the Northern Territory we seem to be disproportionately affected, with worrisome domestic violence levels frequently featured in the news and in reports. In 2014 the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that the NT had, by far, the highest rate of homicide offences related to family and domestic violence compared to other jurisdictions in Australia. One study found that 44% of offenders were repeat offenders and the same proportion were in breach of domestic violence orders.

Victims of domestic violence are left with few choices other than to run away from the perpetrator, thereby leaving behind their homes, jobs, friends and family in order to protect themselves from the perpetrator of the violence. This is not an easy thing to do, and I applaud the initiatives such as the safety planning booklet released by Dawn House in January this year, which is a resource for how to safely leave an abusive relationship.

No matter where they are forced to run, victims of domestic violence deserve to be protected. Further, the perpetrators of violence should not be able to hide. Domestic violence is high on the list of government priorities at the federal and Territory level. It is everyone's right to be safe in their relationships and it is everybody's responsibility to help reduce the incidence of violence and support victims in their recovery.

The opposition in the Northern Territory will work collaboratively and constructively with the Northern Territory Government and stakeholders to reduce the instances of domestic violence. The bill before the House represents a commitment made by the Council of Australian Governments in 2015 to establish a national domestic violence order scheme.

The bill is based on model legislation that has been adopted across Australia, and, under it, domestic violence orders will be automatically recognised and enforceable in any Australian state or territory.

Currently, when a victim of domestic violence moves interstate the onus is on them to apply to the interstate court to have their domestic violence order registered. This can be a stressful situation for an already traumatised victim of violence. The court system can be difficult to navigate, and having to go to court again serves as an unnecessary reminder of the events that possibly instigated the interstate move and the inherent risk it represents.

Under this legislation, victims will not have to go to court to register the domestic violence order made in another state or territory. They will automatically be protected across Australia, regardless of where their order was issued. Courts and police will have access to up-to-date orders nationwide. For police it will be an important aid in having all the information available to effectively protect the community. We have been in contact with those at Dawn House, who advised us that they often have clients from interstate who are fleeing to escape domestic violence, and that not having to register their DVO in court in a new state would provide one less thing to worry about in a traumatic situation.

The legislation will help make the lives of victims of domestic violence easier by relieving the need to go to court and retell and relive their stories. It will help police and courts to have up-to-date information on DVOs from across Australia, and it will help make sure offenders are brought to justice no matter where they might be.

Madam Speaker, the opposition supports this bill.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I also support and welcome what is a commonsense bill before the parliament.

In reading the explanatory notes—it puts out everything this bill is about. It would be hard for anyone to say that domestic violence is not a major problem, not only in the Territory but in Australia. I will comment on some of the issues in relation to domestic violence in the Territory a little later.

The bill provides the automatic recognition in the Northern Territory of domestic violence orders made in participating states and territories, which makes common sense. If we are to deal with this issue as a national problem, we have to make sure that is the case. The automatic recognition in the Territory of foreign domestic violence orders that have been registered in participating jurisdictions—that is also common sense.

One would hope that governments would try to get as many participating jurisdictions in those agreements as they can. Variations and revocations in the Territory and other participating jurisdictions of recognised domestic violence orders, whether made in the Territory or elsewhere—that is a follow on from what was just said.

As a general rule, the most recent domestic violence orders should prevail over early, comparable domestic violence orders. Again, these are what I call commonsense approaches to dealing with this on a national basis.

Limitations on the extent to which a police domestic violence order can exist at the same time as a court domestic violence order, and the enforcement in the NT of recognised domestic violence orders made in participating states and territories—that is very important.

Limitations in the *Firearms Act* and the *Weapons Control Act* regarding persons against whom domestic violence orders have been made are to also apply to persons against whom recognised interstate domestic violence orders have been made. We know firearms are used in domestic violence cases, unfortunately with very serious or fatal consequences. That is an import part of the legislation.

The exchange of information between law enforcement agencies and courts regarding domestic violence events—for a long time in this parliament I remember hearing about silos and the exchange of information between departments. You have to break those things down. That is even more so the case when you are dealing with interstate organisations.

Protection against liability of police and court officers acting on good faith if enforcement action is taken without obtaining current information about a domestic violence order—because of the nature of what those people are doing, sometimes things have to be done on the spot.

Transitional provisions concerning the extent to which domestic violence orders made in the NT, or elsewhere, prior to the commencement of the legislation are automatically recognised—that is fairly straightforward.

The registrar of the Local Court to have the power to declare a domestic violence order made in a non-participating jurisdiction to be recognised—that is common sense.

Anyone who wants outcomes that will reduce domestic violence in our society cannot disagree with those changes. There are other changes as well.

In her second reading, the minister said:

In April 2015, COAG agreed to take urgent collective action to address the unacceptable level of violence against women. COAG proposed that by the end of 2015 a national domestic violence order scheme will be agreed, which will provide the automatic recognition and enforcement of domestic violence orders in any state or territory of Australia and the progress will be reported on a national information system that will enable courts and police in different states and territories to share information on active domestic violence orders. New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania were to trial the system.

In May 2015, the LCCSC noted that reducing violence against women is a priority item on COAG's agenda and it was expected that model laws would be agreed to by the end of 2015.

There are concerns about the amount of domestic violence against women, especially Indigenous women. The figures in the Northern Territory from 2015 and 2016 show that, from an Indigenous perspective, there were 535 males and 3011 females who come under the classification of domestic violence and assault, and there were 141 male and 304 female non-Indigenous assault victims. Outside of that domestic violence category there is alcohol-related assault victims, which include 614 Indigenous males and 2092 females, and 536 non-Indigenous males and 280 females. None of that is acceptable.

When we talk about domestic violence there are two aspects that do not get enough consideration in the debate. Looking at Indigenous domestic violence, there is no doubt that women are by far the most assaulted. The 535 Indigenous males and 141 non-Indigenous males are just as much in need of protection as the women who are subject to domestic violence. That has not been identified for a long time. That is one of the good aspects of the Charlie King and CatholicCare No More violence campaign. It does not discriminate on gender. It talks about family violence, because family violence can also be between siblings.

We need to make sure we do not leave men out of this equation. I know what harm this separation can do to men, who have sat at my desk and wept because they have lost their family and seem to have no hope in the world of recovering that family.

I do not always know the background of why things happen, but I know there are men in our society who feel that the system does not take enough notice or care for them. I support the No More violence campaign because it covers all people who are subject to domestic violence. You cannot ignore 535 Indigenous men or 141 non-Indigenous men who also suffer as a result of domestic violence, which is a scourge on our society. The figures on domestic violence related to alcohol are 332 Indigenous males, 1764 Indigenous females, 67 non-Indigenous males and 134 non-Indigenous females. Yes, there is no doubt, especially in Indigenous populations, that women cop most of the effect of domestic violence. There is no way you can change that; it is a reality. But we have to face up to it, and Aboriginal people have to face up to it. It also affects men—332 and 67.

The total figure for Indigenous is 2096—that is alcohol affected—out of a total of 3546. Whether those two figures can be matched or there is any duplication, I do not know. What is alarming is the amount of domestic violence where alcohol is part of the problem. We have to keep recognising that alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence, and violence in general.

Looking at violence caused by alcohol, there were 536 non-Indigenous males and 280 non-Indigenous females. I want to know where that violence is occurring. I have tried to get figures on the violence in Mitchell Street. They are very hard to obtain. I want to know how many people present to Darwin hospital on weekly basis from the Mitchell Street precinct. When we had the debate about lockout laws some years ago, it was extremely hard to get figures. All I know is that a lot of police are there at all hours of the night, making sure people do not get into too much trouble.

That is still an alarming number of Indigenous alcohol-related assault victims. I am not talking about domestic violence. A total of 2706 Indigenous people were the victims of assault related to the use of alcohol. If I put the domestic violence and alcohol-related assault victim figures together, there were 6200 Indigenous people who were affected by violence and about 1200 non-Indigenous people. That is why we need to support people like Charlie King and his No More violence campaign.

Although we separate these discussions about family violence, I believe we need to put more emphasis on violence in general. I umpire footy and I see people get bashed in the head occasionally. Part of that is the game, but I also see deliberate violence in the game. There can be a form of violence in football games that is aggressive but part of the game—go in for the ball hard and bump someone. But you can also see someone walk up and hit someone fair in the head. That is violence; it is not part of the game.

I have seen it from men and women on the football field. It worries me. I wonder what it is like in their home if they have such violent reactions on the football field when something has gone wrong.

There were pictures in the newspaper recently of a brawl at Casuarina Square. Where are these kids learning to be violent?

Ms Nelson: At home.

Mr WOOD: That is right, but it is not only at home. We have a society that promotes it. I have trouble believing that the UFC—so-called boxing. I support amateur boxing for kids, but I see that rubbish on Sky where people are flat on the ground and someone is smashing them in the head. Tell me that is not violence! That is not a sport. It is a blood sport—similar to the Romans and Christians. It does not present good role models for young people, yet people cheer and carry on when they see it.

To some extent we do have a culture of violence that is reflected at home and in schools sometimes, with bullying. It can be at bus stops; remember all the CCTV pictures of Palmerston bus shelter over the years. It is also reflected in the number of people we have in our prisons.

Whilst this bill is important and I support it, the discussion has to be broadened around the influence of violence in our society and where we are heading if we do not change that culture. The figures I have provided are the latest figures I have received.

You might say that the words, 'domestic violence' have not been around that long. It always brings back memories of my time at Daly River when I was 19. Fresh out of a Melbourne suburb and walking into an Aboriginal community that has no electricity and is out bush—I had never seen the place in my life—then you would find a man standing over his wife with a steel bar. Or you would turn up at the local church on Easter night and find a woman sitting on the steps with blood pouring down her head. We did not call it domestic violence then; we just said it was terrible.

One good thing, if you can call it good, is that over the last few years people have realised this is a real issue. It is an issue for Aboriginal people to take responsibility for but it is also a responsibility for all of us, as a society, to promote nonviolence, to show that violence is not the way to achieve a result or an answer to a problem. We also have to look at the influence that alcohol has on our society.

I really worry when the government says it will have a review into alcohol and the Chief Minister says he will not look at lockout laws. Regardless of whether you support lockout laws, there is no way you can leave that discussion out of a review of the alcohol act. It has diminished the amount of violence in the Newcastle CBD—talk to the police, paramedics, nurses and doctors.

The alcohol industry is extremely powerful. Why did the New South Wales Government change the hours in Kings Cross after it introduced lockout laws? There was enormous pressure from the industry to change things. We have an industry here which also has influence, and I think the government needs to get at arm's length from the alcohol industry and tell it to read this: 2096 Indigenous people involved in domestic violence where alcohol was related; 201 non-Indigenous people involved in domestic violence where alcohol was related; 2076 Indigenous people involved in straightforward alcohol-related assaults; 816 non-Indigenous people. You cannot tell me alcohol is not a major factor in problem violence in our community. We need to say that and not be influenced by the alcohol industry, otherwise this will continue.

I support the bill and thank the minister for bringing it forward. When we were discussing other matters this morning, I wondered why a more important bill—I think the body-worn video and domestic violence evidence bill should have been brought forward during these sittings. I had a briefing with the Police Association, which supports this.

This is something that should not wait. It has gone through the normal process. This is a bill we should also have included in today's agenda. We only had four bills for three days; we are not exactly overcrowded. We had a statement where people enjoyed themselves, but there was a place in these sittings for that bill—unless the minister can say there were some major problems with it. The Police Association is in support of it.

It is a good bill that needs to be supported.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I support the Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Bill. Note that there is not one mention of gender in that title.

The Northern Territory population is a moving, transitory one. People move here for various reasons, and some move here to restart their lives. Amongst those who move here to restart their lives are people who are hoping for a fresh start in a new environment that is safer than the one they left. We want to support these people and let them know the Northern Territory has measures in place to protect them.

Under the current legislation in place throughout Australia, it is the domestic violence victim who usually has to apply to the Local Court for the registration of an interstate domestic violence order. This forces the victim to deal again with the court and law enforcement processes in another jurisdiction.

Going through my first page of the speech, note that I have not mentioned gender once. While doing so, recounting their story, reliving their trauma, the main objective of this bill is to provide for the automatic recognition and enforcement in the Northern Territory of domestic violence orders made elsewhere in Australia so victims no longer have to reapply for DVOs each time they move.

As a woman who has been affected by violence and comes here with a background in working in the community legal services sector, I am incredibly pleased and honoured that the Territory is fulfilling the

commitment made by our government to protect and support domestic and family violence victims throughout each step towards recovery.

Our NT Government is progressing the Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy. This strategy was one of the important directions identified in the first three-year stage of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

Domestic violence in Australia continues to be a widespread and prevalent issue affecting the stability and health of families and communities around the country. While domestic and family violence affects men, women and children, data shows it is women who are overwhelmingly subjected to domestic violence as victims.

Given the fact that most incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault against women go unreported, it is difficult to determine the true extent of domestic violence against women. However, research indicates that since the age of 15 around 34% of women will have experienced physical violence, and about 19% will have experienced sexual violence.

While domestic violence affects women from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds some groups of women experience domestic and/or family violence at much higher rates, or face increased vulnerabilities in terms of protection from domestic violence or barriers in accessing assistance.

The Northern Territory is host to the highest rate of domestic violence deaths per capita. The need for a death review mechanism in the Territory is discussed further in the bill. I will not going into that right now.

When I was the Executive Officer of the Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service I noted that many of our clients who presented for assistance as victims of domestic violence also experienced overlapping legal issues, for example assistance being sought in respect of child protection or defendants in violence matters.

Remoteness often comes with a lack of resources, information and service provision. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women struggle to access assistance with domestic and family violence for these reasons. Furthermore, many have to travel hundreds of kilometres to access assistance and services. Katherine is a prime example of that.

Most victims living remote will also be living in a small community where there may be a perceived lack of anonymity and privacy with respect to seeking help. This is incredibly problematic if a victim is living in the community of the offender's family or if they are closely located. Fear of further violence as a result of reporting matters to police is a real and ongoing concern for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and many non-Indigenous women. Katherine, again, is a prime example of that. Even though we continue to do further research and consultation to determine the support, information and services that are most effective in improving the safety of women who live remote, this proposed legislation will greatly simplify the requirements for domestic violence victims to access services and support.

The general rule will be that a domestic violence order made in any jurisdiction will apply in all Australian states and territories. Victims of domestic violence seeking redress through the justice system may face the challenge of being involved in multiple court proceedings and, sadly, many do.

Domestic violence takes many forms beyond physical violence. Victims may seek protection for themselves and their children through a range of judicial forums. For example, a victim may be appearing as a witness in an assault matter where they have been the victim of a physical act of violence by the partner or ex-partner, while also pursuing custody orders or a property resettlement through family court proceedings.

Having to go through multiple, often lengthy, court proceedings often is a financially and emotionally exhausting experience for victims of domestic violence. I also state that through my own personal experiences. More often than not victims face the prospect of re-traumatisation through court proceedings, for example, when a defendant self-represents when contesting a domestic violence order, or through family court proceedings where the presence of domestic violence in the relationship may not be made explicit, where the dynamics of power and control are inadvertently allowed to continue to play out.

Mandatory reporting requirements in the Northern Territory mean that many mothers experiencing domestic violence come into contact with the child protection system. While the best interests of the child are paramount to a court's determination of any care and protection proceedings, it is essential and crucial

that awareness is raised amongst all involved agencies to avoid a punitive approach being taken towards women who have already been victimised through their experiences of family violence.

This bill is the first step towards the automatic recognition and enforcement in the Northern Territory of a domestic violence order made elsewhere in Australia. We are legislating to be ready for interstate recognition, but the development of the information system that will underpin the operation of the national scheme is not yet complete. The Commonwealth is leading this work through the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. Our police and courts will have to be comfortable before the national system commences.

It is crucial that police and courts have a capacity to quickly identify the current domestic violence order in place, as it will be the only order that is legally enforceable. This was a prime example shown in the Rosie Batty case. Additionally, if the technical system is ready to go they will probably not be in a position to back-capture the data for all current orders in place.

This amendment is one small step towards ensuring our government continues to support and facilitate every effort in protecting and minimising further harm to victims of domestic and family violence—men, women and children.

I commend the Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Bill to this parliament.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I am also proud to support the Attorney-General, the members of government and all members in the House in the debate on the domestic violence mutual recognition bill.

It is national legislation, and as the Member for Katherine has just outlined the technical nature of the bill—it is a very important bill. It brings the Territory in line with national counterparts to make sure the legislation supports all Australians.

For me, as the member representing around 5200 constituents of the Barkly, and as a father, husband and grandfather, this bill's presence in the Assembly sends a very clear message that domestic and family violence has become a scourge on our society. It is now at alarming rates. We are concerned that it has a huge impact on the Indigenous community, which represents 39% of the Northern Territory's population. It needs to be addressed.

This legislation will address a cross-border issue and provide national uniform legislation. It is important to note the unique nature of the Northern Territory; it is a highly-mobile population. There is a lot of cross-border movement and migration. Those are two distinct population logistics, but this bill sends a clear message that we are united as if we are linking arms with the other states and territories, which is a good thing.

I want to reflect on a recent incident in Tennant Creek. As a proud member of the Northern Territory for nearly 38 years, more than half of my life, I have seen some senseless violence, tragedy and trauma. The most recent incident, which I cannot comment on since it is a matter before the courts, involved two young people I know. They shared their school life with my children, and now reflect the ultimate tragedy through domestic violence, with one deceased and one facing serious charges.

This sort of cycle of grief is a major deficit to our community. When you live in a small Territory jurisdiction or a small regional remote town, you deal with the loss of loved ones on a regular basis, which impacts all families. When you deal with these ultimate tragedies in human life through domestic and family violence, the cycle of grief is amplified astronomically. When it involves significant Indigenous cultural ramifications, the cycle of grief is extremely complicated and reverberates across borders and boundaries. It destabilises community wellbeing over significant lengths of time.

The psychological impact and cycle of grief is a major consideration for government in terms of any community development policy or wellbeing programs. It has to be looked at and factored in. The area I have chosen to live in and raise my family—it is amplified. I can go further into the bush and talk about Borroloola. There was a particular year in which there was a funeral every month of that year. When you are the principal of the school and are trying to run educational programs to make sure you deliver the best potential for children's lives, that has a major impact. The recent incident in Tennant Creek has had a profound impact on our community, and it will take years to recover from the grieving process.

I acknowledge the community coming together after this tragic event with a rally and vigil in a local park. I was unable to attend due to ministerial commitments elsewhere, but I have reports that it was a small but powerful gathering. It was so important that someone came out and spoke. Community members linked arms, spoke and showed the town, in a visible sense, that this is inappropriate, and that it is a scourge on our society and we need to do something about it.

That brings me to this government's policy, underpinned with the valuing, socialisation and development of support for children. As we listen around the country to people who are well versed and learned, who have studied this area through psychological studies of human behaviour, we know this is a generational problem that will require generational change. That is why Labor's policy—in terms of the 2016 general election, articulating that policy for the Territory to embrace it. Now the great challenge is for us as members, not only of the government but of the general Legislative Assembly, to implement that policy. Children are at the centre of that policy, and I believe it is our responsibility to grow our children and socialise them, and this area is very relevant and real.

I was lucky to be home for a great event where the Imparja Cup, a major cricket sporting event in the Northern Territory that started between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, has celebrated its 30th year with a game back in Tennant Creek. There were two games; two Darwin sides travelled on their way to Alice Springs, stopped and played, and Tennant Creek played Katherine.

By the way, you will be hearing about this, but the Tennant Creek regional team won the Imparja Cup in 2017 in Alice Springs. Congratulations and well done to them. But it is not all about winning. This event not only celebrated its history and heritage, but it brought people together. I acknowledge Charlie King's incredible initiative to make this visible and personal, making a stand against domestic and family violence with the ceremony of linking arms.

We had two Darwin cricket sides as well as Tennant Creek and Katherine linking arms. I rocked that opening ceremony with my speech when I said, 'Did anybody notice those 10 kids on the oval playing superb cricket for about an hour before this opening ceremony? They have gazumped the Imparja Cup in Tennant Creek and in the Northern Territory. Check them out!' They were all sitting on the fence like cockatoos by that time and I encouraged the crowd to give them a round of applause because that is what it is all about in any sporting development program. It is about our juniors.

Not only were these kids playing superb cricket and celebrating that event, but they got to sit and witness this ceremony of linking arms. I made a point of making sure that was spoken about. What is it? What does it mean? What message is it sending? In that conglomerate there were fathers, brothers and grandfathers. That is a really powerful signal for generational change as long as it is deconstructed and reinforced by respected and responsible adults.

It becomes very simple in terms of Charlie King's initiative. Whenever you see those public ceremonies, take the time to make sure you deconstruct those values with somebody. My recommendation is young people. It is so important to learn about respecting yourself, your mates and each other.

It is hard to imagine, with that recent tragic event in Tennant Creek, that nobody reflected on their mother or grandmother. What would my mum have said or done? I am probably one of many privileged Australians who had strong support in my life around socialisation.

I am not saying life is easy. There is nothing easy about any of these challenging issues in our society, but we can base off some very simple measures in our community around our children and families.

That is what this legislation signals to me. We can listen to all sorts of explanations around the influences of society and the change and loss of values, and we can make our excuses around that. I heard a good one the other day about the increase in youth crime and where dysfunctional youth who are disengaged from the school and family community sit and play highly-stylised, contextual electronic games that teach you about stealing cars and police chases. It is the ultimate in how to be the Hollywood movie star in the crash, chase and shoot-out. If they are practising that all day in an electronic medium, they go out and practice it for real at night.

I do not completely buy into that theory. I can say plenty of people have plenty of theories, but, essentially, it comes down to each and every one of us as positive role models in our families, communities and society.

I thank the Attorney-General for bringing this legislation forward. It conforms to national uniform legislation but allows the Territory to, once again, have this debate and support Charlie King and his initiatives, to take it on in each and every family, to stand up and be a positive role model, to deconstruct and communicate this message to everybody, and to be an effective part of generational change.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the domestic violence mutual recognition amendment bill.

I have worked in this field and have been attending meetings on the very issues dealt with in this bill for over 13 years. I am very proud to be part of the team bringing this reform for the safety of all Territorians who need it.

I thank the Member for Barkly for his wise words, reminding us of the cost of domestic violence to individuals, families and communities. It impacts on all of us. Tackling domestic and family violence is a huge task faced by this new government; however, it is one we are committed to addressing.

This amendment before the Legislative Assembly is one part of this government's approach to combatting domestic and family violence. Ending domestic violence requires united effort across all Australian governments to provide cooperative solutions to issues affecting people no matter where they live. The invisible lines of state and territory boundaries should not define whether or not a person is protected from harm, or whether their right to feel safe is met.

This amendment provides for automatic recognition and enforcement of all domestic family violence orders made in Australia. It includes New Zealand domestic violence orders that are registered in Australia. The Northern Territory has the highest rates of domestic and family violence in Australia. We have seen time and time again the confronting statistics of Territorians affected by this issue. This amendment is essential to the safety of some of our most vulnerable Territorians, particularly those in remote communities.

The Northern Territory is unique in its vast land mass and dispersed population, which promote possibilities and challenges. The borders of our neighbouring states are often alongside some of our most remote communities, with people moving regularly between states. With our smaller towns, women and children who often need to leave to ensure their own safety—it is difficult to avoid anyone, even in Alice Springs, as we all know from the supermarket on a Saturday morning. In Alice Springs, women at high risk would more often seek safety in Adelaide than Darwin.

These are issues that have been impacting Territorians for a long time. The issues of our geography should not stop individuals affected by domestic and family violence who need support and protection accessing it through the justice system, particularly in immediate times of great trauma and crisis.

At the end of last year I represented our government in Brisbane at the Council of Australian Governments' violence against women summit. At the summit, first ministers met with women's safety ministers and more than 140 subject specialists and expert leaders to profile best practice in making Australia safer for women and their children. The summit was also attended by my colleague the assistant minister for women's policy and prevention of family violence, Sandra Nelson. I thank her for her support and contribution.

The summit was also attended by Territory leaders who are passionate about domestic and family violence, including Ms Bettina Danganbarr, who is an Aboriginal community police officer; Ms Dianne Gippy, the Director of the Alice Springs Women's Shelter; Charlie King, the founder of the No More campaign; and Ms Andrea Mason, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, who is also the Northern Territory Australian of the Year and the Telstra Australian Business Woman of the Year. Also in attendance was Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw, who is a strong supporter of this issue and has done a lot to ensure our police are acting on these issues.

The purpose of the summit was to ensure that all governments join together as part of a coordinated and consolidated effort to address violence against women. It forged newer and deeper connections between governments, the sector and leaders in the field to progress a collective response to reducing violence. Collectively the Council of Australian Governments' commitment to reducing violence against women was re-affirmed.

Through this commitment the Prime Minister, Hon Malcolm Turnbull, launched the Council of Australian Governments' Third Action Plan 2016–2019. This plan forms part of the Council of Australian Governments' National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022. The National Plan aims to connect the important work being done by all governments throughout Australia,

community organisations and individuals so they can work together to ensure fewer women experience violence, and more women and their children can live safely.

This is a long-term partnership for action between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. It is aimed at achieving significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. Our government supports the national plan, and is committed to working with other jurisdictions to implement the plan in the Territory.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to taking a holistic approach to the issue of domestic and family violence. This is clearly demonstrated through the formation of Territory Families. This department brings together early childhood development, child protection, youth policy, youth justice, multicultural affairs, women and men's policy, and domestic family violence policy and services. Through Territory Families I am responsible for the implementation of 36 practical actions from the Third Action Plan, which will be undertaken in six priority areas. These actions will see more concerted action in the areas of prevention and early intervention; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children; greater support and choice of service delivery; sexual violence; responding to children living with violence; and keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems.

We have a strong history of leadership in cross-border protection and cooperation. In the NPY cross-border region, Northern Territory Police have shown significant leadership by being part of the Cross Border Justice Scheme, which was the forerunner to this legislation, proving that cooperation across borders can work as a concentrated effort on the ground.

We have also been leaders in the area of having police co-located in the Northern Territory. I congratulate the Northern Territory Police on their leadership in this area. As a government we will strengthen relationships across borders. As part of our commitment to working closely with our South Australian colleagues—I look forward to joint Cabinet meetings during the year—we have pledged \$50 000 towards community-led initiatives focused on primary prevention and education that addresses family violence in Aboriginal communities across the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands. This is a co-funded project with the South Australian Government.

The Northern Territory Government, in the last term, expanded the Family Safety Framework, which was originally a South Australian program, and I was part of starting this program under the previous Labor government. Throughout the last term the previous government rolled out this great initiative to Tennant Creek, Yuendumu, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy, as well as keeping it in Alice Springs, which has been a strong, ongoing process. It is a really important process in supporting people's safety. It provides an action-based, integrated service delivery response to individuals and families experiencing domestic or family violence who are at high risk of serious injury or death.

Using the South Australian tool means the same risk tool is used through the middle of Australia, assisting communication and, therefore, the safety of the individuals involved.

I also note that under the previous government support services were expanded in remote locations. I think it is important to acknowledge where things were done correctly in the last term. The expansion of outreach services to remote communities was one of those things.

We have also committed to establishing a safe house in Galiwinku, and I look forward to visiting soon to talk to the women on the ground about how they want that building to look.

The Northern Territory Government is also committed to developing a whole-of-government sexual assault framework to prevent and respond to sexual assault in the NT. This has been an area of policy neglect over many years and we are determined to deliver it under this term of government.

Territory Families is also working in partnership with the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice to improve domestic and family violence victims' access to the justice system and the response to perpetrators through legislative amendments. Our government is moving to make legislative changes to evidence laws to support information being captured by body-worn police cameras being tendered in court as evidence-in-chief in prosecutions. This reform will help police with prosecutions of serious domestic violence offences and will mitigate the trauma that victims experience from entering our justice system.

Along with this legislation, where women do not have to go back to court to reapply for a DVO, we are also supporting women, when they have experienced a traumatic event, by reducing the need for their evidence.

The government continues to support the No More campaign. I have met with Charlie King several times since I became a minister, and we are looking forward to continuing work with him. We have also worked on White Ribbon accreditation for government departments as well as White Ribbon Day events.

As a government we recognise the importance of including Indigenous men in this conversation, and we will support a law and culture gathering event in 2017 through the Indigenous Males Advisory Council.

I very much appreciate the support I receive from the Member for Brennan in the men's policy area, as he is the assistant minister.

Today's amendment aligns with the work of all governments undertaking the Third Action Plan's model law framework for domestic and family violence orders. The model law framework was developed under the auspices of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council, and approved in December 2015 with the Council of Australian Governments. All jurisdictions have committed to the national framework to be operational by 2022. That is one of the reasons we have to make sure we get this legislation through so that we do not delay the process any further, although some other jurisdictions are working on their contributions to the framework.

This legislation will allow domestic violence orders issued in one jurisdiction to be automatically recognised and enforceable across all states and territories in Australia. Currently when a person has in place a domestic violence order and they, for any reason, cross borders into another state or territory, the onus is on them to apply to the new jurisdiction's court and have their domestic violence order registered there. If this is not done, their existing order is not recognised or enforceable. As someone who has supported women through this process on a regular basis, I know it is difficult and onerous—sitting around the court, having already gone through a time of trauma. To be able to do this automatically will make a huge difference to women's safety.

Entering a new jurisdiction without this amendment requires a person at the risk of harm to engage with the court again; they constantly have to re-share their story. The Member for Katherine was very clear about how difficult that is—and thank you for sharing your personal experience of that. I have witnessed many women being very stressed by this.

The other practical solution is that this amendment removes unnecessary pressure on our court systems and removes the need for individuals to negotiate the very process they currently undertake to register a domestic violence order in each state and territory. For instance, the South Australian process is quite different to the Northern Territory.

Our government has committed \$6m to build a new women's shelter in Alice Springs. It is a big infrastructure commitment that I am proud of. This service is one of the biggest and busiest crisis accommodation services in Australia. Where it is located means it is providing support on a regular basis to women and children from over 80 different communities across four states.

This service is a case study about why this bill is needed. The impact of cross-jurisdiction cooperation, coordination and today's amendment will further assist to protect women and children who will be accommodated and receive services at the shelter. It will also free up the very busy staff who are not needed to go through the process of registering cross-border DVOs, which is a time-consuming process. This has good impacts for our NGO sector.

To support this legislation the Australian Government is leading the development of a comprehensive national domestic violence information sharing system. This system will be used by police and courts to help enforce domestic violence orders across all states and territories and, importantly, it will enable courts and police to share information on active domestic violence orders in a sensitive manner.

This Labor government is committed to a whole-of-life, whole-of-community approach to achieve better outcomes across a range of policy areas. We are part of a coordinated and consolidated effort by all governments to address violence against women and their children. If we are to succeed in our cause it will take the concerted effort of many.

There is much more to be done, but this is a good small step in the right direction. This means police will be able to work more effectively and women will be able to travel more easily when they need to. When I was at COAG in Brisbane it felt a very long way from home—I gave the example that at that very moment while we were all sitting there, there was probably a woman in a car in outback Australia, on a dirt road, going to

visit her mother in the next community, and at some stage of that trip she would cross an invisible border, which would mean she was less safe than she was on the other side of that invisible border.

In 2016 this does not make any sense. My position, and the position of this government, is very clear. There is no acceptable justification for violence in a family or domestic circumstance and there is certainly no justification for violence against women and their children.

Systemic change is needed to stop the path that so many find themselves on when they experience domestic and family violence, whereby victims find themselves unjustifiably in contact with the criminal justice system.

We are committed to stopping this cycle of disadvantage with a whole-of-life, whole-of-community approach. This approach places people at the heart of policy development. This is a critical start and I am proud to be a part of the government that brought this legislation to the House.

Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, I support this bill.

This bill is an improvement on existing law; it supports victims' rights in existing laws. I cannot, however, accept DVOs as a solution for my people. DVOs, by the colonial nature of the system, make more violence and conflict than what they assist in. DVOs impinge upon the ability of Yolngu clan leadership in dealing properly with violence in our community and domestic conflict.

Our people are struggling with lateral violence directly caused by the colonial movement that started with the landing of the first fleet in 1788. For the Yolngu people colonial takeover is not an issue of the past but a current, ongoing conflict. It is a conflict that, through tools like DVOs, disempowers my people and makes our justice dependent on the very people who caused the violence in the first place.

The answer to lowering domestic violence in rural communities is taking control of the issue. This means we must have the power to intervene in these issues, return Yolngu authorities and not be threatened by the intervention of Northern Territory Police and non-Indigenous law like domestic violence orders.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Madam Speaker, it is good to stand here and support this important bill going through.

One of the cornerstones of this government is vibrant and safe communities. For a community to feel truly safe citizens need, among other things, to feel safe from the threat of domestic violence. One of the challenges of Australia's formation is we have a federated history where our constitution confers rights on the Commonwealth, states and territories. This history means there are often different legislative and regulatory frameworks in different states, and, unfortunately, negotiating these frameworks to achieve seamless outcomes can be difficult.

I thank the Attorney-General for her work on this, and our federal colleagues for addressing and uniforming this legislation across jurisdictions. It is important we have mutual respect and recognition between the states and territories.

This model is drafted in accordance with the four policy principles we have heard about today—which came from the national domestic violence order working group, comprising representatives from justice and police agencies from December 2015—which are that a family domestic violence order made or registered anywhere in Australia is nationally recognised and enforceable; an order made in one jurisdiction can be amended by another jurisdiction, but only by a court; when an order made in one jurisdiction is enforced, if necessary, a new order can be made in another jurisdiction, but only by a court; and the latest order in time prevails.

The cross-border jurisdiction boundaries are gone, and I acknowledge the contribution by Minister Wakefield on the police cross-border legislation that was passed a few years ago and made a significant difference to our extremely remote communities, especially in Central Australia around Docker River and Kintore—crossing borders so you will not get in trouble. The word then in Indigenous communities is that the police are looking for you, so you cruise across the border and stay there for a while until they are not looking for you, then you come back and everything is on track but the issues have not gone away.

I want to touch on the absolute bloody disgrace of our domestic violence rates. It is important that I break this down, because in today's society we just talk about domestic violence, but most of the stats are around domestic and family violence. Domestic violence refers to the act of violence—physical, sexual, emotional

and psychological—that occurs between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship. Family violence is the most widely used term to identify the experience of any—the statistics include a broad range of marital and kinship relationships in which violence may occur, rather than just intimate relationships. The Member for Nelson mentioned that it could be sibling to sibling.

It is an absolute bloody disgrace that one woman every week is killed by a partner or former partner. Domestic or family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness, which we rarely speak about in this Chamber—the repercussions of not only physical abuse and going to hospital, but the fact they do not have anywhere to go when they want to escape.

I acknowledge, commend and have respect for the NGOs, women's shelters and any shelters that look after our most vulnerable people. Generally they are underpaid and not recognised for the work they do. The people I have met in those industries do not want recognition. They do not want the big salaries; they want to make a change and be part of that change. It is important that we, in this Chamber, support that change.

Another disgraceful statistic is that Indigenous females are 35 times more likely to experience domestic or family violence than non-Indigenous women. Indigenous women and girls are 31 times more likely to be hospitalised due to domestic or family violence. At the end of my term in this political role—and I am very happy to have a seat at the table to make change, and, along with my colleagues in this Chamber, we want to make change. We saw the latest Closing the Gap report recently—another disgrace. How can we spend billions of dollars addressing Indigenous disadvantage only to see it going backwards? I find it amazing.

Many people in this country are being paid a lot of money, including us, and we are going backwards. We need to revisit what we are doing so we are not doubling or tripling services to the same people, and so we are not funding three or four service providers to do the same job for the same clients. We need a strategic approach to minimise this harm and lower the domestic violence rates. We have a plan for that. I ask that Territorians, not only in this space but the juvenile space, take a breath and let us try to move forward, even slowly, to try to get some outcomes.

I do not want to be in here in three or four years talking about the same things and seeing the rates going up and closing the gap results going down even further. I find it unacceptable, as someone with a strong Aboriginal family and strong links to the Territory, and as someone who has worked at Batchelor Institute and seen how education and health can change people's lives.

I am not just talking about domestic violence as an Indigenous problem; it is a problem throughout Australia. One woman a week is killed by a partner. I am not saying it is Indigenous females all the time; this is a problem we have, nationwide, for all Australians.

We have intergenerational trauma, almost post-traumatic stress disorder, of children seeing their mother or father beat up. I acknowledge what the Member for Nelson said, that males are also subject to domestic violence; however, we are here to address the elephant in the room. Males are predominantly doing this to females. Children are seeing this, so there is intergenerational trauma which we have not addressed.

I am confident that some of our youth problems around the Territory are caused by seeing domestic violence happen to their loved ones—mothers, fathers, sisters. The trauma it creates, we have not addressed yet. The worst thing I have seen is when I was in opposition; the former CLP government cut nearly \$4.5m out of the youth justice programs in Central Australia. Not only were they keeping track of people and keeping plans in progress for them, but they were also addressing the trauma they face every day.

It is all right for me to sit in Rapid Creek and say to my boys, 'Cruise down to the shop and get me some milk,' or, 'Can you go and do this for me?' Sometimes that is not an option. Some families do not have the money to do that because they are struggling.

They have seen trauma, dealt with it and continue to deal with it. We all, sadly, have stories of domestic violence. Over the last 10 or 15 years the sad reality around Darwin and Alice Springs is that it is out in the open. We go down to the shop and suddenly there is a dust up and people are screaming at each other, and then someone gets hit. We need to make sure we stop and take care of that person and report it, as we are supposed to. But this is the reality.

I agree with some points the Member for Nelson made; video games, movies and the glorification of violence have contributed to this, but the fact is we all have a job to do and we need to address this. I

support this 100%. It is a small step, but the bigger problem we face is that domestic and family violence rates need to decrease. We also need to address the massive issues in child protection.

Regardless of governments and ministers, people want to see that we are working towards change. We come and go, but the problems continue to exist, not only domestic violence but also, as the Member for Nelson mentioned, alcohol-related violence, which is a major contributor to this. When you go back to remote communities and the rates out there—we are talking about 20 or 25 people in a room.

Madam Speaker, I am thankful for and proud of the work this government is doing. I hope everyone in this Chamber supports this and continues to work together to lower the domestic and family violence rates.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

RESPONSES TO PETITION Petition Nos 1 and 2

The CLERK: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 123 I inform honourable members that responses from the Minister for Health to Petition No 1 and Petition No 2 have been received and circulated to honourable members. The text of the response will be included in the *Parliamentary Record* and placed on the Legislative Assembly's website, and a copy of the response has been provided to the Member for Daly for distribution to the petitioners.

Petition No 1

Transport for Coomalie District Residents to Attend Medical Appointments in Darwin

Date presented: 19 October 2016

Presented by: Mr Higgins

Referred to: Minister for Health

Date response due: 15 February 2017

Date response received: 15 February 2017

Date response presented: 16 February 2017

and

Petition No 2

Access to Hospital Treatment in Darwin for Coomalie Residents

Date presented: 19 October 2016

Presented by: Mr Higgins

Referred to: Minister for Health

Date response due: 15 February 2017

Date response received: 15 February 2017

Date response presented: 16 February 2017

Response

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 October 2016, in which you forwarded the terms of two petitions read in the Legislative Assembly on 19 October 2016 (Petition No 1 and Petition No 2), as required by Standing Order 122.

Pursuant to Standing Order 123, I am required to respond to a petition referred to me pursuant to Standing Order 122 within 12 Assembly meeting days of it being forwarded. Please consider my response below in response to both petitions for presentation to the Assembly.

Both Petition No 1 from the Council on the Ageing Northern Territory (COTA NT) and Petition No 2 from COTA (Coomalie Region) state that the residents of the Coomalie District (including the townships of Adelaide River, Batchelor and Lake Bennett) are disadvantaged in terms of accessing Royal Darwin Hospital, specialist clinics and other medical treatment due to the lack of public or government-funding transport. The petitions request that the Northern Territory Government assist by 'gifting a suitable vehicle and financial aid that will provide much-needed transport for older members of the communities and surrounding areas to reach medical appointments and treatments in Darwin'.

I note that financial support is available under the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme (PATs) in some special circumstances. Patients who travel to Darwin for cancer treatment (chemotherapy) for several days per week from these areas who do not have family to assist are provided accommodation assistance under PATs as a special circumstance. The PATs guidelines also provide reimbursement for patients who must travel more than 200 kilometres one way or more than 400 kilometres cumulatively in one week (to attend renal and oncology services).

Further information on the PATs can be obtained at the following link: <https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-subsidies-support-and-home-visits/patient-assistance-travel-scheme>

TEHS has recently reviewed the Low Acuity Patient Travel (LAPT) in response to these petitions and endorsed an expansion of the service. The LAPT bus currently travels from Katherine to Darwin return on Monday to Friday, departing Katherine at approximately 8 am. The LAPT bus will now be managed in Darwin and depart from Royal Darwin Hospital daily. The service will be expanded so that patients discharged from Royal Darwin Hospital can be dropped off in Adelaide River and Batchelor on the trip down to Katherine. These changes will take effect by the end of February 2017, with a view to further expanding the service after that time to also pick up patients from these areas.

The operational arrangements for how patients will access the service, which will either be via their local health clinic or by contacting a central transport booking officer, and the demand for the service, are currently being determined. Further assistance with travel may also be available through government funding programs. Specifically, COTA (NT or Coomalie Region as appropriate) may wish to consider applying for a Community Benefit Fund grant for the purposes of obtaining a vehicle. The details of how to access the fund are available at:

<https://nt.gov.au/community/community-grants-and-volunteers/small-and-major-community-grants/who-can-apply>

I would strongly encourage submission of an application to the Community Benefit Fund.

The A/Executive Director of Local Government Division from the Department of Housing and Community Services has offered to provide advice on developing an appropriate Community Benefit Fund application, and assistance to the community in exploring potential partnering opportunities with organisations such as local government councils and non-government organisations, who may have solutions for transportation issues.

I appreciate that access to health and community services from the regional areas can be challenging and trust that this response provides reassurance that efforts are being made to support this access.

Thank you for drawing this issue to my attention.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS) (NATIONAL UNIFORM LAW) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 3)

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Attorney-General and the Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Bill. I understand the main purpose of this bill is to provide the automatic recognition and enforcement in the Northern Territory of domestic violence orders made elsewhere in the country. I want to place on the record my support for this bill as a local member.

I represent a jurisdiction which has the Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian borders so many of my constituents ...

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Namatjira, please pause. Those making a yakkity yak, could you go outside please?

Mr Gunner: You are calling out bipartisanship over here.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay, bipartisan yakkity yak—down to the back please.

Mr PAECH: Madam Speaker, as I was saying; as a local member whose electorate borders three other jurisdictions—Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia—I understand and support the importance of this bill to recognise interstate domestic violence orders, because many of my constituents are very transient people who travel throughout that tristate region, so this is very important.

From my personal experience, having travelled with a number of my constituents on various trips—understanding the areas of caution when we are entering a different jurisdiction and their domestic violence order becomes invalid.

I also want to place on the *Parliamentary Record* that this is not framed at any particular race. People will always make reference to this being towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As an Aboriginal person I want to say that we are not all perpetrators and we are not violent people. It is not our way and it is not our culture. I feel it very important to put that on the record today. This is about legislation that will reflect everyone and provide safety for everyone.

I also want to reiterate the importance of this legislation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community within Australia, who will also, under this legislation, have the ability to travel interstate and have a domestic violence order validated when they are travelling if they feel unsafe—knowing their domestic violence order is active throughout the country provides a level of certainty for those people.

I thank the Member for Braitling, Minister Wakefield, who has taken a strong lead role in reforming the domestic violence services in the Northern Territory. I am thankful to be part of that team with her. We will look after and reform that space. The Member for Braitling mentioned the Alice Springs Women's Shelter, and I am happy to see the announcement of \$6m there. Many of my constituents from the electorate of Namatjira will have to use that refuge when they need a safe place to go. I am thankful for the tireless efforts of the people at the Alice Springs Women's Shelter, who provide a safe place for women and children in the Northern Territory, particularly in the southern region. A number of people from South Australia and Western Australia travel to Alice Springs to utilise that facility as well. I am excited to be part of a team that is making a commitment to invest in that area.

I am happy to support the Attorney-General today in an effort to make sure we have a number of provisions in place to support all Territorians.

Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice): Madam Speaker, I thank everyone who has contributed to this debate.

This is an issue that everyone in this Chamber acknowledges; domestic violence is an epidemic that we need to address. The speeches we have heard today and the acknowledgement of it as an issue is very important. I appreciate the support of members and the time they have taken to reflect the thoughts of their communities.

This legislation is important because it will ensure that interstate DVOs can be enforced as if they are local DVOs, if they are registered with the Local Court. The Domestic and Family Violence (Recognition of Domestic Violence Orders) (National Uniform Law) Amendment Bill provides a framework for the automatic recognition and enforcement of all family and domestic violence DVO orders made in Australia, as well as DVOs in New Zealand that have been registered in Australia.

This bill provides a scheme for the national recognition and enforcement of state and territory domestic violence orders by simplifying the recognition requirements, which will result in better protection for victims of domestic and family violence across Australian borders. The Member for Namatjira stated that he sees this in his electorate. Other than for New Zealand orders, victims and police will no longer need to register orders. For New Zealand orders, registration in one Australian jurisdiction will suffice for the whole of Australia.

The bill removes the need for victims of domestic violence to unnecessarily re-engage with the justice system when they move between states and territories. This is particularly important if people are moving permanently—the transient nature of the population today sees many people move around looking for opportunities and employment. This means they do not need to re-engage with the justice system, as that can be stressful for people.

The bill is based on model laws developed under the auspices of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council and was approved in December 2015 by the Council of Australian Governments. The model laws were drafted in accordance with the following common policy principles and were agreed to by each

jurisdiction: a DVO made anywhere in Australia or New Zealand or registered anywhere in Australia is nationally recognised and enforceable; a DVO that is nationally recognised can be amended in any jurisdiction, but only by a court; if a DVO in one jurisdiction is in force, a new order can, if necessary, be made in another jurisdiction, but only by a court; and the latest DVO in time prevails. That is just some of the detail around the legislation.

The NT bill provides for the implementation of these principles through the amendment of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* and for consequential amendments to the *Firearms Act*. The core amendment is the inclusion of a new Chapter 3A, which implements the model law that was approved by COAG.

I acknowledge and show appreciation for the role of the courts in this work. It is a positive step for each court in different jurisdictions to recognise each other's decision-making processes. Hopefully in time, where possible, we will see a move to uniformity of wording and orders, which will help with the implementation of mutual recognition.

There was a question from the Member for Nelson about data sharing. It will commence when there is satisfaction throughout Australia that the data-sharing systems are viable so executive governments will know the courts and police and ready. The Commonwealth is leading that.

Our court staff and police, as well as prosecution and defence lawyers, will need training on the generality and the specifics of the legislation, and the underpinning information systems. There is a proposal to commence this nationally towards the end of this year. We will work with the Commonwealth Government and our colleagues interstate on that. If this bill passes in a few moments' time, the Northern Territory will have the legislation to provide for that.

I take a moment to acknowledge the contributions of members in the Chamber. We talked about Charlie King and the work he does with the No More campaign, which is very important in getting the message out, breaking down the boundaries and talking about this issue. Recently—the Member for Brennan was there—the motorcycle clubs joined together with the football league at a home game in Nightcliff. Hundreds of motorbike riders joined with the football players and with Charlie, linking arms in support of the No More campaign. It is a very important campaign across the Northern Territory, highlighting this important issue.

This bill, along with the other states and territories' versions of the model law, marks a significant step forward in protecting the victims of domestic and family violence. We, as a government, treat this issue with a huge deal of respect and seriousness, and I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT The Year Ahead

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, today I will outline to the House our government's economic and social agenda for 2017. I note that the Mayor of Katherine is in the building. I will be talking about Katherine today.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR Fay Miller

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Chief Minister. I draw honourable members' attention to the presence in the gallery of the Mayor of Katherine, Fay Miller. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr GUNNER: It begins with creating jobs because there is no more potent agent of change for economies, communities and individuals. Only by creating jobs will we grow our population to support the diverse

economy we need to even out cycles of boom and bust. At a family level, jobs not only put food on the table, but instil purpose, pride and confidence—the stuff of role models.

The CLP government failed to set down a way forward beyond the so-called INPEX construction cliff. Our jobs agenda is grounded in a sensible and community-engaged short-, medium- and long-term strategy. We know we must act with urgency because businesses have told me that 2016 was as bad as it gets.

We are facing challenging headwinds. Our economy is slowing down because of the transition of the INPEX project from construction to production, but this slowdown has been brought down harder and faster because of previous political chaos, uncertainty and failure to plan. Private investment is slowing, and while government cannot wholly fill the void, there are measures we have taken and will take this year.

We have shown we will move fast and act decisively if it means keeping Territorians here and in work. Because of our government's actions, more than 250 Territory families have their first homes because we introduced \$24 000 of stamp duty relief. More than \$1m has been spent on tradies because of our \$10 000 renovation vouchers.

The construction industry will have more work available because we fast-tracked \$120m of infrastructure programs. More people will sleep in better conditions and more kids will wake up fresh for school because we have fast-tracked \$10m of what will be a record \$1.1bn investment in remote housing. More tradies, smaller contractors and steel manufacturers will have more work because we are investing \$22m in steel works, public housing upgrades and community organisations for repairs and infrastructure.

One of the smartest ways to drive local small and medium businesses is to open up more of the NT Government's expenditure on goods and services. On coming to government we beefed up the buy local principles so that 30% of local content weighting applies across all government procurement stages. We also extended those principles to groups that received government capital grants.

This year we are going further. Guiding the seven new buy local initiatives last week is replacing the 'value for money' definition in government procurement guidelines with 'value for Territory'. This is about looking beyond the dirt cheap tender. This is about getting work in the hands of businesses which will use it to create and sustain jobs, and drive our economy. We will now work with industry on a model for an independent industry advocate who will monitor and help enforce these principles.

This government will not be arrogant. We will not be pigheaded. The Territory will always come first. We have consulted widely with business, and business told us the Home Improvement Scheme worked. That is why we brought it back and made it bigger and better. Under our \$15m program, additional to the \$11m already spent on the existing scheme, Territorians who have already received a \$2000 voucher can access it again. Territorians who have not previously accessed a \$2000 voucher can now access a one-off \$4000 voucher.

Subcontracting will now be encouraged under the scheme, which is important because this means tradies can get work from tradies.

The potential long-term reward from Defence industries investment is as great as any past or present major project. Defence infrastructure in the north is expected to top \$8bn over the next decade and \$20bn over the next 20 years.

I have been in Canberra this week, meeting with the Prime Minister and the federal ministers responsible for Defence, Defence industries and northern development about securing Defence projects for the Territory. These meetings are not about asking nicely and hoping for the best, but demonstrating the strategic value of engaging and equipping businesses and contractors to create a smart, self-generating and expert local Defence industry right here.

The Department of Trade, Business and Innovation has brought together experts to assess how we can continue to best prosecute this case. Next month I will announce a team to base itself in Canberra to advocate constantly on our behalf.

In June I will host public forums with local businesses in Darwin and Katherine to let Territorians know how to prepare for projects and to hear what Territorians need from us. In September we will take this information and publish a refreshed Defence strategy paper.

Government's infrastructure investment must be focused on projects that can leverage the private sector economy into action. We will put in the hard yards and we expect private enterprise to do the same. We have listened and we heard loud and clear that this is not the time to take the foot off the pedal.

The economic summits process, which will culminate at the end of next month, will guide a 10-year infrastructure plan. More immediately, discussions with business across the Territory have already produced common themes we need to begin addressing right now.

This year we will begin to invest back into our living centres. This is about creating practical, safe, welcoming, vibrant and well-serviced places to live, work, play and visit. This is about creating countless local jobs.

In Darwin we will embark on a 10-year plan to bring the CBD to life, affirming a sense of place and history, and a sense of significance befitting Australia's great tropical capital of the north. We will transform our retail and living space by making it a more comfortable place to live, work and play. We must get people back to the CBD.

When we talk about a 21st century Darwin, the Asian century Darwin, we must talk about finishing the State Square project. We should redevelop State Square to have at our capital's heart the kind of elegant space found in the great capitals of the world.

I have already said that I believe the Chan building and the bus terminal should be moved, and the Supreme Court car parking would ideally go underground. My vision is for open and treed green space, with paths, water features, statues of our heroes and stories of our past. Lord Mayor Katrina Fong Lim and I have restarted the Northern Australia Capital City Committee, with enormous goodwill on either side, to get things done. We have engaged Government Architect Professor Lawrence Nield to put together an advisory team of locals and professionals.

One area we need to look at is heat mitigation. We know there can be a seven to nine degree difference between built-up concrete areas and green space. The advisory team is working with world-renowned Professor Mat Santamouris on a heat test for the CBD. Cooling the CBD could mean more green space, vegetation canopies, reflective pavement and water features. We have to build smart connections throughout our city so there is a natural foot and vehicle flow from the new luxury hotel and harbor through to Myilly Point.

Myilly Point is an excellent site for another museum. A new museum is not about replacing the fantastic one we have at Bullocky Point, but complementing it. A new museum is a requisite cultural investment to consolidate Darwin as the economic and cultural capital of the Developing the North agenda. This is my view. There are many great ideas out there and I would like to hear them all.

This month, and again in May, I will host capital cities meetings. Between June and October we will publish detailed discussion papers about the issues of liveability, heat sinks, proposals for the CBD, the State Square project and progress on the museum master plan. By November this year I want to launch an agreed vision for this great city's CBD, then we get shovels in the ground.

Alice Springs is the beating heart of outback and Indigenous Australia. I see it as Australia's inland capital, a place every international tourist and school group must visit to better understand our rich and living Indigenous histories. Beginning this year, our government will invest in Alice Springs in a way that has not been seen for decades. We have begun to hear ideas about creating a central, attractive and welcoming meeting place where locals and tourists can gather to grab a coffee or meal, shop and find all the information they need about the region's tourism offerings.

This may mean the creation of more open spaces in the CBD, road redesign and park or water and rock features. The centrepiece of an Alice Springs revitalisation will be the nationally significant, iconic Indigenous art gallery, which will be about celebrating the tens of thousands of years of continuous Indigenous cultures and the resilience of these cultures. Next month we will form a consultation group of Aboriginal and other experts to guide the process. This building, an architectural symbol of remote Australia, will eventually be the beginning of an arts trail linking upgraded or new galleries in Tennant Creek, East Arnhem and Katherine, all the way to Darwin and a new CBD museum.

I believe in Tennant Creek, my old home town, as a mining services centre and as the hub of the booming pastoral industry of the Barkly. Mining and cattle are its heritage and future. This includes working with the Commonwealth to improve our beef roads in the Barkly and elsewhere. I am excited about the real, on-the-

ground work that is about to begin. We cannot underestimate the importance of the resources industry to our short- and long-term prosperity and jobs, particularly for remote Australians. We are working with Geoscience Australia to comprehensively map a 550 kilometre seismic line in the Barkly's northeast for minerals.

We are making this and all exploration records since 1901 public and easily accessible. We will help revitalise Tennant Creek with an upscaled gallery as part of the Indigenous arts trail from Alice to Darwin. We will work with the tourism sector to develop heritage trails. To make Tennant Creek more appealing to families, this government will invest \$5m to upgrade facilities, and \$6m in early childhood education facilities.

Katherine is the natural road and rail link to the agriculture and cattle regions of the north, south, east and west. There is such excitement in Katherine right now. It is the closest centre to the emerging rich Douglas Daly and Ord agricultural zones. Our government will invest in Katherine to help it realise its potential as an inland port and agribusiness centre of national importance. We will build a logistics hub and business park, and work is under way to identify the most appropriate site and investment partner.

We are also investing in environmentally-sound water capture methods, and commissioning water mappings of the region. Katherine is so much more than agriculture, and we will invest in new or upgraded art galleries as part of the arts trail, and will work with the Jawoyn on opportunities for Katherine Gorge and tourism.

Palmerston has often been treated as a mini Darwin. It can be many things, but not a mini Darwin. Palmerston must have its own suite of services, sense of purpose and identity. Palmerston has a self-contained and family-focused centre of living. Palmerston will soon have its own hospital. Beginning this year, with a fast-tracked \$15m, we will build a police station for its suburbs. We will establish a re-engagement centre for kids who struggle with the traditional education system, as part of an overall \$8m for child support services. We will also install a regional coordinator, like those already in place in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Katherine, to bring together services and find gaps in service delivery needs.

The Territory's natural environment supports our great lifestyle and drives our tourism industry. It is one of our greatest assets and must be protected with clear, robust and transparent laws. We have already started consulting on important environmental reform and we have reinstated funding to key environment groups. We have also reinstated community-based water advisory committees and we are consulting on the implementation of strategic Indigenous water reserves. For the first time all large water users will be required to apply for a water licence, including the large mining and petroleum operations currently exempt.

To make the community safer tomorrow, we must invest in kids now. To reduce the burden on our already overburdened health, justice and welfare systems tomorrow, we must invest in kids now. In the last decade the average age of young offenders has fallen to 15.6 to 14.6. The arrest rate has multiplied by 3.4. We must do things differently.

The government is leading a radical shift to early and long-term investment, putting our money, resources and skills to work, treating the symptoms and the cause. We have created a Cabinet subcommittee on children to ensure every government decision considers the effect on child and family welfare. We have appointed experts from the Territory and across Australia to create an early childhood plan, bringing in the government, the non-government sector and the community.

We need children ready for school on day one, term one, year one, and the process begins before birth. Nurse-Family Partnerships pair expecting mothers and professionals to offer ears, help and advice through the first years of parenthood. These partnerships work; the runs are on the board. The Australian Government has contributed funds to help services expand to Wadeye, Maningrida, Gunbalanya and Wurrumiyanga, and to Darwin and Palmerston this year.

We are in the process of selecting sites to deliver these services in another five localities over the next year. The evidence is overwhelming; the first 1000 days of a child's life are crucial for later health and wellbeing. Support must continue throughout early childhood to ensure families do not ever slip through the cracks. The Families as First Teachers program works with community members to identify what support services in their communities or towns would help their kids grow stronger, happier and healthier.

This program works and we will expand it. By the end of next month we will have opened new Families as First Teachers programs at Ludmilla and at the old Henbury site, which will also become an early intervention site for children with additional needs.

By the end of May there will be new sites at Jilkminggan, Minyerri, Warruwi and Melville Island. By the end of June there will be new sites in Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs.

All Northern Territory children have the right to a quality education. Our government is investing back in our schools. From this year, an additional \$20m each year will go to where it is needed most. We will invest an extra \$8m a year to tackle challenging behaviours and support children with disability. That means more specialist services, timely allied health services and early intervention and engagement programs.

Every Territorian has the right to feel safe in their homes and on their streets. We have heard the frustration born of recent crime sprees. Early investment is about long-term results, and healthier, happier, more engaged and safer communities, but this does not address our more immediate challenges.

We will honour the broken election promise of the previous government of an extra 120 police for the front line. This commitment has already given police the confidence to assign 18 experienced officers to focus on youth crime right now because they know a squad of new constables will start in May. We are building a new police station in Palmerston to provide facilities for up to 200 police for the next 30 years. The \$15m stage one investment has been brought forward and a public tender date is planned for the middle of the year.

We must also keep grog out of the hands of the people who smash Territory shopfronts and their own families. Our approach to alcohol will be tough but fair. Alcohol-related harm costs Territory taxpayers \$642m a year, which is \$4200 for every adult, almost four times the national average. Alcohol is a factor in much of the Territory's crime and antisocial behaviour and domestic and family violence matters reported to the police. Every day four Territory kids witness or are subject to domestic violence. We cannot waste time.

In May we will introduce legislation to bring back the Banned Drinker Register. We hope to have the legislation passed by August, and by 1 September it will be operating in all Territory liquor outlets. We have already capped takeaway liquor licences because we believe one outlet for every 353 adults is enough.

The youth justice system is broken and we have taken the first steps to fix it. We are fast-tracking \$15m to rebuild Don Dale, and last week we announced the most comprehensive overhaul of the youth justice system in Northern Territory history.

As part of an \$18.2m annual package we will fund 52 youth diversion workers in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice to case manage young people. These workers provide information to courts and police to improve sentencing and diversion of decisions. They will provide early intervention support and coordinate after-hours youth activities. Twenty-two will start imminently and the entire workforce will be operational within three months.

For the first time in Territory history, young offenders on bail will have individualised support and a comprehensive range of programs to stop reoffending and meet bail conditions. This support will be provided by youth diversion workers and NGOs. It will include safe accommodation options.

We are expanding victim conferencing because we believe victims of crime deserve a stronger voice in the justice system. Young offenders will see and feel the impacts of their crimes. We will expand diversion programs, including wilderness and boot camps, and focus on drug and alcohol rehabilitation and road safety programs.

We value and admire our ancient languages and knowledge. We believe in homelands. We believe in treaty. Discussion on what this may look like will begin this year. We acknowledge traditional owners at the beginning and end of decision-making on their ancestral lands and seas. We will give Indigenous rangers more powers and fund them to buy vehicles, boats and equipment.

Over 10 years, beginning now, government will give local decision-making power back to Aboriginal people in the areas of local government, education and health services, looking after children, law and justice, and housing. We will spend \$1.1bn over 10 years to house more people in more rooms. We have fast tracked \$10m for remote housing this year and we are currently speaking to 23 local communities about how they want this money delivered.

We must restore Territorians' trust in this place. We have opened up Question Time to give the opposition and Independents more time to scrutinise our decisions. We are opening up members' interests online to bring us into line with other states and the Commonwealth. We are publishing our overseas travel costs. We have established a long-overdue inquiry into political donations, going back 10 years. We have established a select committee to investigate how we can make parliament and members more accessible and transparent. In 2017 we will begin work on the legislation to establish an anti-corruption commission so it is ready by next year.

In August last year the people of the Northern Territory elected a Labor government to lead them to a more prosperous and safer 2017 because, as many told me, 2016 was as bad as it gets.

I believe only our government's agenda—jobs, kids, trust, bush and community—with hard work and consultation, can meet the scale of our challenges and unlock our enormous potential.

I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for his speech to the House on the year ahead. There are many fine words in the speech that were worth delivering twice. However, it is not new, informative or strategic, and we could not see the vision.

I take the opportunity to respond with what the Country Liberals would like to see in the Chief Minister's year ahead. Before the election the Chief Minister promised to create 12 000 to 14 000 new jobs per year. He has been in power now for six months and Territorians would like to know when he will fulfil his promise of that for his first year.

We believe this should be the key item in the Chief Minister's agenda for the year ahead. When the Labor Party took government unemployment stood at 3.5%. Today ABS released its updated monthly trend figure, which for January was 4%. We were the lowest; we are now the second lowest.

This morning the *NT News* announced that the Gunner Labor government planned to make sweeping job cuts across the public service. The Chief Minister was asked about that in Question Time and he failed to answer. How many public servants does the Chief Minister intend to make unemployed in his year ahead? What does the Chief Minister believe the year ahead holds for the families of the people he sacks?

We also read in the *NT News* this morning about the massive gas resources sitting under the ground. The Country Liberals would like to hear that the Chief Minister, in his year ahead, plans to speed up and finalise his costly and unnecessary inquiry. Chief Minister, stop blocking this industry and let it invest in the Territory and employ Territorians. The stringent, world's best-practice environmental regulations were being delivered by the previous government.

The Country Liberals would like to see the plan for the year ahead on how to attract investment. It should be obvious, but it needs repeating. We need private investment to drive population and job growth.

The onshore gas inquiry is not about attracting private investment. The half-day public holidays were not about attracting private investment. The new regulation on floor space, aimed at stopping a new business, is not about attracting private investment.

The Country Liberals, when in government, worked hard to attract investment and worked with sectors such as tourism, mining, oil and gas, agriculture, primary production, the public sector and Defence. The Chamber of Commerce, in its survey to members, said that crime was one of the two top concerns of business in the Territory. Getting serious about crime now is one way we can attract new people and businesses to the Territory.

Disappointingly, the Chief Minister did not mention any immediate plans to crack down on crime in his year ahead. A whole-of-government and parliament approach is needed to address crime, especially youth crime. This must be addressed in the year ahead. Both immediate and long-term solutions need to be implemented in order to successfully address the increase in crime.

The Gunner Labor government has taken some positive steps towards decreasing youth offending, but more comprehensive, research-based solutions are needed in the short and long term.

The Country Liberals want to see more hotspot policing, including bolstering the visible presence of police in areas where crime rates are high. The Country Liberals also want to see increased electronic monitoring,

which is a cost-effective, efficient and effective way to decrease crime. Every person released on bail, a community order or parole should be assessed for electronic monitoring. It reduces recidivism, deters crime and makes the community safer.

The *Bail Act* should be amended to include a presumption against bail for those who breach the terms of their bail, tamper with electronic monitoring equipment or fail to appear in court. It is simply unacceptable to routinely grant subsequent bail to offenders who breach the conditions of their bail, fail to appear or commit further offences while on bail.

The Territory is in the grip of an ice epidemic. Immediate and comprehensive action needs to be taken to combat the increase, manufacture, supply, distribution and addiction in our community. Ice does not discriminate; it has a destructive impact and is not confined to race, age or income. In the past year Banyan House has seen a 125% increase in requests for treatment due to ice addiction.

Ice addiction is robbing our youth of their futures, with the department of corrections reporting that 90% to 100% of youth offenders are using or addicted to ice. It seems to me that ice is the problem, not alcohol. Urgent action is needed to prevent ice from reaching our streets, helping those already using to get the help they need to quit, and lock up those who traffic this devastating drug as well as sell it to our kids and profit from the misery of others.

Youth offenders need to be provided with the training, skills and tools to turn their lives around, provide restitution to their victims, and re-join society as contributing members. The best proven way to reduce recidivism is to provide offenders with VET training and work experience. Various studies have shown that offenders who undertake such training are almost half as likely to offend and 30% more likely to keep their job after their sentence.

Moreover, providing offenders with training and work experience will help compensate their victims by providing income to satisfy restitution orders or fines. Parents need to take responsibility for their children and instil more respect. Increasing parental responsibility is a vital part of ending youth offending in the long term. Research has shown that inadequate parenting is a strong precursor to youth crime and a significant contributing factor to property crime.

Requiring parents or guardians to front court when a youth is charged with an offence would send an important signal to the community that we are serious about dealing with the root cause of crime. Closely engaging parents in the actions of their children can be extremely effective, particularly as part of a broader justice strategy that takes into account the diverse cultural, social and economic circumstances around the Territory.

The Country Liberals would like to see the Chief Minister emphasise, or at least a mention, the Northern Territory Government's key external relationships with the federal government. Considering the bulk of our income and a large part of the Northern Territory's program funding comes from the federal government, we find it a curious omission from the Chief Minister's statement. The Country Liberals have an excellent relationship with the federal Coalition.

We have already raised issues such as the Commonwealth Grants Commission's funding formula with the Australian Government. We have smoothed the relationship after rather puzzling pronouncements from the Member for Solomon when it looked like the Territory government was walking away from the commitment to build a cyclotron. We in opposition will use our influence and goodwill to ensure Territorians will always get a fair hearing from the Commonwealth.

The opposition wants to see more vision and leadership for Territorians, who have heard that the 21st century will be the Asian century. Territorians are ready for the challenge. We are a people who have struggled when it seems everything is that little bit more difficult, yet we always get it done in spite of everything, and for the most part we do it with a smile. We are Territory tough, Territory proud and Territory made, and so we should be.

Territorians instinctively know that our Territory is the bridge to the Asian century. We have better, stronger and deeper connections to our friends in Southeast Asia than any other state or territory in Australia. A shared vision of a peaceful and prosperous region motivates us. This is our vision and work for the years ahead. Where there is money to be made, I do not have to tell a Territorian twice. I support Territorians getting ahead and trading our way to a bigger and better Territory.

There are now some 600 million people in the middle class in India through to China and all the countries in between. In 20 to 25 years this figure is expected to rise to over three billion people. That is 2.4 million new people who will expect higher-quality food and services, such as education, health, finance, law, travel and entertainment. I came across a quote recently by entrepreneur Richie Norton, who captured one of my frustrations:

Opportunities come and go, but if you do nothing about them, so will you.

When I came to the Territory 31 years ago, it would have been hard to imagine a future in which the prosperity of families in Darwin and Jakarta was so connected. Our economies have experienced the promise and perils of globalisation, from the shock of the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s to the millions lifted out of poverty because of increased trade and commerce. We learned from the recent economic crisis that we have a stake in each other's success.

The major drivers of world economic growth are Asian countries, with China alone contributing between 30% and 40% of world growth. This leadership in global growth from Asia is likely to be a constant throughout this century. Australians now live in a region of the world that is undergoing an economic phenomenon and humanitarian miracle that has removed more than 500 million people from poverty. This is a phenomenon that has never been witnessed by modern Australia, and it is in our own back yard.

Australia has benefited enormously from this emerging phenomenon, particularly through sales of resources and energy, agricultural products and education and tourism services. Eight of our top 10 trading partners are now regional neighbours. The next 10, 20 and 30 years can be spectacular if we take a big breath and move out of our comfort zone to help the region reach its full potential by positioning our services into the countries around us often, in joint ventures. Our clean, green and healthy agricultural produce is viewed in the region as gold standard.

What is not well recognised in Australia is that our services are also seen in the region as gold standard, whether we are referring to health, aged care, education, financial services, water management, engineering, agriculture, resources and energy, architecture, design services or waste management, and there are hundreds more.

With the digital age and the connectivity and cheap convenience of 40 000 aircraft in the world sky at any one time, even many of our small and medium enterprises can now consider marketing their services into the region, often in a joint venture without too big a risk.

It is not all about selling to our neighbours. Trade is two ways. Foreign investment has filled the gap in order to drive our growth, potential and significant prosperity. This is as true today as it was 200 years ago. As Territorians know, English company Vestey's owned and developed large tracts of the top half of Australia for almost a century, yet today much of it is being sold back to Australian companies and Vestey's is but a memory for people my age or older. I am talking about senior people.

Another institution known and loved by many that is a good example of a vehicle to drive Asian engagement is the Darwin Festival. As arts minister I had to take action and make some tough decisions to save the festival and guarantee its long-term future.

Making the hard calls does not always make politicians popular, but that is what leadership is about. To date we have not seen the Gunner Labor government make a hard decision, but I am hopeful, given their youth and inexperience, they will learn. I offer my services to provide guidance, wisdom and assistance. Having experience is important, but that is why I knew I could not let a terrific engagement vehicle and showcase for Darwin die.

We invested in a specific Asian engagement component of the festival. The arts and cultural sector is critical to the health and success of the Northern Territory, providing a wide range of benefits, including positioning Darwin as a cultural destination, and providing jobs and opportunities for locals, businesses, individuals and artists. Most importantly, it is giving all of us an opportunity to celebrate the unique and wonderful lifestyle enjoyed in the Territory.

Relative to our population, Darwin Festival boasts the highest attendance rates of any Australian major arts festival, with a huge proportion of the city enjoying performances with attendances of over 90 000 at ticketed and free events last year. Northern Territory and Asian workers were in abundance at the 2016 Darwin Festival, thanks in large part to the previous government's focus on Asian engagement.

As arts minister I delivered the first ever 10-year strategic plan for the arts, called Vibrant NT. For the first time ever we now have a roadmap and the hard data to show that investment in arts is attractive and worthwhile. For every \$1 invested the NT Government is getting \$3 back. Not a bad rate of return, especially when we think of how we could leverage our festivals into Southeast Asian markets.

I give the example of the Darwin Festival as an illustration of how taking action, even if only small, can make a difference. That can cause a ripple across the region. For the Asian century this is where our thinking needs to be. What the Chief Minister said in this place is good and works well as an operational plan. However, as Territorians we can do better, dream bigger and be more aspirational.

I thank the Chief Minister for bringing his statement to the House.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the statement by the Chief Minister on this government's plan for the Territory.

The Chief Minister has provided a very clear direction for the year ahead, and as the Member for Drysdale I know how important it is for my constituents to have confidence in government and know there is a clear plan for addressing the social and economic issues our communities are facing. Last year, 2016, was a very hard year for many in my electorate—they told me so—and right across the Territory, but through this government's fast and decisive action I am confident our communities will feel safer and people will continue to enjoy our unique Territory lifestyle and share in its economic prosperity.

As the Chief Minister outlined today, this government has supported more than 250 Territory families, including over 70 families in Palmerston, to buy their first homes by introducing the \$24 000 stamp duty relief for existing homes. This is great news for Palmerston; our town continues to thrive under the Labor government. Real estate agents in Palmerston and across the Territory are saying how positive this policy change has been and how well it has been received by Territory families.

Palmerston will soon also have its own hospital, providing more accessible health services for the community. We will also have a new police station, which will enable police to be more responsive, with \$15m fast-tracked for its construction. This government's stimulus package is providing much-needed support for local tradies and small businesses, which is important to the people living in my electorate.

I move on to the bigger picture things, including the issues around education. This government recognises that Territorians have a right to feel safe in their homes and to know their businesses will be secure. The government has a plan for addressing crime, and it is responding. It is putting 120 more police officers where they are needed, and overhauling the youth justice system by investing an additional \$18.2m in early intervention and to reduce the risk of reoffending.

I am most proud to be part of a government that is putting children at the heart of its decisions, a government that is investing in their future and the future of the Territory. All children have the right to a great start in life. As the Chief Minister mentioned, the first 1000 days of a child's life are critical for later health and wellbeing. With 37% of Territory children developmentally vulnerable at the start of their school lives, and more likely to have difficulties in reading and numeracy and meeting national minimum standards, we need to do more.

Getting the right start in life can shape a child's ability to thrive at school, stay healthy and socially connected, and contribute to society both socially and economically. That is why I am working with the Minister for Children and my colleagues on the children's subcommittee of Cabinet to develop a long-term plan so all children are school ready on the first day of school.

While there is a lot of work to be done, there are positive programs we can build on, programs that are evidence based, locally responsive and culturally appropriate, such as Families as First Teachers, which is providing early leaning support to all families in the early years. This started under the previous Labor government and is now operating in 27 communities across the Territory.

By working with families and children, the program supports the young children's development and early learning to improve their readiness for starting school. The program provides local Indigenous women with training and meaningful employment opportunities. This year we are expanding the program into five remote and five urban areas. As the Chief Minister mentioned, two will commence operation next month in Ludmilla and at the old Henbury site.

By the end of this year there will also be sites operating in Palmerston, Katherine, Alice Springs, Jilkminggan, Minyerri, Waruwi and Melville Island. The Member for Daly spoke about the benefits of families in improving the lives of children—but then also impacting on the social issues around crime. We are doing something about that, expanding the Families as First Teachers program, which the Labor government initiated. The Families as First Teachers programs provide increased employment opportunities for Indigenous people and increase the number of quality early education services for young children and their families.

As I mentioned in Question Time, we are also investing in the early years space in infrastructure. We are spending \$6.5m to build an early childhood integrated learning centre in Tennant Creek. The new centre is much needed in Tennant Creek, where children's vulnerability levels are well above the Territory average. It is unfortunate, but that is the reality.

Children and family centres become central hubs for children and families in these communities and they provide a soft entry where families are welcome. The new centre will have 88 new places for preschool and an outdoor early learning area. Children in the Territory love being outdoors; they grow up in the outdoors, so having learning centres in outdoor spaces for children is wonderful. There will also be vacation care provided outside school hours, special education services, Families as First Teachers, parent education and targeted family support, and allied health and wellbeing services.

We have seen just how valuable the family and children centre is in Palmerston. We have also seen that in remote communities, such as Ngukurr and Umbakumba. Having an integrated early years centre in Tennant Creek will be a bonus to that community. It will be located on the grounds of Tennant Creek Primary School and in close proximity to existing childcare centres. The new facility will be designed to promote the development of coordinated service delivery to improve children's lifelong learning opportunities by providing a stimulating physical environment which supports the delivery of quality early childhood education and care.

Integrated early childhood services enable child health, early childhood education and care, and family support professionals to work in partnership and deliver universal and targeted services to address the complex and challenging problems that many families face. That is the important thing, just to talk about that coordinated approach—having it all integrated at one site so families can work with health professionals, preschool teachers and educators. We can work together to address some of the complex problems some of our families face in the Territory.

Construction of the centre will commence in the second half of this year, providing job opportunities for local construction workers and providing a boost to the Tennant Creek economy. The new centre will provide employment opportunities for local people, with an additional teacher, an assistant teacher and Families as First Teachers staff employed. These people are a great addition to the Tennant Creek community—to have people there long term who are committed to that community and become a vibrant part of that community.

We are also investing an additional \$24m into education and focusing our efforts so every child is a successful learner. That is \$31m per year in extra resources for NT Government schools from 2017.

This government is delivering on its commitments, with \$20m already being rolled out to schools for their 2017 budgets. All schools in the Territory are benefiting from this increased funding. Schools will be able to choose how to spend their additional funds to best meet the needs to their students. With this additional funding, schools will be able to employ additional teachers and support staff, youth workers, counsellors or child psychologists. It will be up to the school to choose how it wants to use the funds.

They may choose to buy additional resources to deliver high-quality teaching and learning programs for their students. Our reinvestment in the education system will create more jobs for people in the education workforce, but will also provide funding stability for our schools. Many of us have heard about the number of teachers the previous government had on contracts. We ended up losing some wonderful young teachers to interstate. When they are on a contract, which is unstable, and are put on another contract and another, rather than being made permanent—the schools were so nervous about the funding they were getting. They were never sure if the funding would continue, because it was continuously cut. We saw \$114m cut from schools.

When you cut funding it makes schools nervous. The schools cannot then commit to employing teachers and making them permanent. We lost many families to interstate because of that. Without the constant worry of funding cuts, schools will be able to confidently plan for their future workforce requirements. This

will result in more attractive employment opportunities, more permanent staff and better working conditions, such as smaller class sizes, access to high-quality professional learning and better classroom resources and technology.

To support the school the Department of Education is implementing strategies to ensure principals can recruit and retain high-quality staff, including teaching staff when they need them. We listened to the community's concerns and have taken action to make sure funding is directed to where it is needed the most. This means more funding for preschools, transition classes, secondary students in homeland learning centres and schools with high proportions of Indigenous students.

Appropriate funding for our schools is essential to delivering on this government's commitment to children and the economic and social prosperity of the Northern Territory. We need to have a needs-based funding model that is targeted at kids who have the greatest needs in the Territory. We will undertake a review of the funding model this year to ensure it is equitable, is based on student needs and is transparent and efficient.

I will ensure we have a good look at that money because \$20m is a lot to put back into the system. We need to make sure it is hitting the mark and being spent in the area of greatest need. I look forward to the federal government and Senator Birmingham funding the Northern Territory on a needs-based funding model as well.

This work will not be done in isolation. We have consulted with key stakeholders, such as the Northern Territory Principals Association, the Australian Education Union NT and the Council of Government School Organisations, which represents parent bodies.

I meet with those people monthly. It is vital that we continue to have those conversations so we can hear their views. This review is about following through on our commitment to a school funding model that is based on meeting the needs of students. It is about making sure that funding is being directed to where it is needed most, and where the evidence says it can make the biggest difference.

We will also put more money into engagement programs and support services. We will invest \$8m per year to better support and educate children with challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental health challenges, to improve the outcomes for these students, their families and the community. Schools are microcosms of our society. Some of the things we have seen as adults in our communities are things we see in our school communities as well. There are also issues around mental health, such as some children experiencing post-traumatic stress issues because they see family violence.

The CLP pulled funding out of special needs and support for students. We have heard from people in our community about parents having to wait eight months before they could get their child's hearing assessed, or seven or eight months, or even longer, before they could get a psych assessment for their child to be able to participate in special programs to improve their learning opportunities. We are putting \$8m back into the areas of challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental health issues to look after the kids who are the most vulnerable.

This work is important because some of the issues around youth crime are with the kids who have fallen through the system and missed out on programs. If they feel unsuccessful in school then they vote with their feet and do not attend school. This is an area I am committed to working very closely on with the Minister for Territory Families to ensure all Territory students have the best opportunity for education that meets their needs. We do not want a one-size-fits-all, cookie cutter model, but education that is targeted to the diverse needs of students in the Territory.

All of these additional funds—\$20m, \$8m, the money for infrastructure—create jobs for the allied health professionals and the people who work with children and teachers. They are great people to have in the Territory. We want to see professionals come to the Territory, buy homes and then commit to the Territory long term. They are the people who go to restaurants, cafes and movies, and are involved in the community. That is what will improve things for the Territory's economy.

An additional \$2m per year will be provided to develop the Healthy Life Creative Life program in the Katherine and Barkly regions. There are students there who need additional support programs to ensure they get a quality education. I am pleased to focus on those regions because often the remote areas, such as Katherine and Barkly, are last on the list, and we saw that with the previous government. We are committed to ensuring all Territory students, including those in the bush, have wonderful education opportunities.

This investment will keep young people engaged in secondary schooling through access to arts; sports; social, emotional and cultural learning; language; learning on country; and vocational education and training to ensure they are job ready in their local communities. The Members for Daly and Nhulunbuy have spoken strongly about language and culture as well as vocational education and training.

The previous Labor government, under Paul Henderson, made us the first state or territory in Australia to make sure students could do their certificate of education and training with a vocational education component in it. Instead of just doing academic subjects, for kids to also be able to train and get an NTCET is highly valued in the Territory. The Labor government led the way on that. We all know how useful it is for kids to be able to do some training, engage in something they love and be able to then go into the workforce when they finish their schooling.

Investing in and having a long-term plan to better support students with additional needs is critical for the government's focus on children. Early intervention and ongoing support is critical to ensuring students succeed in their learning. We need to, and will, focus on the early years. The four-year-olds today will be the 14-year-olds in 10 years' time who will cause trouble in our community. We need to focus on them and work with their families to make sure they are engaged and happy to go to school every day, and get a quality education to go on to be productive, happy Territorians as part of our community.

Over the next four years, from this July, every school in the Territory will receive \$300 000 for refurbishments and upgrades as part of our building better schools initiative. This is an investment of \$56m which will kick-start building projects everywhere from Darwin and Palmerston to remote parts of Arnhem Land and Barkly. Projects may include school buildings, renovations, new playgrounds, shade structures and any building-related works to enhance student learning and safety in their educational experiences.

From our conversations with principals we know they like to have flexibility of funding to be able to sit down with their school council or board and talk about projects they want to work on for their school community. It may be on the forward works, but it may be a long way off. Being able to provide \$300 000 for those school communities means they can sit down with their councils and come up with a plan for their schools.

The other positive side is that our tradies, builders, tilers and painters then have the opportunity to be able to undertake that work in those communities. It is a win-win for all and a positive outcome for our schools.

I have committed to continuing the capital works that were on the forward works under the previous government. There are some wonderful things in that program for schools. Stage two at Braitling school will go ahead—I opened the preschool the week before last. There are a lot of great things for schools across the Territory, not only with the \$300 000 but with the ongoing commitments that were already made.

There will also be a \$5m four-year program for refurbishing and upgrading our homeland schools, starting with much-needed work in the Yirrkala homeland. I have had conversations with the Member for Nhulunbuy about how valuable that is. Some of our homeland schools have not had upgrades or funding for a long time, so I am pleased to be able to see the \$5m being spent on them.

Most of the homeland schools are only one-teacher classrooms or schools. Most of them would have, at a maximum, about 20 kids. Often there are a lot smaller numbers. Sometimes they move between the main schools at, for example, Maningrida into their homelands. There is opportunity for those to have upgrades and to be bigger and better, as well as provide accommodation for visiting teachers to ensure they are safe on those communities too.

These programs are part of a coordinated and cohesive economic plan for the Territory which will see years of steady work for the construction industry across the Territory. If we are to be successful we need to empower our local community. Work has commenced on a community engagement and decision-making framework that will form part of this government's community-led schools. The Chief Minister talked a bit about that in his plans.

A consultation process on the framework will commence next week with Indigenous peak bodies and a number of schools and school communities. The successful work being undertaken at Gunbalanya, in the Member for Arafura's electorate, provides a useful model on how community-led schools could be supported through a phased approach.

They are long-term plans. We will not just let communities hang them out to dry. As the Minister for Health mentioned, we do not need to set schools up for failure; we need to set them up for success. There is

training that will be rolled out around governance and decision-making to make sure the community can feel empowered in the decisions it makes for its schools.

There are many more initiatives I could talk about, such as solar panels in schools, which is a lovely one. We all heard loud and clear over the last four years, and when we were campaigning, just how much Territorians want a stable, responsible and considered government. To have politicians put the Territory first and not their own self-interest—that is what it is about. It is about listening to people on the ground—the teachers, principals and key stakeholders—and making sure we hear and consider their views before we make decisions.

This government is working hard to rebuild the community's trust in our institutions, in this House of parliament and in their elected representatives to follow through on their commitments. I am adamant about that. I give my undertaking that we will continue to work through this in this term of government.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable member, your time has expired.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I support the vision of the Chief Minister. This government was elected to listen and plan for the long term to do what is necessary to achieve long-term change and better outcomes for all Territorians.

As the Chief Minister said, to make the community safer tomorrow we must invest in kids now. To reduce the burden on our already overburdened child protection and youth justice systems tomorrow, we must invest in kids now. Territory Families is a vital part of this plan.

The Chief Minister has said that giving every child the best start to life is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. This government is leading a radical shift to early and long-term investment, putting our money, resources and skills to work, treating the cause as well as the symptoms. That is why the new agency of Territory Families was created, to make sure we invest in kids at risk from the start, before insurmountable problems emerge. That is why Territory Families is working on the establishment of what we call a dual pathways system and approach to kids at risk.

The benefits to children of the dual pathways system extend well beyond childhood. They are a way of changing children's chances and their trajectory in life. The outcomes for children are better when they are able to maintain a safe and supported environment with their families and community. More than 70% of referrals to our child protection hotline are from police, health and education professionals exercising their mandatory responsibilities. More than 50% of child protection notifications are not assessed as needing to proceed to investigation, but that does not mean the family does not need support.

Dual pathways will build on child and family support and services at the local level by providing a referral pathway for vulnerable kids, enabling children to be assessed as to their level of risk and, wherever possible, diverted to supports and services in the community.

An alternative referral gateway will be developed, which will mean that children are not referred directly to child protection unless they really need to be. Additional funding will be provided to the non-government sector to deliver and evaluate intensive family support services which will work hand in hand with universal services at the local level to maintain and support kids at risk in the community. Three million dollars in new funding will be provided to build a robust system at the community level where vulnerable families are provided with the support they need before problems escalate.

These children are vulnerable, but it is critical that we do everything we can to keep them out of the child protection system. One of the really important issues this government will grapple with is the over-representation of Aboriginal children in our child protection system, specifically in our out-of-home care system. We have over 1000 children in care and almost 90% of them are Aboriginal. The figures have grown by 60% in the last five years. I, personally and professionally, find this distressing.

The Department of Territory Families works hard to put into place the Aboriginal child placement principle, but the reality is we need to do it better. The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle underlies the *Care and Protection of Children Act*. The ACPP outlines that an Aboriginal child who is in need of protection should, as far as practicable, be placed with a member of the child's family. If that is not an option the next option is an Aboriginal member of the child's local community, followed by the option of an Aboriginal person. Placing the child with a person who is not Aboriginal is the last option.

We can do this while keeping child safety central to our decision-making. These two concepts are not contraindicated. Our kinship carers are, and will continue to be, an integral part of the Northern Territory's child protection system, but we need more foster carers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Earlier this week I spoke at length with the Member for Nhulunbuy about the system of Aboriginal kinship and how it can be better utilised to care for children whose parents may not be up to the job. Our challenge together is to work out how this ancient Aboriginal system of care can be best intersected with our own system of child welfare and risk management. In the meantime I encourage as many Aboriginal people and families as possible to apply to become foster or kinship carers.

I was delighted today to sign a very important statement of commitment auspice by Family Matters. Family Matters is a national coalition of 150 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, noted academics and other leading groups. They aim to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by 2040. Their principles call for:

- applying a child-focused approach
- ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children
- protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's right to live in culture
- pursuing evidence-based responses
- supporting, healing and strengthening families
- challenging systemic racism and inequities.

These principles will underpin this government's work in the area of care and protection, particularly our review and development of out-of-home care services. We need to offer alternative family supports and reduce the number of children in care. But if children do end up in out-of-home care we need to make it the very best culturally-appropriate care it is possible to provide.

We need a youth justice system that keeps young people accountable. We need to make sure individuals are held accountable and responsible for their behaviour; however, unless we also have the vision to fix bigger problems, we are only applying band aids to growing wounds. As I said on Tuesday, a government that relies only on police and punishment is a government without vision. That is what the previous government was.

The former Treasurer, who is now the Member for Araluen, cut youth programs by almost \$5m per annum in one hit. This is still having an impact more than four years later. The fact is, in its ideological zeal, the CLP government failed to properly plan for a youth justice system that worked. There was a lot of tough talk but no action and no plan.

Last week's announcement of the biggest investment in youth justice ever made in the Territory is a dramatic departure from what has been happening over the last four years. What we announced last week is a long-term fix. It will build our society's capacity to address the really difficult problems that lead to kids stealing.

The real measure of the work we are doing and the services we are delivering right now will be the sustained improvement in youth crime levels over the years to come, beyond the current election cycle and even beyond a generation. The record investment will help build a stronger, safer Northern Territory through targeted reforms and strategies. It is about investing not only in our kids but in the Northern Territory to ensure the right system is in place for a strong, safe and connected community.

The Chief Minister also said we are giving local decisions back and engaging Aboriginal people in the future of their communities because it is the smart, simple and decent thing to do. On Tuesday I spoke of the need to invest in the capacity of our youth sector. I spoke of how critical this is for the growth of the Territory and its ability to deal with tough social issues.

I also want to add that we need a different and stronger way of working with Aboriginal organisations. So often we speak about building the capacity of Aboriginal organisations; we provide governance training and financial training and we expect that is how to build capacity. While this is necessary to an extent, it does

not build the really difficult capability of collaborating together to develop a really profound understanding of each other's values and approaches, and how to implement strategies that work across our very different cultures.

Anthropologists call it working in the intercultural sphere. It requires robust construction, not superficial agreement. It involves experimentation, innovation and acknowledgement that social innovation is not always a straight line; it must be based on continuous learning and improvement. I reiterate what I said before about speaking at length with the Member for Nhulunbuy, and I thank him for his time. I say again that our challenge together is to work out how this ancient Aboriginal system of care can best intersect with our own system of child welfare and risk management.

I now turn my attention to my home town. Central Australia is a cultural and physical landscape, more beautiful than you can imagine. It is the natural home of Australia's inland capital, as the Chief Minister has dubbed Alice Springs. Many Aboriginal people wish to realise their dream of presenting their culture to the world through the national Indigenous art gallery, the national Aboriginal cultural centre and the web of Indigenous art trails that connect remote communities' art centres to Alice Springs and our other urban centres. Those people believe, and we agree, that the international art and cultures community will beat a path to our door and lift Central Australia and the rest of the NT into a new era of cultural and adventure tourism, art collecting, cultural activities and social wellbeing for us all.

Alice Springs is an unusual outback town in that the creative industries are not just part of our cultural and social fabric, but integral to our economy. Visitors already come to experience our range of arts and crafts from the Beanie Festival, my favourite festival, to the international quality art of Desert Mob. The extra jobs that a national art gallery will provide in our region will not just be in the construction phase. That in itself will be stimulation to local businesses, but in an already strong industry.

The benefits will flow much wider than that, because this iconic art gallery is also about identity, providing a strong, positive, sense of Aboriginal Australia that is valued and respected by the whole community. This is why I am so proud to be part of the Territory Labor government. This is a government with vision, doing what is urgent and important at the same time, acting now whilst ensuring we are well positioned not just in 2017 but into the future, and thinking beyond short-term political cycles whilst delivering disciplined, strategic and timely governance today. We are listening, we are acting, and we will deliver for all Territorians.

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I commend the Chief Minister's statement to the House on the year ahead. What an exciting and big year we have ahead as a government.

Firstly, I will respond to the Leader of the Opposition. The Chief Minister's vision was very well received when it was delivered to a diverse group earlier last week. He has an exceptionally strong and welcomed vision for the Territory. I am proud to be part of the Gunner Labor government and stand behind the Chief Minister's bright vision for the beautiful place we call home.

Territorians elected this government on a platform of trust, kids and jobs. These three pillars are essential to getting things right for the future of the Territory. We are rebuilding the trust that was destroyed by four years of CLP dysfunction that they and Territorians would like to forget, but unlikely will. We put children at the centre of decisions made as a government, and we will ensure that our minds and actions support ongoing job creation and security for Territorians.

As INPEX transitions from construction to production, the economy is slowing. This is a challenging time, but it is a challenge we knew was coming and that the former government failed to plan for. The endless revolving door of ministers, Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers did not allow the former government to have the focus it now claims to have. We have a plan and we are delivering on it. As a local member I am proud to be part of a team that listens and acts.

I am proud to be part of a team that was not too proud to admit when the Home Improvement Scheme needed to come back, and then made it bigger and better. The Gunner Labor government will deliver the multistorey carpark at Royal Darwin Hospital, and have it fast-tracked in the forward works to ensure ease of access to our most vital health services. The Minister for Health took important steps towards improving the situation this week.

One of the Gunner Labor government's first acts was to bring back strength and support for first home owners wanting to get onto the property ladder in established homes as well new homes. There are now an additional 262 Territorians even more invested in this beautiful place and its future. This government

recognises that a global digital revolution is shaping our lives and the world in which we live. Information and communication technology, ICT, will play a critical role in delivering better outcomes for all Territorians, from the way our kids experience life to the jobs available to us now and how we do them in the future, to the way communities function and the prosperity and wellbeing of Territorians living in the remotest of communities.

This is something the Chief Minister and I are passionate about, as are other members of the team. We took a smarter government policy to the election that is integral to our commitment to a transparent and accountable government, to ensuring that our kids are prepared for the jobs of the future and to growing our economy. I am pleased to note in the House today that these are things we are already working on.

A smarter government means the efficient and effective use of ICT to deliver more jobs and better services for Territorians. Businesses will be better supported to scale their operations and work forces so more ICT jobs stay here in the Territory. It will enable the creation of new innovative businesses by opening up access to a range of valuable Territory government data. Smarter government means better support for our kids and communities, both in towns and in the bush, because it makes it easier for Territorians to access and engage with government programs, including health, education, justice, police, fire and emergency services. It will ensure better-designed and targeted government services for Territorians through new rigorous data analysis and evidence based decision-making, and it will deliver more efficient and effective government for all Territorians through a coordinated governance structure for digital innovation.

Unfortunately the former government did not adequately respond to the digital opportunities available to Territorians, and showed no leadership in harnessing the many benefits and opportunities that digital technology offers Territory businesses and communities.

We are building on our ongoing engagement with the ICT industry through two dedicated economic summit sessions, one next week and another in March. Thank you to Simon Watt and the ICT Industry Association for their assistance with this.

Informed by the economic summit process, we will complete and launch the Smarter Government ICT Strategy in the second half of this year. This strategy will ensure IT systems and services are better coordinated across government and designed to provide simpler and more efficient services for Territorians.

It will identify and support efficiencies that allow small and medium-sized enterprises and export businesses to compete in a global market, as well as deliver new or existing services and products to new markets, as Territory company SRA Information Technology has done so successfully in its innovative approach to software development for business and industry.

To make sure this happens, smarter government will introduce a whole-of-government ICT leadership role. This role will oversee digital initiatives, ensuring they are cohesive, efficient and delivering jobs, and that they are supporting our kids and communities and providing better outcomes for the bush. We are working now on details for the best structural option for this role and will roll out our approach later in the year.

According to the Bureau of Communications Research's recent report, access to government data has the potential to generate up to \$25bn a year for the Australian economy. Making government data more accessible will help restore the community's trust in government. Data is also a valuable public and economic resource. The upcoming water portal demonstrates that we are already doing this; we are making decisions and information public, but there is a long way to go.

Easier access to Territory government data helps business create more jobs and enables the creation of new, innovative enterprises. It also helps us work together on evidence-based policy. In partnership with industry, our data strategy and practices will address security and privacy, interoperability, transparency, technical systems ability and decentralised decision-making.

In the year ahead we will continue to support the development and roll-out of digital government services, and support our communities as part of our digital by default commitment under smarter government.

There are a number of government ICT initiatives under way, and I applaud the initiative and leadership the various public service agencies have demonstrated, not only my agency, the Department of Corporate and Information Services, but right across government.

An example is the new grants NT project which will provide a single digital portal for all grants, saving time and money for applicants. During the year we will finalise consultation with non-government organisations on their user requirements and with industry on the procurement side so that grants NT is up and running in 2019.

We will continue to support community and educational efforts to prepare our kids for the digital economy and the digital world they are growing up in by continuing funding for events like the CDU code fair, the RoboCupJunior competition and the Skills 2021 expo. These investments in our kids' skills will prepare them for the jobs growth ICT is delivering globally.

I spoke with some of the competitors at the recent CDU coding fair, and they clearly understand the opportunities of the digital revolution. I was excited by the number of young women doing some incredible things in technology, and I am determined that this government does not let them down.

We will continue to ensure local business has opportunities to bid for government ICT goods and services provision, as well as engage with major ICT projects. The Department of Corporate and Information Services manages ICT service contracts with 74 service providers and an estimated annual spend of \$84m. Through our strengthened Buy Local scheme, outlined by the Chief Minister, and through the new ICT contracting model, we will ensure ICT businesses in our regions are in a better position to tender for this work.

The Australian Computer Society reports that the contribution of digital technologies to the Australian economy is forecast to grow from \$79bn in 2014 to \$139bn in 2020. This represents growth of over 75% and an increase in the digital economy from 5% to 7% of Australia's GDP. This is a huge opportunity for the Territory to transform its economy. That is why we have developed an all-of-government smarter government policy and why it includes an all-of-government ICT strategy, open data, data analytics and digital-by-default components.

The year ahead in ICT means ensuring local businesses get a crack at government procurement opportunities, delivering on major ICT projects that will benefit our communities in both the cities and the bush, and putting in place the platform our kids need to prepare for the digital world they are growing up in—staying healthy with increasingly screen orientated lifestyles, staying safe online and getting ready to get jobs in the digital economy.

We predict strong jobs growth in ICT. One of our challenges is to ensure our educational institutions are poised to respond to this need. Part of meeting this demand will be encouraging more women to pursue careers in ICT, an industry that has perennially experienced underrepresentation of women in its workforce.

Last year I met an inspiring young woman while we were having our community Caucus meeting in Jabiru, Mikaela Jade. Quoting her LinkedIn profile, her story encapsulates the potential of ICT in the Territory:

Based in Kakadu, Jade's company InDigital and its team of three work to develop innovative new ways to digitise and translate knowledge and culture from remote and ancient communities.

...

Her signature app, Indigital Storytelling, uses drones, 4D mapping software, image recognition technology and cultural law to bring the world's cultural sites alive through augmented reality.

A proud Cabrogal woman, she was chosen as one of 21 Indigenous entrepreneurs to attend the Prime Minister's Reception for Indigenous Innovators and Entrepreneurs in Canberra.

With the right policy settings it is women like Mikaela who will become part of the vanguard for a new economic, social and environmental digital future enabled by ICT. I know a couple of other people checked out her app. I wish her all the very best of luck. She is ahead of the game. I think it is a game changer, not only in ICT but also in tourism.

In the year ahead the Gunner Labor government will be providing the policy leadership and support mechanisms that the Territory has been missing to enable ICT to underpin jobs growth and help us deliver better services for Territory kids and communities in towns and the bush, across the Territory, for the months, years and decades to come.

Within my Tourism and Culture portfolio I oversee two major contributors that underpin our economy. The first is Aboriginal culture and the second is tourism. Both are major contributors, both complement the other and both are major employers of Territorians. Apart from our World Heritage listed landscapes and our impressive coastlines, visitors are coming to the Territory to get a firsthand experience of Aboriginal culture. That is why we are investing \$100m to refresh and renew our tourism offering with an arts trail snaking across the length and breadth of the Territory.

This will be supported by other support for the tourism industry, like our \$5m investment to seek visitors from new markets from China and India. We appreciate that one of our biggest assets in the Territory is our rich cultural Indigenous heritage. Aboriginal people use art, dance and language to connect to their land and their culture, and with other people. While it might be difficult to quantify the economic value of the Aboriginal art and craft sector, which has been reported as being more than \$300m, it is fair to say it is a crucial industry for our economy.

Before I move on I want to comment on the Darwin Festival and how pleased I am that the Leader of the Opposition has the vision he has. It is a vision I shared with media at the announcement of the new Darwin Festival board over the weekend. We talked about our place in the region, not only as the capital of northern Australia and how important we are in northern Australia, but our place in the broader region looking north. We have a brilliant opportunity to have a fantastic festival in 2017 with the opportunity to make the most of that identity going forward.

I congratulate board members Ian Kew, Mary Anne Butler, Avril Vaughan, Karen Green and Emily and the team at Darwin Festival. There will be an expression of interest going out for two community representatives for the Darwin Festival board as well. Emily gave us a sneak peek for this year and talked about theatre in some unusual spaces around town where you might not expect to see theatre. This is a great example of showing—the money we are investing in things like the Darwin Festival is linking strongly to the commitments we have made around revitalising the CBD. We are cementing and asserting ourselves in regard to what we have to offer in the region.

I am in the process of finalising a working group of key experts who will undertake the initial scoping for the iconic national Indigenous art gallery to be built in Alice Springs. I will announce the members of this group in the near future. The working group will provide the government with a report that identifies and provides options and recommendations on the project's development, construction and establishment, including, but not limited to, its purpose and functions; principles guiding the collection policy; governance and management structure funding, including for its building and ongoing operations; location and design; building completion and opening; and time lines for the stage process.

As I have already mentioned in this Chamber this week, we have begun the process of establishing an iconic national Indigenous cultural centre. We are working in collaboration with and providing support to Nganampa Anwernekenhe development corporation, which is leading consultation and scoping the national Indigenous cultural centre in Alice Springs. We are investing \$20m in this important project and consultation for the art gallery and cultural centre will ensure they are coordinated and linked. I acknowledge the work that has already gone into—other members of this Chamber have been part of this over time—forming a vision around what is possible here.

By December I will have a progress report for Cabinet, and I will keep Territorians and the House informed. We are looking towards having the arts trail regional stimulus program kicking off very soon, which will see \$6m over three years going to community art galleries in grants, and \$10m each for Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land gallery extensions and upgrades. This work will complement the national Indigenous art gallery in our push to lure tourists to drive the length and breadth of the Territory following our arts trail.

I refer to some of the things the Leader of the Opposition raised. He talked about the vibrant arts policy. Some of things in that policy focus on a five to 10-year plan, which demonstrates long-term commitment to museums and the arts in the Territory. We are positioning the Territory as a world leader in Indigenous culture and creative practice. These are significant investments linked to what was coming through the consultation process in the Vibrant NT arts policy document.

We are committing heavily to infrastructure projects in the arts, and growing the value of the tourism sector with further development of cultural experiences. That is a snapshot of what is in that document, but I am sure we can agree the significant commitments made by the Gunner government into in art and tourism align with the major points in that document. The art sector is very excited about this and is getting involved.

There are 103 art and culture sites which have been identified across the Northern Territory, including art galleries, art centres, museums, libraries, keeping places, knowledge centres and cultural centres. Some of the facilities are all those things wrapped into one, for example Injalak Arts at Gunbalanya also has an art gallery and research facility.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms MOSS: The Knuckey Centre at Belyuen, on the Cox Peninsula, has a women's centre, art centre and a keeping place in one facility. We are broadening our arts vision to include all those cultural facilities, and they will be eligible to apply for a community art gallery grant, with the first round to open later in the year.

In Katherine we have begun discussions with Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre, also known as GYRACC, and the Mimi Aboriginal Arts and Craft centre to expand and upgrade the facilities so they can attract more tourists to their town. Mimi Arts and Craft is much loved and has great visions for its facilities in Pearce Street, which include print-making facilities and resident artist workshops.

GYRACC has identified priorities to improve the functionality and opportunities for a future generation of income, the development of tourism services and arts program expansion, including greater participation of Indigenous people.

Both organisations work in collaboration with the Member for Katherine, Sandra Nelson, and I appreciate her local knowledge and input into this project.

We have a lot more work to do in the Tennant Creek and Arnhem Land regions, but our announcements on these initiatives have attracted interest from across the Territory. I am looking forward to working with local members and organisations to get those happening.

We also need to refresh our major cultural institutions in Darwin. We will develop a 10-year museums master plan for our capital city. The Chief Minister has been very clear about his vision in this area. I am very excited that we have a Chief Minister who understands the importance of cultural keeping places, for Territorians and those who come to visit.

The master plan will identify and prioritise our investment in arts and cultural infrastructure in Darwin. The master plan will be delivered by October 2017 and will consider the establishment of a new museum and its design, contents and funding. I look forward to working with the Member for Port Darwin on that.

The Territory's natural environment is one of our greatest assets. It supports our great lifestyle, drives our thriving tourism industry and offers us a wealth of opportunities for economic development. We know that good environmental policy is good economic policy. That is why we are introducing a strong regulatory framework to protect and preserve the environment while allowing responsible development to proceed with certainty, delivering jobs and economic growth to Territorians.

The government is already progressing its environmental regulatory reforms through a two-stage process. Stage one will see the reform of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the strengthening of the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act*. Consultation on these components of our reform is already under way. We expect to finalise changes to the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act* later this year and the *Environmental Assessment Act* mid-next year.

Stage two will see new environment protection laws implemented with consultation on this significant part of the reform process due to occur in 2018. The government is currently considering options for implementing these changes, which will include decision-making based on science and the views of the community. Our framework will provide a robust set of rules and guidelines for assessing the environmental impacts of new projects and ensuring this is embedded in the approval process.

We are putting in place a marine and coastal management strategy that will ensure the health and viability of our coastline, support its use by Territorians for recreational and cultural purposes—we have heard a lot today about people's love of fishing—manage growing demand for our natural resources and foster sustainable industry for the benefit of the economy. We are in the process of establishing a stakeholder advisory group which will be the key driver for the development of the strategy, which will be finalised in 2018.

We have recently—just on the weekend—delivered a key election commitment by announcing the expression of interest process for community members to join the new Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee. I want the committee to include a wide range of stakeholders, including Indigenous leaders, recreational fishers, researchers and representatives from local business and industry. The committee's first task will be to develop a comprehensive plan of management for Darwin Harbour, including a plan to protect vital habitats like mangroves. I look forward to announcing the new committee in the near future.

Water in the Territory is a precious and finite resource. From our larger population centres to our most remote communities, we need to responsibly manage and allocate our water resources to ensure the ongoing health of our rivers and waterways while meeting the growing needs of our households businesses and industries. Under the former government there was a lack of process and transparency when it came to water allocation and water policy. The Gunner government is returning certainty, transparency and fairness to water use policy.

We are doing that through the community-based water advisory committees, ensuring Indigenous communities have access to water allocations for economic development opportunities on country, and ensuring all large water users apply for a licence, including currently exempted mining and petroleum operators.

Strategic Indigenous reserves offer potential opportunities for traditional owners in regard to economic development and job creation on country. Consultation is under way on the model for establishing reserves to ensure they are returning the greatest benefit. A new public portal, as I referred to earlier, will also be developed to make all water decisions available to the community. Work is well under way on developing this portal, which we expect to launch by May 2017.

Indigenous ranger groups across the Territory play a crucial frontline role in conservation and natural resource management and the protection and preservation of our natural assets. New funding will commence from 2017–18 to support those ranger groups in the form of capital grants, an additional \$2m per year to improve conservation practices and establishment of an Indigenous carbon unit.

This will stimulate employment and other social outcomes, development of partnerships, building economic self-sufficiency, and significant potential to deliver jobs and revenue for remote communities. My department is developing guidelines for the grant programs and details for the effective administration of the funds. Organisations will be able to apply for funding from 1 July 2017.

The Gunner government knows what sport means to Territorians. A healthy, vibrant sporting community is underpinned by access to first-class sporting facilities, and our investment in sporting infrastructure will create hundreds of jobs for locals and allow Territorians to play their chosen sport in modern facilities as good as facilities in other parts of Australia.

The great sport of rugby league needs a new stadium to call home, particularly after the CLP's bungling of the proposed redevelopment of Richardson Park. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition spoke again of the fast-tracked Warren Park rugby league stadium project. This project is a brilliant result for the sporting community and for Territory jobs, and we will deliver it.

I pick up on the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, and I would like to make clear two things. The first is—the rugby league fan he says he is—I firmly believe the Leader of the Opposition knows this new stadium is a positive for the rugby league community in the NT. We welcome the scrutiny of and being held accountable by the opposition; however, I ask that—even though he is a rugby league fan—perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might reconsider his ongoing, unfounded objection to and derision of this project.

Secondly, I want to make it quite clear that our priority has always been local rugby league. The stadium was discussed with the rugby league community in the NT, announced as a home for the local rugby league, and that is what it will be. That is what we promised and will deliver. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to do the right thing by the sport of rugby league and get behind this fantastic new stadium. It is great that we will have the first quarter of the Rugby League World Cup here in Darwin, at TIO Stadium, later in the year.

By fast tracking the construction phase of the stadium we are creating jobs for Territorians and delivering a much-needed home for rugby league. The consultative project has a design phase well under way, with the tender expected to be awarded in July this year. We look forward to seeing the first local league game played at the new stadium in the second half of 2018. The Member for Brennan will be there, bells on. As

with all of our sporting infrastructure commitments, the Warren Park project will be a flagship Buy Local project.

Netball is one of the highest participation sports in the Territory, and we are investing in the future of Territory netball by fast-tracking our investment of \$10m into the state-of-the-art, four-court netball stadium at Marrara. We are working with Netball NT on the design phase, and tenders for the project go out in May.

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

Motion not agreed to.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Chief Minister's statement sets out a plan for the Territory's economic and social agenda, which I passionately support. This statement touches on aspects that are important to every Territorian.

The Territory Labor government works for Territorians from all areas across the Northern Territory. We are putting children first and have put kids at the heart of all our policies. We are focused on listening, consulting and working with the people of the Territory to achieve good outcomes. We want to restore trust in government, create jobs and invest in our children, who are the future of the Territory.

We want to build safer, fairer and stronger communities. In order to build these communities, all Territorians need good employment and housing options, children need a good start at school, people need access to good healthcare and communities need to feel safe. Young people need opportunities and elderly people need to be supported and cared for.

As a government, we understand this. Every Territorian deserves a good quality of life to enable them to contribute to our society. We understand that all Territorians should have control over their life and access to high-quality services. We want to work with our remote communities and regions and we want to build a stronger, healthier and happier Northern Territory.

This year, and beyond, will be challenging, but Territorians can be assured that the government is acting to improve the economic and social climate the previous government led the Territory into. The Chief Minister has outlined the government's plan to support the Territory through this rocky period, with plans to lead us towards a more prosperous future. From our remote communities and regional towns to our urban centres, every Territorian has been considered in this government's plan.

Good housing is a right for all Territorians. A good home leads to good education, good health and good community outcomes. However, the Territory has significant housing problems that have severely impacted on many Territorians for far too long. In remote Indigenous communities, housing has been inadequate and overcrowded, and has resulted in poor health and social outcomes. The negative impact of poor housing for Indigenous people living in remote communities is significant and crosses every aspect of life, from health to education and employment.

We need to address the housing deficit to improve people's lives and wellbeing. Poor-quality, overcrowded housing has a social cost to the people affected, and an economic cost for governments of all levels and political affiliations. Time for change is long overdue in this sector.

We are working with local people to build homes where people feel they belong. We want to build houses where families can raise healthy children, houses that will be delivered by local workforces, both of these building our local economy.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to improving housing outcomes in remote communities, with a record investment of \$1.1bn over 10 years. These programs include \$500m for new remote housing under HomeBuild NT; \$200m for Room to Breathe; \$200m to expand government employee housing, including housing for local government employees; and \$200m for additional repairs and maintenance funding.

We want everyone to get on board with these reforms, as we cannot do it alone. Many people will know that the Australian Government National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing is due to expire on 30 June 2018. The department and I are currently meeting with all layers of the Australian Government to extend its funding commitment to the Territory.

I recently had the privilege of participating in a review where I was able to articulate progress made and our future vision for the Territory regarding remote housing. Not only do we need the Australian Government, I also urge members opposite to give bipartisan support for our remote housing reforms, as they would know too well how Indigenous communities have suffered due to the lack of housing and the impact this had had on individuals, families and broader communities.

We are committed to these reforms and to making a difference. A record \$1.1bn investment in remote housing, with a program to build and improve remote houses for Territorians, represents our Chief Minister's vision.

This program was planned to roll out in the 2017–18 financial year, which represents the first Labor government budget. However, we have fast-tracked \$15m for remote housing into this financial year. Five-million dollars was to increase repairs and maintenance for remote housing across the Territory, with additional works under way, scheduled across Arafura, Arnhem, Big Rivers, Barkly and central regions. Ten million dollars is brought forward for Room to Breathe, a program that will start this financial year and roll into subsequent financial years.

Room to Breathe is an extensive engagement program. It has already commenced across the Territory through consultations and planning to deliver the early works. Twenty-three communities have been selected right across the Territory for these early works. Community consultations are under way in a number of the remote communities and the early work focus will look at specifically providing additional enhanced living spaces that do not require water and sewerage infrastructure in this first stage.

As previously mentioned, Room to Breathe will add innovative living, sleeping and outdoor areas, and innovative cooking spaces to houses to reduce the pressure on overcrowding and allow families to continue to live together. This will also create local jobs. As the early works under Room to Breathe roll out, we are also engaging and planning for the remainder of our remote housing program, which will begin with the new budget cycle in July of this year.

When our remote communities and regions are strong the Territory is strong. We are working with local people to build homes where people will feel they belong. The Territory government is determined to restore local decision-making to remote communities because local people make the best decisions for their community.

An essential element underpinning government's investment in remote housing reforms is our engagement with communities to work in partnership and create opportunities for participation in programs and decisions that will impact on the people in those communities.

This reform initiative will not be driven from a government agenda. It needs to be done hand-in-hand with Indigenous communities. Such partnerships must be based on mutual respect, with engagement between government and communities to take place at a local level.

Government is collaborating with Indigenous communities and local organisations to jointly develop approaches that respond to the needs and opportunities for each community. This government's commitment to engagement extends from the planning to the delivery phase of its housing program and works. Place-based consultation with each community is under way. In addition, five-year funding arrangements will be available to allow enterprises to plan employment and training packages that will allow individuals to undertake apprenticeships or traineeships in relevant trades. Consultation is ongoing with land councils, regional councils, Indigenous business enterprises, housing groups and local businesses throughout the Northern Territory.

The delivery of housing works will feature local participation, which will encourage local economic development and the development of locally-based skills to manage housing stock into the future. We want to build houses where families feel safe and can raise healthy children. The first step towards this is to reduce overcrowding.

We will work with communities to create local jobs and enterprises. Many governments have made this commitment. We do not want to create jobs and training that are here today and gone tomorrow. We are focused on creating longer-term jobs and businesses, and growing the economies of remote areas—sustainable economies. The work to improve and build houses will be delivered by a local workforce that will build the local economy. Five-year funding arrangements will be available to allow enterprises to plan employment and training packages. This will allow for apprenticeships, traineeships, and allow organisations to employ important, skilled tradespeople who will mentor, guide and train local people. The

delivery of housing works will feature local participation that will remain at the heart of Labor's \$1.1bn investment over 10 years.

The delivery of clean reliable energy in the bush will also provide income and training to locals through the Solar SETuP program, which will deliver 10 megawatts of solar energy to remote communities. This is a \$55m investment from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and the Territory government. More than 30 remote communities are, or will soon be, beneficiaries of initial jobs in the construction phase, and ongoing jobs through opportunities and expansion of Power and Water's essential service operator skills base.

There will be cleaner and quieter electricity generation—without as much reliance on diesel being trucked and barged in—through flexible generated systems capable of expansion in the future. The integrated battery system at Daly River will also be switched on soon. It will cut down on diesel and put in batteries that reduce admissions while providing jobs and skills for the community. This project represents one of the largest isolated, off-grid solar rollouts ever that is of world-class standard and recognition.

This project will not only affect the Territory; it has national significance by proving that you can deliver clean energy and jobs to remote communities in a cost-efficient manner. As part of the work on the recent parliamentary select committee over four years, in terms of the NT's energy future—I remember being at a hearing with multiple energy agencies and we were speaking with Power and Water about this design and construction project. I asked them, 'How do you plan on educating the communities about this concept? How do you plan on raising the education and awareness of the communities so they will embrace this work, participate in it and see it as something important for their community development that needs protecting, particularly the kids?'

I relayed some stories from my previous experience. Most recently I was talking to one of the head people at Territory Civil Services, who has been working with the Maningrida community. The dialogue about the exchange between laypeople, members of parliament and high-tech officials around the table has translated to the concept being delivered. I was informed that in Maningrida there are eight local people working on that project. Those local people are going home each night and talking to their families about it. They are relaying this story of what it is, what it means and how it needs to be looked after. From a high-level construction point of view, they say it has been beneficial and they have been able to engage at a local community level.

That is a localised story that I felt good about when engaging with this high-level official at Territory Civil. The other important thing we discussed was the level of work involved to engage local people. At this stage they were unable to engage them at the high-tech level. There was the traditional fly-in fly-out workforce because it is specialised work—all the planning, civil construction, set-up and mechanical areas of the project—and there were opportunities for these workers to move on to the next project if they choose to have further employment.

From a small thing, real things have grown. It is good to see that translate into the real world where some of these projects do not always hit the target. The Chief Minister has made it clear that underpinning his view of the future is real engagement, and making that engagement translate into real industry and real outcomes.

We are committed to empowering remote communities through stronger local authorities. Local authorities are a key voice that informs the work of regional councils and government agencies. Regional councils provide important local infrastructure, such as roads, rubbish management and local sports facilities. They also support communities in their efforts to get the additional services needed at a local level, such as aged-care workers. Local authorities provide a strong mechanism for government engagement with communities. Conducting community engagement through local authorities helps to coordinate and manage the volume of consultation demands that are placed on remote communities. It also provides a more robust mechanism to ensure accountability and feedback from government agencies to communities as work progresses.

We will further strengthen these authorities and their members through programs that will ensure community residents have the skills and knowledge to be active participants in the decisions that affect their daily lives. Through our election commitments we have serious infrastructure programs that will travel side by side in the development of good governance and show people that their decisions will translate into real outcomes in their local community, something that was definitely missed in the previous administration.

We also have to recognise urban housing. Housing is more than bricks and mortar; it is the bedrock of a safe and healthy family in urban and remote communities. The Northern Territory has a dated public housing system. We have an ageing asset portfolio coupled with expensive repairs and maintenance requirements. This greatly impacts on the ability of the Northern Territory Government to provide a responsive housing system.

We are looking into growing the community housing sector and ways we can increase the supply and diversity of housing stock across the housing continuum. Also, as part of the Northern Territory Government's \$22m Immediate Works Stimulus Package we have provided a \$5m boost to the local construction industry for repairs and maintenance to urban public housing stock.

Around 150 tradies have applied for the work under this program, which will raise the living standards for our public housing tenants. Funding will go towards much-needed upgrades to roofs, kitchens, bathrooms and fences. This will enable us to repair our stock at a faster rate and therefore improve our turnaround times. My job as the minister is also to work closely with my colleagues on the intersection of our responsibilities so we can deliver the best outcomes in housing, homelessness, health, justice and education.

I plan to work hard and collaboratively to deliver the Chief Minister's vision, not only for the Territory but in specific areas like the electorate of Barkly, which I represent. Sadly, in the NT we still see record homelessness rates, some of the highest rates in Australia. In terms of a high level of homelessness—that rate relates to overcrowding in remote and very remote areas.

We are responding to this as a government with our once-in-a-generation investment into remote housing, and we are looking at new models. The Member for Stuart will look exclusively at new models of engaging with remote communities and delivering better packages, better governance and more inclusive models that will generate economy in our remote communities.

We are working with the homelessness sector to develop new reforms. We have undertaken an extensive needs analysis to help guide our decision-making. These new reforms will take a regional approach to ensure our response is matched to the different needs right across the Territory. We are also about to test some new models under a homelessness innovation fund. These models will be run out of Katherine, Darwin and Alice Springs, and will assist people to move from crisis to long-term housing and provide integrated case management support.

Not least of all, we plan on trying to reduce homelessness to the best of our ability, an objective to provide greater dignity and improve life outcomes for the most vulnerable members of our community. I am eager to learn more in this space.

There is a great section of my speech on the Barkly region that I probably will not have time to deliver, but it is great to see that this government has incorporated education, health, justice, housing, art, sport and recreation and all those powerful tools around wellbeing and community development into the plan for the Barkly.

In conclusion, the Labor government, led by Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, has a plan for the Territory's economic and social responsibility. We welcome the other side—but it good to celebrate that enthusiasm and energy of this side as we go forward. A four-year term with a 10-year plan is what Territorians are embracing and that will be an exciting way forward with many challenges. These are challenges we are up for that will benefit the Territory.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, in September last year, on my first day as the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, I committed to take a sensible approach to the complex situations and decisions that affect agribusiness, livestock, resources and fisheries. This meant no more thought bubble politics or policies such as those that plagued the previous CLP government. Policies will be thought-through properly and implementation will be properly considered and planned.

From the outset I committed to having the door open to industry, and I have made a commitment to listen and plan for the long term in order to play a part in lifting our economy into prosperity for current and future Territorians. This approach will be necessary to deliver on this government's big agenda for the year ahead. There is a lot to do to support the development of the key resources and primary industry sectors, and I am excited to play a leading role in the work that needs to be done.

I have talked about the importance of jobs many times in this parliament, and jobs are essential to my portfolio of Primary Industry and Resources. Ultimately, prosperity begins and ends with jobs—local jobs for Territorians on the farm, in the stockyard, on our waters and in our mines. Together, primary industries and resources represent 20% of the Territory's economy. Growth in agribusiness, livestock, resources and fisheries productivity is the catalyst that will change our economy and communities Territory-wide.

At lunch time today I had the pleasure of addressing the Darwin Mining Club which is also celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the Minerals Council of Australia. I congratulate it on its longevity and the great work it does national and locally. Last month I addressed the Petroleum Club of the Northern Territory, making two significant engagements with the mining, oil and gas industries in the first two months of 2017. I thank both of them for inviting me and allowing me to address them with our plans.

In those addresses I clearly acknowledged the importance of the industries to the Territory not only for providing jobs and contributing to the economy but also in their social contribution to the Northern Territory. I also made it clear that this government has a strategy to facilitate industry development, and our plan is to generate critical new information on the Territory's prospects that will open up new areas for exploration and increase the likelihood of identifying previously unrecognised resources. We will map the information using the latest mapping technologies, including 3D geological models. We will then make this resulting information as widely and easily accessible as possible. We actively seek investment, both domestically and overseas, and review regulatory frameworks to ensure they are sensible and contemporary, and understand and incorporate the needs of all stakeholders.

Today I want to talk about the government's plans for Tennant Creek and the Barkly region. A key component of our policy platform that we took to the election last year is that we will develop Tennant Creek as a mining service hub of the Northern Territory. Tennant Creek has a proud history of mining and we would like to harness that heritage value and leverage it to promote tourism value. Tennant Creek is a proud town and a resilient community. I work closely with my colleague, the Member for Barkly, the former Minister for Mines and Energy, Gerry McCarthy. This government is focused on working collaboratively with our members and taking advantage of the knowledge and experience they have to offer to ensure we reach our desired outcomes for the Territory.

Along with Minister McCarthy, I will be working with the assistant minister for primary industry and resources, Jeff Collins, the Member for Fong Lim, who will be aiding in my work with a focus on Tennant Creek and the Barkly. I thank him for the great work he has done already in those areas. As a vital regional centre, we want to see Tennant Creek prosper. The Jemena Northern Gas Pipeline project is advancing and serves as an example that capacity-building at Tennant Creek is under way.

The Central Australian region has been identified as a significant area for potential development. To make this happen we need to unlock the vast mineral potential that exists in the region. The Territory Labor Government is continuing to support the work done by the NT Geological Survey within my department. The NT Geological Survey is working under the Creating Opportunities for Resource Exploration, or CORE, initiative with a focus on giving the NT a competitive advantage.

Towards the end of last year Geoscience Australia, in collaboration with the NT Geological Survey, announced that the Barkly region between Tennant Creek and Mount Isa will be the recipient of major focus to investigate resource potential as part of the Commonwealth Government's Exploring for the Future program. We are working with Geoscience Australia to comprehensively map a 550 kilometre seismic line northeast of the Barkly region for opportunities under the ground.

This will result in the prospectus of a new resource opportunity in the area. This prospectus will be a professional tool, used to promote the Territory as a place to invest. Access to data has also been a major focus of government. Last month the NT Geological Survey completed a project that made every industry report on exploration since 1901 accessible. That equates to 23 000 reports that can now be accessed anywhere across the globe when we are competing in a global market. The most recent Fraser Institute Survey of Mining Companies ranked the NT fourth in the world for the quality and accessibility of its geological data.

As the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, I will continue to work with Tracey Hayes from the NT Cattlemen's Association and Stuart Kemp from NT Livestock Exporters Association to deliver certainty and future-proof the industry against the cyclical nature of the live cattle trade. In recognition of the value placed upon our live export industry, worth over \$360m in 2015, the Territory Labor government has fast-tracked an election commitment of \$4.1m to the NT Live Exporters Association to upgrade the Berrimah export yards.

The upgrade will create dozens of jobs and ensure best-practice standards for livestock handling. Jobs will be generated during the construction for engineers, steel producers, steel workers and general construction. Further jobs will be created in transport and logistics due to the increased capacity of the export yards. The improved Berrimah export yards will allow cattle processing all year round, improve live export animal welfare standards and enhance our reputation as a producer of premium cattle products with our Asian trading partners.

This government is committed to investing in Katherine as an inland port, focusing on agribusiness. We recognise that Katherine not only has a great local member now, but is also a natural road and rail link for cattle, horticulture and agriculture produce to the Ord and Katherine regions. Shenal from NT Farmers Association has been vocal in the association's belief in growing the Northern Territory plant industry. This government will support them by providing facilitation and strong research and development.

In fostering a committed partnership, the Northern Territory and Japanese governments signed a memorandum for cooperation on 13 January in Sydney, which I was lucky enough to attend and sign on behalf of the Northern Territory Government. Under the MOC the Department of Primary Industry and Resources and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will work together to develop a master plan to jointly realise commercial opportunities in agriculture and aquaculture sectors and in the development of supply chain logistics in the Northern Territory. This master plan will set out short-, medium- and long-term outcomes.

In providing strong research and development for the horticulture industry, we will focus on a number of areas. One of those is working with NT Farmers to investigate which high-value commodities are in high demand in Asian markets, and to map the supply chain logistics. This will include air freight and cold chain supply logistics.

We will investigate Asian market demand for commodities and map through the air freight cold chain to determine infrastructure gaps, including Katherine, and the information gaps, coordinated with the NT Farmers Association, NT Seafood Council and NT Airports.

Supporting tropical forestry service expansion and a potential distillery development in Katherine through the strategic infrastructure projects working group—and supporting and promoting the development of mango exports to overseas markets direct from Darwin, including produce from the Katherine region.

Recreational fishing is an iconic part of the Territory lifestyle. This government has committed \$50m to recreational fishing infrastructure over five years to improve the recreational fishing experience in the Northern Territory, and to enhance our reputation as a must-visit destination for fishing tourists. This funding provides a significant opportunity for Territorians to fundamentally improve recreational fishing access and infrastructure to enhance fish stocks and improve the quality of the recreational fishing experience for locals and tourists alike.

One of the direct benefits of the government's commitment to invest \$50m in recreational fishing infrastructure will be the creation of jobs. Under this government's Buy Local plan, many of the contracts to plan and build this \$50m of infrastructure will go to local contractors and firms. Once contracts under this package are awarded, direct jobs will flow to the construction industry. This infrastructure development will also create indirect jobs for our fishing tour operators, fishing tackle shops, boat sales and servicing, tourism, hospitality and retail sectors that cater to tourists lured to the Territory in search of the mighty barramundi.

The Michael Gunner government is already moving to deliver on recreational fishing election commitments, with projects under way to seal the carpark at Middle Arm boat ramp and to install toilets and security cameras at Dinah Beach boat ramp. A scope of work for the upgrade of the Channel Island boat ramp is also being developed in consultation with AFANT, the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee and other stakeholders.

I address the comments made by the Member for Nelson on Tuesday regarding perceived bias of this government towards recreational fishing to the detriment of the commercial fishing industry. This is not the case. This government has a plan to create world-class commercial fisheries in the Northern Territory, ones that are profitable and sustainable.

An example is the Northern Territory mud crab fishery, which is currently undergoing a comprehensive review. A reduction in catches as a result of successive poor Wet Seasons has seen this fishery classified as transitional-depleting in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In consultation with the stakeholders, a harvest strategy for the fishery is being developed which will ensure the sustainability of the fishery and provide increased certainty for all stakeholders. This harvest strategy will be the first ever developed for a commercial fishery in the Northern Territory, and demonstrates this government's commitment to profitable and sustainable fisheries.

Future harvest strategies are planned for other commercial fisheries in the Northern Territory. As the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, I am proud of our hard-working commercial fishermen. I have supported this industry in promotions such as Buy Local over the recent Christmas and New Year, to support our commercial fishing industry, traders and processors.

As a proud Indigenous member of parliament, I am proud of the progress my department has made in creating jobs in commercial fishing through the Aboriginal coastal licence. This commercial licence will assist Aboriginal coastal communities develop small-scale fisheries to supply local, fresh seafood. Nineteen licences have been issued to date, 10 of which are current.

It is important to note that the industry's I am minister for create jobs not only for themselves, but also in service industries as varied as transport, vehicle repairs and suppliers, legal and accounting support, labour hire and catering.

This government has a plan that is echoed throughout my portfolio and the industries it supports. That plan has been prepared after listening to Territorians and we will keep asking and listening, and, importantly, we will try to keep delivering.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, the speech we heard from the Chief Minister today is a carbon copy of the one he gave last week, so he must be pretty happy with that speech. We have all had to hear it again.

I wanted to touch on a topic that came up in Question Time, one that is key to the Chief Minister's speech, that is, the commitment to a secure public service. We all know our public servants do an excellent job. The Chief Minister's answers in Question Time today were less than sufficient in putting the minds of public servants at ease.

We knew, from the Sky News debate that the now Chief Minister had the night before the election, that he would cut \$184m dollars from the public service. He dressed that up by saying it was 28-odd executives, but it equates to 800 hard-working Territorians that this government will need to chop out of the public service to meet that commitment. That is by his admission. It is very interesting that the Chief Minister's speech today does not lay out more certainly the future of the Northern Territory's public service.

Having listened patiently, and there have been lots of contributions on this statement, the key thing that I have taken out of this is that the issue of strategic engagement with Asia has been ignored. Truthfully, the Chief Minister's speech is not strategic or visionary. It did not identify any of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats.

It is self-evident, but worth repeating, that we need private investment in the Territory to drive our population and economic growth. Despite the announcement of the two half-day public holidays, which the Chief Minister dressed up and justified at the time as a way to keep Territorians in the Territory and secure our population growth—people are going to flock to the Territory because we have two half-day public holidays. I cannot wait to see the statistics when they come through. I cannot wait to see what an impact the public holidays have on our drive to increase the population.

Across the economy, our approach that sought to nurture and support private investment was being implemented and applied in all sorts of industries and areas. We had tourism, mining, oil and gas, agriculture, primary production, the public sector and Defence. All these areas were looking for a vision and a plan from this Chief Minister, and to date we have received nothing.

The Chief Minister's speech was disappointing because it spent so long focusing on so little, which was followed up by many contributions that were also long and focused on very little. There was nothing said about keeping Territorians safe and reducing crime. After the months of historically high crime rates here in the Territory, with commercial break-ins over 63% and a 127% increase in break-ins in Palmerston on last year, I find it astonishing that since Question Time today we have not debated the urgency bill on bail amendments. Instead of celebrating a puff piece and patting each other on the back, as you are all doing on that side of the House, we could be debating a bill that could be passed tonight and become law tomorrow to help Territorians and reduce crime in our community.

You are unorganised. You lack fundamental urgency on this issue. You are passing a bill on urgency in March that is taking the same length of time as an ordinary bill. If that bill was more advanced, which it is not—it is still in its infancy, as admitted by the Chief Minister in Question Time—you could have introduced it yesterday, done the second reading today and we could debate it in the ordinary course of business. There is nothing urgent about it.

Yesterday, if you were fair dinkum—we were expecting to walk into this House and hear the Attorney-General give notice and, bang, we could then debate the bill on urgency. Even better, yesterday we could have debated it. It could have all been done and dusted last night. But instead of debating a very important bill on crime, something the community is screaming out for, which is real and tangible and has a practical application in people's lives, we are listening to a puff piece by the Chief Minister, and everyone on the other side is giving each other high fives. That is good, but tomorrow morning when we pick up the paper and read that there has been more crime, more car thefts, more churches and schools being broken into—that is on your hands, because we could have dealt with this last night or tonight. Instead we have to wait until March and there is nothing anyone can do about that except you.

Nothing has been said about services in enhancing our unique Territory lifestyle, although the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources danced around the edges. There was nothing said about eliminating unnecessary red tape so that business can prosper and continue to employ Territorians. At the end of the day, what Territorians need is job security and job opportunities.

Nothing has been said about supporting senior Territorians so they can continue to live with dignity in the Northern Territory. There was nothing about driving down the cost of living, and there was nothing about empowering Aboriginal people and communities to address disadvantage, despite the Chief Minister missing the first day of parliament to be in Canberra for the handing down of the Closing the Gap report.

There was nothing about the public service. I already mentioned that and reminded everyone of the Chief Minister's commitment, the night before the election, to rip \$184m out of the public service, which is the equivalent of 800 Territory jobs. I listened to the Chief Minister's speech and was left scratching my head as to how the Gunner Labor government is also taking steps to maximise federal support for the Territory.

No amount of spin in the Chamber will change the rules of how the NT economy runs, and a discussion about state economy now or in the future cannot be had without speaking about GST and strong relationships in Canberra. I am proud of the work the Leader of the Opposition and I have done in months gone by in leading the debate on securing a fair share of GST for the Northern Territory. It was a great honour to represent the people of Spillett and every Territorian in Canberra in November last year, when we put the GST directly to the chair of the federal Treasurer.

This government has misguided priorities and a lack of urgency, and they are the central criticisms that the opposition brings to this House. It is so frustrating—I would have loved to have debated your bill on bail today. In fact, you guys could have brought that bill forward today, then we could have passed it, and in the next month you could have been thinking up more measures, drafting more legislation and putting your heart and soul into it. We could have moved another bill on urgency in March.

We could have had a suite of measures but, instead, whatever idea you had yesterday is still in the department waiting to be crafted into something tangible so we can bring it forward on urgency in a month's time, the same amount of time it takes for an ordinary bill. It is so disappointing.

Core business owners, employers and investors are telling us that the lack of urgency is stifling the Territory. Territorians want to know where we are going; they want some serious discussion and a real plan to tackle the difficult subjects, like addressing the two-speed economy, structural bloating and reform, debt and deficit sustainability and managing the recurrent expenditures.

These issues are what good governments deal with. Good governments do not have all the answers, but at least they identify the problems, make decisions and try things. This Gunner Labor government has been so afraid ...

Members interjecting.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I pick up on the interjection from the chirping members on the other side. I think it was the Members for Katherine, Fong Lim and Sanderson. I pick up on those interjections—Tweety Birds in the corner.

This government has so much good will, but it is afraid to spend its political capital, make tough decisions and implement reform. The only thing that is happening is that future generations are being locked into poorer living standards and higher debt.

Let me expand on the serious concerns I raised earlier, namely the two-speed economy. We know that private business investment is down \$7.9bn, with a further forecast fall of \$9.4bn for the financial year 2016–17. Business confidence is 30 basis points lower than the national average. Historically, business confidence in the Territory has trended above the national average. Things at the national level are not rosy either so it shows how poorly private business is feeling right now in the Territory.

This government says it understands the plight of Territorians and the state of the economy, but how can we believe that the Gunner Labor government feels private business' pain when some of the only decisions it has made have been to introduce measures that hurt business. There was no consultation on the two part-day public holidays. You did not flag it before the election. No one saw it coming and no one except your union mates knew about it. There was no consultation with business before or after the election, or before or after the decision. Yet, bang, we were slapped with it and now we are stuck with. No matter how much community outpouring there was—we can help businesses put their message to government—or how many businesses came to government, you did not listen; you shut your ears. This is a government that went to the election and said, 'We will consult; we will listen.' You did not listen.

The training voucher scheme took you five months, but we got there. You have admitted you should have done it earlier; we can all accept that. It is in place and money is flowing. Great. Well done. Part-day public holidays—we are still waiting for that one.

What about your 50% renewable energy target? Territorians need secure, stable and affordable energy. This goes straight to the cost of living, affordability and being able to stay in the Territory. Today your federal Labor colleagues said it would cost an additional \$48bn. The entire Territory economy is \$2.8bn a year—very interesting.

Western Australian Labor has backflipped on its 50% renewable energy target. Are you guys still committed to it? Will it hurt Territorians? How much will it cost Territorians for you to stick by this ideological target?

How can private business believe the Gunner Labor government's economic credibility when, in spite of overwhelming national, international and local evidence, it introduces an indefinite moratorium on hydraulic fracturing of gas in the Northern Territory? This moratorium, or ban, sends a very clear signal to investors that the Northern Territory is not open for business.

Ms Nelson: Because that is the only business we have in the Northern Territory.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I pick up on the interjection from the Member for Katherine. How can there be any jobs or jobs growth in the Northern Territory if we shut out our national and international investors? It is not just in the field of gas exploration that jobs have been banned, stopped, ended by Labor's moratorium. The Territory's key strategic commercial economic advantage is gas.

The Leader of the Opposition met with INPEX representatives to get the facts. After all, we believe in the power of facts and not feelings on issues. The fact is there will be significant job losses in the economy from the fourth quarter of 2017. Ninety per cent of the workforce required during the construction phase of the INPEX project will be demobilised. That is a huge number of jobs, over 5000. These are good jobs with really good wages, supporting local business and property across the Darwin and Palmerston area. Where is the Gunner Labor government's plan for the transition out of INPEX? Why is the Gunner Labor government not starting the conversation and consulting with business and the community about what happens next?

It is so disappointing to hear, time and again, in this place, the government blame everything on the previous government. The only problem with this approach is that once you win an election it becomes your responsibility to take action and drive the Territory forward. Playing the blame game never built or created anything. Frankly, the people in my electorate are sick of this government using the previous government as a scapegoat.

The government should have noted, in the Deloitte Access Economics December 2016 report, the breakdown of economic growth on the forward estimates being:

... underpinned by private consumption and net international exports.

Yet, seemingly, the Gunner Labor government has gone out of its way to damage these two key planks of economic growth in the Territory.

New car sales, which are the rolled gold metric when it comes to forecasting private consumption, for the December 2016 quarter were down 9.2%, much worse than the national figures. Similarly, large numbers can be seen when we look at the population picture. It is accepted that population stability and growth are critical for economic growth and job creation.

Again, I cannot wait to see the statistics on how well the two part-day public holidays have boosted our population in the Northern Territory. I hope I am astounded. I fear that I will not be, but we are looking forward to seeing those statistics.

Key forward-looking measures take time to filter through the system, but eventually they end up in unemployment numbers. They are low now, but without a coherent and cohesive plan there will be a terrible and sad spike. No one in this place wants to see people on the dole; unemployment brutalises human dignity.

The story that came out today was not promising. Unemployment is on the rise from 3.5% in August to 4% today; that is a 14.2% increase. This is the fastest and largest increase in unemployment in the nation. The only projects being pushed out by the current government are the ones started by the previous government. The government that Labor blames for everything was the only government providing leadership. The Country Liberals' plan and vision for the Territory is the one this government continues to roll on with.

Does Labor have its own plan for the Territory? Where is it? What is the vision? Can we see it? When will it be implemented? What does it look like? Where there should have been certainty, Labor has delivered uncertainty and inaction for the Territory.

The year ahead could have been bigger, better and bolder. We should look to the stars and not to the soles of our feet. I reiterate how disappointing it is that we are standing here tonight, in these precious hours of debate we are given on so few days a year, debating a motion about the Chief Minister's puff piece on the year ahead when we could have been passing a real bill on urgency to help fight crime in our community, which is an issue at the forefront of Territorians' minds. It is all over Facebook, the radio, the news and in every conversation. When you pick up the kids from childcare or drop them off at school, it is what people are talking about. Instead of us reflecting what Territorians are talking about—we are their representatives—we talk about pages and pages of this puff piece, which is hugely disappointing.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today in support of the Chief Minister's statement on the year ahead, which outlines some significant work being undertaken by this government to support and grow jobs across the Territory. I take this opportunity to give my ministers and colleagues a pat on the back and huge congratulations for the amount of work, time and effort they have put into delivering this plan. Thank you very much, everybody.

As the Chief Minister reflected, 2016 was a very tough year for the Northern Territory economy, and 2017 will be a tough one, but we are facing these challenges head on. However, with challenges come opportunities, and this government will use them to continue strengthening the economy for the future and keep the wheels of business turning. I have said this several times recently, but it must be said again; Katherine is definitely a winner with this government. It has taken a Labor-elected Member for Katherine and a Labor government to realise the potential of this amazing electorate.

This government took a detailed jobs plan to Territorians before the last election, and we are delivering on that plan. We have built and strengthened that plan in consultation with local businesses, NGOs and the broader community. In my inaugural speech, on 18 October, I stated that the Katherine knights who have been brave enough to invest significant time and resources to nurture the small businesses that are the heart of our town's economy also need immediate attention. This government is ensuring this happens with the Buy Local program. This government has strengthened buy local principles so 30% local content weighting is applied across all government procurement stages. This principle has also been extended to groups who receive government capital grants.

As the Chief Minister stated:

Guiding the seven new buy local initiatives last week is replacing the 'value for money' definition in government procurement guidelines with 'value for Territory'.

This will be far more than just awarding what is the cheapest. Doing this will ensure work is in the hands of businesses that will use it to create and sustain jobs and drive our local economy. Doing this also falls in line with ensuring we have far more egalitarian access to business opportunities in electorates like Katherine, which will ensure greater government and private investment in my electorate.

The Chief Minister shares my optimism that Katherine can be a leader in the NT economy. Since being elected I have worked tirelessly in advocating on behalf of my electorate, lobbying for services and infrastructure spending. My efforts, along with the vision of this government, the ministers and my colleagues, have resulted in infrastructure spends being brought forward, such as the \$5m to upgrade the Katherine Police Station, which was brought forward by three years.

Because of our government's recent actions six Katherine families have bought their first homes, made easier because we introduced the \$24 000 stamp duty relief. The construction industry will have more work because we fast-tracked \$120m of infrastructure programs, of which Katherine is a recipient with the Katherine Police Station improvements and the infrastructure spend for Katherine art galleries, which is part of the iconic arts trail. The \$300 000 commitment to schools allows them to improve their infrastructure.

I also stated in my inaugural speech that one of my major goals as the Member for Katherine was to facilitate innovative and targeted investment in services and infrastructure by prioritising a consultative approach. This means that every stakeholder is at the table when a decision about funding is made so that Katherinites can be sure that every dollar committed to the development and betterment of our town is being spent in a responsible, sustainable and ethical way. This approach was put into practice with the \$10m commitment to the development of Katherine's role in the Northern Territory iconic arts trail. I consulted with several stakeholders with the support of the minister for the arts, Lauren Moss, and her staff in Katherine to foster a more collaborative approach towards establishing Katherine as a leader in arts and culture in our region.

Our Chief Minister has taken steps to ensure that Katherine is properly considered in budget decisions. This is evident in the consultation being coordinated with key stakeholders in Katherine, such as the Katherine Town Council. I have spoken about this several times, but I must reiterate that I am fortunate to have the Mayor of Katherine, Fay Miller, and the Katherine Town Council Chief Executive Officer, Robert Jennings, who have provided a visionary and progressive Katherine master plan that I support 110%.

This government, led by the Chief Minister, is ensuring that Katherine is the focus of planned funding that will see real outcomes for the people of my electorate. It is not all about significant amounts of money. The Katherine community recently received a boost ahead of Christmas, with more than \$300 000 in grant funding being awarded; the first round of the Community Benefit Fund grant applications had been assessed, and \$309 338 was approved in December 2016 for Katherine projects.

The approved grants included \$192 727 for the Katherine and District Show Society; \$6143 for the Katherine Historical Society; \$181 689 for the Katherine RSL, which means it is now able to move the cenotaph to a more convenient and aesthetically pleasing area; and \$31 946 to Katherine Regional Arts. These are significant wins for the Katherine community. The grants will deliver significant improvements and upgrades while also creating an important flow-on effect to the community and economy.

We, as a government, have shown, once again, that we are inclusive. We show that we are sincere when we say we are a government that listens to our constituents. We also show that we are humble enough to admit that we were hasty in our decisions and give credit where credit is due. We have done this by reintroducing the Home Improvement Scheme. This has been spoken about in the Chamber quite a few times. This is giving homeowners a greater opportunity to do home renovations, which in turn generates more jobs for our local tradies. This has been, and will continue to be, a huge boost for the Katherine economy.

I am optimistic and confident that 2017 will be a very good year for Katherine residents. I am also confident that 2017 will provide opportunities that will carry on for many years.

I commend the Chief Minister's statement on the year ahead.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also rise to speak in support of the Chief Minister's welcome statement on the year ahead. What a fantastic year it will be, and it is already unfolding.

When the Gunner Labor government went to the election in August, we promised a strong and clear agenda based on us providing stability and leadership. Last week when the Chief Minister outlined what is in store for Territorians in 2017, to a packed house in Darwin, that agenda could not have been clearer. As a backbencher, that agenda is very clear. Those on the other side of the House are not listening. We know how our electorates will benefit and how they will be affected, and we know where we need to seek the views of our electorates so new initiatives are influenced by local knowledge and local voices.

On that day, as I moved around the room talking to people, many of whom were small businesses from my electorate, I repeatedly heard that they were satisfied that the Chief Minister and this government are on the right track and are prepared to make the hard decisions to ensure we can deliver what can only be described as a very ambitious agenda. We acknowledge that—ambitious, yes, but also achievable. The most impressive part of this agenda to date is that the Chief Minister and our Cabinet straight away started what we now know as 'getting the big rocks rolling' the moment we came into government. We have seen so much of this starting to unfold already.

In the Sanderson electorate we have already seen a number of rocks rolling, and I want to talk about several of those rocks today. The people of Sanderson are no different to other Territorians in that they need the government to take the lead on job creation. I regularly hear from my constituents that the Territory is a very hard place to live if you do not have a job, and I cannot imagine how difficult that would be.

In our electorates, every day, we see the effect of unemployment and the result of the last four years in the form of frustration, increased crime, increased mental health issues and people generally under stress. If you were not born in the Territory, it is likely that you or another family member moved to the Territory to either take up a new job or try to get a job.

The Territory has always been a place where if you wanted to work, you could. But I suspect that over the last few years that has changed. We have seen, over the last four years, people leaving the Territory, seeking jobs interstate, because they cannot afford to stay. The challenge for any government is to make it so that they have enough opportunity to make it impossible to consider leaving, and to know their kids and their network of friends and family will have jobs now and in the future if they want them.

During my doorknocking last year, in one street I came across three families on the cusp of leaving, several having boxes already in the driveway, all having been laid off from jobs and not able to find new jobs over several months.

Jobs are crucial across every span of our life, from teenagers learning customer service skills in the local bakery to parents raising families and wanting to support their children's endeavours and put food on the table, and seniors who wish to engage in paid or voluntary employment to continue social contact and feel a sense of ongoing contribution.

In Sanderson there are many seniors who fit into both of those categories. Jobs can be part-time, casual, full-time or voluntary, but each contributes to our social and financial community fabric and would be generously described as the glue that holds it all together. In support of that notion, we know that where there is an absence of a job there is often dysfunction in families and individuals, as having a job contributes to how we feel about ourselves. We all know that.

A common thread across our electorates, which we see every day in this job, is the need for meaningful employment. I have talked to people working in service stations while they are studying at Charles Darwin University. Just last week I talked to a migrant taxi driver who happened to be a resident of Sanderson, who is one unit away from completing his Masters in Accounting and is looking forward to taking up a job as an accountant so he can start to get his family, including his six-month-old daughter, ahead. He is unsure if he will stay in the Territory, which is sad news, as he is unsure if there is a job opportunity here. We must make sure there is.

Coming into office in August last year, it was clear that the economy was slowing and action needed to be taken straight away. That is what our government has done and will continue to do this year and over the next four years. As the Treasurer said on Tuesday in her statement on jobs, we are delivering infrastructure investment projects to stimulate the economy and create jobs. That is welcome news to people in

Sanderson. It is important because we need to regain community and business confidence, and it is important to leverage valuable private sector economic investment.

Providing construction stimulus means construction workers have money in their pockets to access services and purchase goods. It is a good strategy to invest in our construction sector, as the money flows to people in retail, hospitality and other trades. When we are not working, or work is in short supply, the first thing we do is stop spending. I have plenty of workers across all of those sectors living in Sanderson. We grow jobs, grow our people and then grow our economy.

In the electorate of Sanderson it is exciting that the Marrara sporting precinct in the year ahead, due to the fast-tracking of funds designed to stimulate the economy, will see the commencement of building two great new sporting facilities. I do not believe they were election commitments of the previous government. It is no secret that I am a mad netballer. It is in my blood. I cannot shake the desire to stop playing. I am in good company with more than 3000 other women and kids across the Territory participating every week. We love our netball.

The fast-tracking of the \$10m overdue world-class indoor netball centre is welcome news in Sanderson. Why an indoor centre? After playing on a hard concrete outdoor court for the last 30-plus years, my knees can tell you every single day why we need an indoor centre. For our supporters, we need to be able to bring first-class games to the Top End so our kids have something to aspire to, which other sports already enjoy. It is an essential part of the sports development pathway, and is a place for our elite athletes to train, which is already enjoyed by all their interstate counterparts. I could rattle on for hours on the benefits of that project.

The fast-tracking of the project this year will create over 50 jobs in construction, and I have no doubt that in the longer run it will create jobs in the maintenance and sports development sectors, not to mention the economic benefit flow-on that will come from hosting world-class competitions into the future. I join my colleague, the Member for Casuarina, in looking forward to opening that wonderful facility.

The other fast-tracked project that is very exciting is the construction, this year, of a \$25m rugby league stadium at Warren Park. I hear a resounding 'amen' from the long-suffering rugby community. This infrastructure provides a long overdue home ground for rugby league to leverage for the benefit of members and their sport. It will also provide a strong economic injection for our construction sector, and it includes creating over 100 new jobs in the construction phase and flow-on benefits for our whole economy.

As we have heard across the Chamber, this year we are taking action across the Territory to ensure that Territorians, no matter where they are, have an opportunity to engage with these projects, like the two I have just outlined. Sanderson-based small, medium and large businesses have the opportunity to invest and participate at the level that suits them and their business models. These are part of an overall \$120m infrastructure program.

In Sanderson, and across the northern suburbs, the stamp duty concession on first home buyer purchases of existing homes is already having an effect. My office is actively engaging with new arrivals to our electorate. We make them feel welcome and provide information on how our office can support them as they settle into our great community. We are delighted to see that many of the houses I reported to this House last year as being on the market for a long time are finally welcoming new owners. Many had been on the market for a long period due to a combined number of factors, but none were as detrimental and devastating as the CLP's policy of effectively locking first home buyers out from the existing home market. What a short-sighted policy, encouraging urban sprawl at the expense of long-term Territorians who wish to either downsize, upgrade or move away for personal reasons.

The anger of those local residents was palpable, but our policy of introducing \$24 000 stamp duty relief gave them immediate hope, and we are now seeing these homes slowly change hands, and younger families moving in and enjoying the wonderful environment that well-established suburbs and local services have to offer. Importantly, this has had the flow-on effect of getting more kids into our established schools and not put an artificial burden on newer schools in other areas.

We have moved fast and decisively, and we are delivering on our election promises. Each of these first home buyers is now eligible for the \$10 000 tradie package—local jobs for local small to medium businesses. I just cannot understand who would not welcome more than \$1m being spent locally. I was speaking to a young business owner who told me he has already quoted a number of jobs on existing homes in this package, helping to renovate old bathrooms. This came at a time when he had been struggling to find more than a slow trickle of work.

I was speaking to a young lady on the weekend who told me her husband's business has recently quoted two fencing jobs under the public housing refurbishment stimulus package, and there is quite a number of these old public housing dwellings across Sanderson. It will be great to see some of these vital works taking place to ensure that the current ageing stock can be retained for its full length of time and keep families close to school, their networks and existing community infrastructure.

This same resident told me her husband had also been kept busy by the tradie scheme, and she congratulated the Gunner government on having the intelligence and ability to listen and make the scheme more robust by increasing the level of stimulus. Feedback like this means we are not only heading in the right direction, but we are smart enough to know, in the face of contrary evidence, we are not too proud to do what is right. That makes me proud to be part of this government—listening, responding, fulfilling the commitments we made in August to our local community one by one, starting this year.

Now is not the time to take the foot off the accelerator. We need to ensure we continue to speak to business, listen and be responsive, and continue to provide certainty and stability that allows them to invest with confidence. The economic summit process has already started to bring ideas together and get business and government speaking together to hear where we can afford to be innovative and where we need to invest to get the best bang for our buck. No doubt the final summits next month will give us much more than we have heard already.

It is a very exciting time and a great privilege to hear what Territorians have to say about their future. The challenges will come once that process has been completed, but I am confident we have the right team in place to make the most of that generously provided information and act appropriately so we get the best for Territorians. As I said before, it is a very exciting time.

After taking some time out to visit local business with our Chief Minister a couple of weeks ago, I was left with a feeling of gentle optimism. While several business owners articulated their frustrations in the economic downturn, several were buoyed by the new government initiatives and new leadership, and they had some confidence in the small changes they have already seen. While we still have a long way to go, these business owners were clear in their expectations of government, and they provided clear ideas about what our government can do to support them and the things that need to happen in order for things to change.

It was great to see that our Treasurer visited NT Shade today. That is what we do; we listen and we act. I have heard a number of times from members opposite that there is a lack of experience on this side of the Chamber, particularly in business. For the record, I will speak a little about my small business experience, how important small business is to our economy and the impact on small business owners when job opportunities decline, as they did under the CLP over the last four years.

I have previously spoken about bottom feeder businesses. My electorate is proudly full of them, those reliant on big businesses or smaller contracts—and the difficulties experienced when they say the cranes are disappearing from the skyline. In our line of business, when work is going well you can, over time, employ good, highly-skilled people. In the trade we call them keepers. They are good workers you can rely on and need desperately to hang onto because they work hard and get jobs done well and on time. You pay them well as they are worth the investment and, in turn, they make you money and so it goes on. You are loyal to them because the Territory is a small place and in small businesses you often become friends. When the work slows you find them some work; you prioritise work for them and you have to let others go. That is not easy, and when you know you are impacting a family it is all the more difficult.

When work really slows you stop paying yourself a wage. We heard business owners in that same situation during our recent tour. You can no longer afford to pay yourself, but you are happy to make the sacrifice to retain the service of the keepers. You keep hoping that things will improve. You might no longer use a bookkeeper and do that work yourself, another job gone. You may even borrow a bit, eat into your overdraft, delay payment of creditors, cut back on the non-essential personal spending—all the while hoping work will turn up.

When you can no longer find any work for a period, naturally the keepers move on, either to other companies that can offer work no matter how small, or they leave the Territory. They are then gone from the Territory's pool of qualified, highly-skilled and reliable workers, and who can blame them?

Then you lose friends. When work eventually picks up you have to start hiring again. You sort your way through new tradies, trying to find those keepers again, making mistakes and giving opportunities to people

who often let you down. Eventually you find a few. This process starts again and continues through every boom and bust cycle.

The people of Sanderson know that I understand their issues, and I carry that experience when I am helping shape our agenda for the future. Please, members opposite, stop talking about what you perceive to be our lack of experience; focus on your role of keeping us to account. We have more to offer as a strong, unified government, and Territorians know that. They made that decision in August last year and it is time to move on. We have.

It will be a slow boat to turn, but with the recent introductions this year of a more robust buy local campaign and increased local business content in government procurement rules, we are making immediate inroads.

I speak for many of my local business owners in saying, 'Bravo'. Price undercutting to get a job and then delivering a substandard product with monies flowing interstate has to be a thing of the past. Territorians now know that when they spend their money it stays here. It is not ferried off to Queensland or South Australia or goodness knows where. It goes back into our economy and flows through to support local people, local families and local communities, like Sanderson.

This government has already taken the content weighting in our buy local principles up to 30%, but this year we know there is more to come. It is music to the ears of Sanderson business owners. Again, with my small business goggles on—I must emphasise that I have worn them for many years—tender shortlisting is no longer based on price, but on local value. Value to the Territory is long overdue. The introduction of an independent industry advocate to ensure the principles are consistently applied is, again, overdue and very welcome.

It is exciting that in Darwin alone government has received over 70 applications for funding under our new \$10m immediate works grant for community and not-for-profit organisations. As you know, I have the honour to be the assistant minister for multicultural affairs. This has allowed me to meet with many grassroots community organisations over the last few months. Some of those that are lucky enough, and hard-working enough, over many years to gain a community hall are now struggling with the upkeep. These immediate work stimulus grants have given them the opportunity to apply for funding to get much-needed upgrades done.

Of course this also extends to sporting clubs and other not-for-profits. We will allow them to apply for up to \$100 000 for repairs and upgrades of facilities and existing assets. It also allows for capacity beyond this funding cap, so this government will match dollar for dollar up to \$100 000. Potentially a \$300 000 project will go ahead. This is important where groups have, over time, been fundraising to address an issue, and it allows them to get a job done ahead of time, getting money flowing at the time we most need it.

I have received feedback that this is a very welcome stimulus package. I am looking forward to watching local Sanderson businesses undertake works and contribute this year. I am also excited to see if one of my local electorate organisations is successful in gaining some funding that will enable them to grow their services, employ more people and strengthen their business. I will be watching that space with plenty of optimism.

I will also keep a close eye on the delivery of the \$300 000 in each of my four schools. I am already in discussions with each of them about how the money will be spent to benefit our students.

I am also looking forward to witnessing the full value of our early childhood approach as it starts to roll out this year. This plan will be generationally transformational.

We are a well-travelled lot in Sanderson. Many of us venture into the heart of our city on a regular basis. I could not overlook this opportunity to touch briefly on the work that will start this year to increase the vibrancy of our city centre. As a previous member of our city council, creating a vibrant CBD was front and centre in our agenda, but we always knew we could not do it alone. It requires a partnership with the Northern Territory Government.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mrs WORDEN: It is great to see this government take on this shared challenge. Unlike the previous Planning minister, who dismissed the well-consulted on Darwin city master plan because it might have upset some of his mates, we have a plan to achieve this over the next 10 years, starting this year.

Our city needs to be a vibrant place that provides a bubbling hub for government workers as well as a welcome space for Territorians and visitors to visit, have fun and shop. When our city thrives then so do all our local businesses. We have much to leverage: our unique tropical natural landscape and a rich cultural and military history.

We also have a city that has been rated as potentially very walkable—nice and flat—but clearly needs a hand to connect people to places through the creation of a more inviting environment, cooler walking spaces and the creation of interesting and unique places that are inviting and scream out to be visited, like the new museum that our Chief Minister spoke about earlier.

As the work unfolds, more and more people from Sanderson will make the trip into town and enjoy their own city. Let us not forget that it is not just for tourists; it is for our local communities to visit, access services and spend their money. I cannot wait to see the plan when it is launched in November this year. My colleague, the Member for Port Darwin, is doing some great work in that space.

While my heart is in Sanderson I also wish to note a program that is happening in the Territory this year which I believe is a game changer: our Room to Breathe program. I have spent a lot of time living in and travelling remote areas of the Territory. I also spent the last five years of my previous working career in the Department of Housing, so I have a broad appreciation of the challenges in this area.

This government's commitment to spending a record \$1.1bn over 10 years to house more people in more rooms is a vast and ambitious agenda, but with \$10m of this fast-tracked this year it is very achievable. It is an exciting time for our bush constituents.

There is simply not enough time to speak about all the elements of our agenda for 2017 that will affect my electorate of Sanderson, but I note that the following things are under way and I am receiving positive feedback about them: the legislation to establish an anti-corruption commission, which affects us all, with much work being done now; the select committee considering options to open parliament to the people is very exciting work; the establishment of an inquiry into political donations; we are already publishing our travel costs—I have done one of those myself; online declarations of members' interests; the commencement of a discussion about what a treaty would look like; our environmental reforms; recruitment of the 120 police officers the CLP failed to deliver on our front line, and 18 experienced officers focusing on youth crime; the return of the BDR in September this year as part of a comprehensive reform package to reduce the impact of alcohol in our community, including the devastating impact of domestic violence against Territory women; putting in place a cap on takeaway liquor licences is another big tick for our government; and \$18.2m annually on youth justice, including 52 youth diversion workers and giving our victims a voice, because our kids and victims of crime deserve better.

There is much more and it is a very ambitious agenda, but at a time when business and community confidence has taken a tumble, it needs to see its government take leadership, reset the agenda and provide a clear vision. The Gunner Labor government is doing that work this year and will continue to do so.

I commend the statement to the House.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, today the Chief Minister, who has survived almost six months and a trip to Japan without a coup attempt, outlined this government's economic and social agenda for 2017. It begins with jobs, specifically creating jobs.

As members of the Labor movement, we on this side recognise that there is nothing more important than having a job. On a macro level, there is no more potent agent to change the economy for our communities and individuals. Jobs provide a future for the Territory, and stability and growth.

In relative terms we have a small economy, so we simply must plan for jobs growth if we are to have any hope of realising the bright future we all want for the Territory. We understand the fundamental importance of having a job. Each of us has spent our lives concerned with protecting the jobs of Australian workers.

As the Chief Minister said, only by creating jobs will we grow our population to support the diverse economy we need to even out the cycles of boom and bust. The former government categorically failed

Territorians by missing the opportunity to provide a way forward post INPEX. Our jobs agenda is short, medium and long term. It is a strategy grounded in common sense and community engagement.

As the chair of government's small business round tables, I have conducted a number of meetings and met with numerous businesspeople from Darwin and Palmerston. These meetings will continue on a regular basis, and in the next few weeks I will be meeting businesspeople in Alice Springs and other places. These meetings provide a vital opportunity for businesspeople to raise issues of immediate concern, as well as issues in the longer term. It is a good opportunity for the government and me to have direct communication with the businesspeople of the Territory. This is consultation. This is listening. This is what we said we would do.

I have found in the course of these meetings that the general sense, or desire, of business is to work with the government to achieve positive outcomes. This is very refreshing. The issue of the tradies voucher scheme was raised by a number of people. I am proud to say, noting the Chief Minister's announcement, the government has listened and acted. There is undoubtedly a cost associated with re-introduction of the scheme; however, it is clearly a cost we have to meet at this point in time. As we have heard from businesses, now is not the time for putting the brakes on the economy. Now is the time we, as a government, need to do what we can to stimulate the economy.

As the Chief Minister said, we are facing challenging headwinds. Our economy is slowing because of the transition of the INPEX project from the labour-intensive construction phase to the production phase. The new and improved tradie scheme is a much-needed stimulus for our economy at this time. The tradie scheme is not the only government tool in the shed. The government has shown it will act decisively and in a timely manner where it means keeping Territorians in work here.

I am happy to remind members of the result of this government's actions. More than 250 Territory families have their first homes because we introduced the \$24 000 stamp duty relief. More than \$1m has been spent with tradies because of our \$10 000 renovation vouchers. The construction industry will have more work because we have fast-tracked \$120m to infrastructure programs. More people will sleep in better conditions and more kids will wake up fresh for school because we have fast-tracked \$10m for what will be a record \$1.1bn investment in remote housing. More tradies, smaller contractors and steel manufacturers will have more work because we are investing \$22m on steelworks, public housing upgrades and in community organisation grants for repairs and infrastructure.

The smartest way to drive local small and medium businesses is to open up more of the Northern Territory Government's expenditure on goods and services. Before coming into government we said we would strengthen the Buy Local plan. One of the first actions of the new government was to beef up the buy local principles so that 30% of local content weighting applied across all government procurements, rather than the previous 25%.

Weighting is one thing, but in my meetings with business I have been consistently informed that, regardless of weighting, only two or three lower-priced tenders were being considered. The result was that tenders continued to be awarded to the lowest price only without any real consideration of the local content.

While it might look good on the books, taking the lowest tender is often not the best idea, and with NT government procurement it is a bad idea. While the relevant department may save some money, it fails to provide for the community more generally.

Blind Freddie could tell you that a more expensive tender that provides for the work being carried out by locals is far more beneficial to the community than saving a bit of money—only to have the works, and therefore the economic benefit, undertaken by non-locals. This cannot mean we simply take the lowest tender, regardless of price.

This year, as the Chief Minister has stated, we are going further. To strengthen the Buy Local campaign, the Chief Minister has announced a number of initiatives. Most important among these is replacing the 'value for money' definition in the government procurement guidelines with 'value for Territory'.

As I alluded to earlier, we need to look beyond the cheapest tender. Saving a buck is not the best strategy for the Northern Territory. It is far more important to get the work into the hands of businesses that will use it to create and sustain jobs and drive our economy.

With this government Territorians can be assured they will always come first. There is no longer a basket of crocs in the Cabinet. This is not a government full of egotistical narcissists. This is a government of

members who are committed to good government and who work well together. As a group we will achieve for Territorians.

We have consulted widely with businesses, and businesses have told us the Home Improvement Scheme worked. That is why we brought it back and made it bigger and better. As the Chief Minister announced, under our \$15m program, additional to the \$11m already spent on the existing scheme, Territorians who have already received a \$2000 voucher can access it again. Territorians who have not previously accessed the \$2000 voucher can now access a one-off \$4000 voucher. Subcontracting will now be encouraged under the scheme, which is important because it means tradies can get work from other tradies.

These initiatives have been introduced to see the Territory's economy through the current difficult period, and towards the future investment of Defence industries, an investment as great as any past or present major project. As the Chief Minister noted, Defence infrastructure investment in the north is expected to top \$8bn over the next decade and \$20bn over the next 20 years. The Chief Minister travelled to Canberra earlier this week, meeting with the Prime Minister and other relevant federal ministers to discuss securing Defence projects for the Territory.

In June a number of public forums will be held in Darwin and Katherine to let local Territorian businesses know how to prepare for projects, and to hear what Territorians need from us. That is consulting.

Many of the businesses I have spoken to have been stung by the INPEX experience. They tooled up and obtained expensive, specific qualifications only to receive no work whatsoever. We cannot stand by and see this happen to our already vulnerable businesses yet again. We will work closely with businesses to ensure they are aware of what they need to do to best capitalise on the opportunities available.

It was heartening to hear the Chief Minister indicate reinvestment in our living centres. This government will be about creating practical, safe, welcoming, vibrant and well-serviced places to live, work, play and visit. My friend, the Member for Port Darwin and assistant minister for a vibrant CBD, is doing a fantastic job promoting this agenda. There is no doubt any investment in reinvigorating the CBD will create local jobs. I was thrilled to hear the Chief Minister say the Chan Building and the bus terminal should be moved. Ever since I moved to Darwin I have looked at the Chan Building and scratched my head. What an eye sore; what a blot.

This part of the Territory has some striking complementary and contrasting architecture, such as this House, the Supreme Court building and the ruins of the Palmerston Town Hall, and then you have the Chan Building—squat, ugly and blocking the view of the other buildings worth looking at.

Mr McConnell: Best of the 1960s.

Mr COLLINS: Yes, the best of the 1960s. I am from the 1960s and I am a little worried about that. It is not the best architecture. I understand the Chan Building has some historical connection to this place, and maybe more than a little technological connection, but I still say get rid of it and do it quickly.

The Chief Minister's vision for an open and treed green space with paths, water features, statues and stories of our past would result in a stunning State Square area that would be a source of city pride and credit to Darwin and the Territory. There is no doubt this would go a long way towards affirming a sense of place, history and significance, befitting Darwin as Australia's capital of the north. The local constituents and business people I have spoken to share a general excitement for the plans of this government and the vision for 2017, as provided by the Chief Minister.

As the assistant minister for primary industry and resources, I am looking forward to being part of the development of Tennant Creek as a mining service centre and the hub of the booming pastoral industry of the Barkly. Mining and pastoral industries have been Tennant Creek's heritage and we intend to make sure they are their future as well—a long future at that. Like the Chief Minister, I am excited about the real and on-the-ground work that is about to begin. We cannot underestimate the importance of the resources industry to our short- and long-term prosperity and jobs, particularly for remote Australians. To make Tennant Creek more appealing to families the government will invest \$5m this year in upgrading sporting facilities, and a further \$6m in early childhood education facilities.

I recently had the pleasure of travelling to Katherine with the local member—my neighbour in the Chamber—and the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. As wet as it was at the time I was struck with the palpable excitement in the region. As the Chief Minister has announced, we will invest in Katherine to help it realise its potential as an inland port and agribusiness centre of national importance. We will build

a logistics hub and a business park. Work is under way to identify the most appropriate site and investment partner. We are also investing in environmentally sound water capture methods and commissioning water mapping studies of the region. I am thoroughly looking forward to the opportunity to work with both the Member for Katherine and the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources in coordinating the government's investment in Katherine.

Investing in our kids was one of the core commitments we, as a group, gave to Territorians in the lead-up to the 2016 election. As the Chief Minister has noted, the equation is straight forward. Execution may not always be easy and the path is not politically expedient, but if we are to make the community safer we must invest in kids now. To reduce the burden on already overburdened health, justice and welfare systems tomorrow we must invest in our kids now. The average age of young offenders continues to fall and the arrest rates continue to rise. We must respond and we must do things differently. I am proud to say this government is leading a radical shift to early, long-term investment, putting our money, resources and skills to work, treating the symptoms and the cause.

In my maiden speech I spoke about being tough on crime. 'Tough on crime' is a political statement, or a tool. It is rhetoric and does nothing more than sell advertising space. It is not about being tough on crime but being smart on crime. It is not a matter of not punishing those who commit crimes. It seems the only response some media have to any criminal activity is to suggest that criminal sanctions need to be increased. That type of response is analogous to putting a band aid on a cancer; you cover up the problem in the short term, but the fundamental problem is still festering. The band aid will never cure the underlying problem. I am proud that this government has taken the first steps in addressing this problem.

Mr McConnell: When I was five band aids cured everything.

Mr COLLINS: Some people still think that is the case, Member for Stuart. As I said, I am proud this government has taken the first steps in addressing this problem and, make no mistake, they are only the first steps. I know that when I leave at some point in the future I will be able to look back and proudly say I was part of the team that began the process of dealing with this fundamental problem.

The Chief Minister has reiterated that our children need to be ready for school on day one, term one, year one. That process begins before birth. This policy pairs the Nurse-Family Partnerships, which pair expecting mothers with professionals with open ears to help and advise through the first years of parenthood, with the Families as First Teachers program.

On Monday this week I was fortunate enough to visit Ludmilla Primary School, one of the two schools in my electorate. Carol Putica, the principal, and Anthony Brereton, the assistant principal, treated me to a tour, which included their Families as First Teachers classroom. It has been set up to provide support and assistance to the families from the neighbouring Bagot community. I cannot sufficiently express my admiration for Ms Putica and Mr Brereton, and all the other staff at Ludmilla Primary School, for the work they have done to get the Families as First Teachers facilities up and running as early as they have, and their collective commitment to their students. Fantastic work—each and every one of you.

As the Chief Minister noted, the evidence is overwhelming that the first 1000 days of a child's life are critical for later health and wellbeing. We must continue support throughout early childhood to ensure families do not ever slip through the cracks. The Families as First Teachers program works with community members to identify what support services in their towns would help their kids grow stronger, happier and healthier. This program works and we will expand it. I am looking forward to the reports from Ludmilla; I will be getting constant updates from them.

All Northern Territory children have the right to a quality education. Our government is investing in schools and, from this year, an additional \$20m each year will go where it is needed most. We will invest an extra \$8m a year to tackle challenging behaviours and support children with disabilities, which means more specialist services, timely allied health services, and early intervention and engagement programs.

The Chief Minister raised the issue of trust, which was another issue we went to the election with.

Mr McCARTHY: A point of order, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, acknowledging hard-working government members on their feet, contributing to debate, I request an extension of time for the member.

Motion agreed to.

Mr COLLINS: I thank the Member for Barkly.

I am very proud to be part of a government that has introduced legislation to establish an independent commission against corruption in the Northern Territory; it is long overdue.

I am very fortunate to be the Chair of the Select Committee on Opening Parliament to the People. We will report to parliament within the time frame provided by the original motion. I am glad to inform you all that you will have our report very shortly, and I am very excited about the recommendations included in that report.

In closing, we will continue to work as a government in the best interests of Territorians and in a manner that we see fit. We will not have our agenda dictated by the remnants of the former, failed government.

I commend the Chief Minister's statement to the House.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I proudly stand in this Chamber this evening to throw my support behind the Chief Minister and his plan to push through the challenges we face in order to deliver for Territorians.

Last week the Chief Minister outlined his plan to business owners and community stakeholders. The plan clearly articulated that 2017 is a year for delivery, as well as our approaches to tackle the major hurdles we face to boost our economy through investment and major projects. It also outlined that we will resource and support service providers and government agencies to support our children, families and communities.

Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, a few weeks ago I joined you, the Chief Minister and my colleagues on a bus tour of local businesses that was organised by the Chamber of Commerce. It was a great and productive initiative that allowed us to engage directly with local business owners and hear about the challenges they are facing and the feats they have achieved. Most business owners stated that 2016 was an extremely difficult year. They said sales were down, fewer shoppers frequented their stores and they were being impacted by crime.

In true Territorian style these business owners took the opportunity to share their ideas on how we can turn things around. I was extremely grateful for their glass half full approach. Some of these ideas included revitalising the Darwin CBD and improving access to and the promotion of shops to locals and visitors. This is something we have taken on board. A business owner also told us that they believe the Home Improvement Scheme, introduced by the previous government, was a good initiative, and he highlighted that there were potential flow-on effects of spending in his business because of this initiative.

I am pleased to reiterate that our government listened and acted; we not only re-instated the Home Improvement Scheme, but improved it with a further investment of \$15m. I have a number of small business owners living in my electorate of Karama who will benefit from the Home Improvement Scheme and our Buy Local policy. Small business owners have shared their story with me about how hard it has been to obtain work in the construction and steel industry, and concerns that contracts are being awarded to bigger interstate companies.

Two of our biggest challenges at the moment as Territorians are our high cost of living and our slowing economy. We note that these challenges impact on Territory businesses, and significant investments need to be made to support them. We also understand that there is a need to place a greater emphasis on buying local and supporting local products and services wherever possible, which is why I am pleased to see the 'value for money' definition in government procurement procedures will now be replaced with 'value for Territory'.

By placing the focus on value for Territory we are able to consider the flow-on effects of keeping money in the Territory. We are able to put a higher value on local services, businesses and products. Another scheme I am excited about is our first home owner discount, which provides up to \$24 000 in stamp duty relief for first home buyers, as well as \$10 000 renovation vouchers. It is a fantastic opportunity for first home buyers to be provided with this added layer of support which will allow them to use up to \$2000 of the \$10 000 grant to purchase household goods from local retailers.

The first home owner discount is an important scheme that provides more Territorians with the opportunity to enter the market and purchase their own slice of paradise in the Territory—a place to call home today, to build a future for tomorrow and to be proud of forever. It is a great initiative to keep people in the Territory.

This scheme has helped change the lives of many Territorians. More than 250 families from all over the Territory have accessed this discount and purchased their first homes.

Local tradies have benefited through our renovation vouchers, with more than a \$1m having already been spent. We have listened to Territorians and invested heavily to ensure that our economy, our people and our communities are supported. Another example of our commitment to the needs of Territorians is our huge investment of \$1.1bn in remote housing, with \$10m of this being fast-tracked. Territory families living in remote areas will benefit from this unprecedented investment to ensure their homes are built and refurbished to suit their needs. Indigenous Territorians have continually raised the need for homes to allow for larger families to reside together, and to include adequate living areas and food preparation areas. We are also investing \$5m in upgrades to public housing property stock. I am excited for properties in my electorate to be upgraded and occupied by Territorians.

Meeting the housing needs of Territorians is a key focus of our government. We know that by having a stable environment we provide Territorians with an opportunity to improve their safety. Housing is such a key investment that can have a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Territorians. I witnessed these positive impacts firsthand as the local Member for Karama. I am sure this same positive impact will be experienced by many other Territorians.

Crime is a big issue for my electorate of Karama. I hear the stories of local crime and the pleas of desperation from community members and business owners. I, too, am frustrated that the feeling of community safety is no longer there for many residents. Community members and business owners in Malak and Karama have asked for action and leadership, and that is what this government is delivering.

We recently announced a great investment of more than \$18m annually for youth justice as we recognise that the current system is broken. This investment allows for 52 new youth diversion workers, funding of diversionary programs, supporting the enforcement of bail conditions and expanding youth justice and victims conferencing.

Yesterday the Chief Minister announced that he will seek to pass urgent legislation next month to expand the use of electronic monitoring bracelets to stop offenders committing crime while on bail. It is pleasing to see that the opposition is supportive of this measure. NT Police have told us that this expansion of electronic monitoring will allow them to intervene early with youths in danger of reoffending. As a good government we have listened and we have acted. We understand the importance of having measures that directly address the issue of law and order and that we need to get the balance right between being reactive, intervening and being proactive.

Our police officers are doing an amazing job to serve and protect us all. I am pleased to receive this positive feedback on a regular basis from my constituents.

The Michael Gunner Labor government is also tackling law and order issues through our commitment to increase frontline police numbers, deliver a rolling program to install more CCTV cameras and bring back the Banned Drinker Register to support problem drinkers.

Rather than continue with the 'tough on crime' stance that did not work for our young people, we are investing in our children so that they can be given the best start in life to overcome intergenerational issues that may be impacting upon them, allowing them to learn from their mistakes and be afforded the opportunity to change their behaviour and, hopefully, become productive members of our community.

I am excited to be a part of the Michael Gunner Labor government, which has a clear vision and focus on delivering meaningful and sustainable outcomes for all Territorians. We have listened to Territorians, continue to work hard for Territorians and look forward to delivering on our commitments in the year ahead.

Mr McCONNELL (Stuart): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the Chief Minister's vision for the year ahead. I acknowledge that there is much work to do in 2017 and most of it needs to be done to make sure the Northern Territory economy grows and develops in a sustainable way.

The elephant in the room is our remote economy. How will we achieve full participation of Indigenous land and labour in the economy? I note that Charles Darwin University published something recently, saying we are one of the most inequitable jurisdictions in the world. We have heard tonight about issues that exist in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs, but the situation out bush is even more extreme. It was extreme during the period of the last government; it was extreme in the period of the government before that.

Indigenous participation in the workforce is going down, not up. We have some serious work to do. I am convinced this government will do the work. This government is visionary and, although the bar has been set very low for us by the previous government, this government will achieve some great outcomes. To do this as a government we must continue to create a better relationship with the Indigenous communities out bush and the Indigenous people we represent. We must be willing to listen and act. As Ms Dorianne Raymond said earlier in the week in her welcome to country speech, above all, do no more damage.

That cuts to the heart of the matter. Damage has been done to individuals, communities and the fabric of our society by government policies. We cannot expect what happens out bush to stay out bush anymore. It affects the Northern Territory as a whole. We must ensure we prioritise investment in our remote communities and remote electorates. We must ensure the laws and policy we enact in this place do not continue to subordinate Indigenous people.

Our Indigenous communities are ripe and ready for change. Community members aspire to new businesses, jobs, better education and housing. They are ready partners with the agents of change.

I thank Ms Raymond for the applicable statements she made earlier in the week. Some of them are well worth repeating. A vibrant, strengthened and diversified economy that revitalises regions, rewards home-grown innovation and entrepreneurship, and enables all Territorians to have a reasonable cost of living—that is another thing; people out bush do not have a reasonable cost of living.

Food security in the Northern Territory is important. Agribusiness is vital to strengthening our economy and reducing the cost of living—enough housing so that homelessness and housing stress heads into history. Shorter waiting times for elective surgery, and enabling women in the Northern Territory to make their own decisions on reproductive health—a justice system that is not completely dominated by Indigenous incarceration.

Sadly, the most recent Closing the Gap report and statement acknowledged that current programs are not meeting targets for change. While there are numerous amazing individuals and organisations promoting change in remote communities, there is still much to improve.

I commend our government's \$1.1bn commitment to remote housing. During the last four years, few houses were built in the electorate of Stuart, so many are eager to see new builds get under way.

I am glad this government and Minister McCarthy are willing to support and research trial of new delivery methodologies for remote Indigenous housing. Community housing can drive economic and social benefits in remote communities. We must revolutionise the way housing is delivered.

As the Chief Minister said, local decision-making and giving power back to Indigenous communities will be fundamental to the success of any future programs. I look forward to our relationships with communities developing as equal partners in a shared future.

The Room to Breathe program is another initiative in housing, and consultations are already happening this week in the electorate of Stuart and many other electorates. I am glad that Areyonga, Kintore, Lajamanu and Hermannsburg, also known as Ntaria, are on the list of early works.

I recently visited Areyonga; housing is at the forefront of community issues there. Areyonga is a beautiful location. It is in a valley and is an amazing place, but it gets very hot in the summertime and the houses the community members live in are not air conditioned. Public housing dwellings in urban towns are air conditioned, yet in this vibrant town with a lot of future planning, the houses are not air conditioned. These are the types of inequities that exist.

Investment in remote housing to reduce overcrowding has many flow-on benefits to our communities: improvements in health and education outcomes, stability for children and young people, increasing personal safety and the opportunity to learn new skills and take on new jobs. I commend the government for prioritising this investment.

I agree with the Chief Minister's statement that jobs are a potent agent for change for individuals and communities in the electorate of Stuart and across the Territory. We have a relatively untapped resource of Indigenous land and labour. The future of the Territory will be determined on how we achieve full participation of these resources in our economy.

I often say to people as I am driving around in the electorate of Stuart—I like driving around, as you mob might have noticed. The pastoral properties that are on leasehold land being operated by non-Indigenous families in my electorate are doing really well and are making four or five times as much income as they have for a generation. Places I have not seen in production since the end of the tuberculosis eradication scheme are in production now. All the places that were laying fallow for a while are back in production, but then I drive onto Indigenous-held land and the pastoral valleys are not being exploited at all.

How will we work collaboratively and cooperatively with Indigenous land owners? Not by trying to subjugate them or trying to downplay their interests, but by working with them. When will we do that? That is really important; it is what we need to do. To get the economy and jobs moving forward in the Northern Territory we need to make sure we are working collaboratively and cooperatively with Indigenous interests, both land and labour.

It is important that our government participates with industry, land councils, regional councils and communities to develop the remote Indigenous environment. We cannot have remote business and industry cut off from the rest of the world because of a lack of communication or transport infrastructure, so strategic investments, roads and mobile coverage are essential to ensure we do not lose business, particularly across borders to Western Australia and Queensland.

There is a situation with the Tanami Road, which goes through my electorate. That road is currently not open to all traffic, and that is affecting commerce. If we really do want to have development in the Northern Territory we need to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the Commonwealth, which has money *pulka*, which means lots of money, to get the infrastructure developed in the Territory.

I am glad to be part of the Gunner government, which is committed to policies which will create sustainable and inclusive job growth in the Northern Territory over the next four years. It is not a new one-hit wonder; we really need to protect all the industries in the Territory. We need to protect horticulture, pastoralism and other primary industries, tourism and the clean environment we live in. I am always ready to see natural resources utilised and harvested for the betterment of the quality of life for the people who live here, but that has to be done responsibly, sustainably and through consultation with the community. I sincerely believe that is what this government is doing.

I support the continued investment in job creation for Indigenous people with homeland services providers and regional councils, which have developed a good base of local Indigenous employees. I look forward to the next steps toward them growing their own and achieving local workforce development at the next level. I endorse the government policy of supporting local Indigenous government employees to access government housing and I can already identify where these improved conditions will help with some of our great bush heroes, like Anne Pollock from Pigeon Hole School, in my electorate.

Anne's hard work and dedication saw her graduate with her Bachelor of Education in 2002. Anne Pollock is an Indigenous woman from this region. Anne returned to Pigeon Hole with the dream of becoming the school's teaching principal. She could not have the job there because there was only one teacher house at Pigeon Hole and the department wanted to recruit only teaching couples because of the logistic issues around teacher accommodation. I am sure the Member for Barkly and the Minister for Education have a lot of experience in this area and have heard these stories before. Thanks to Anne's resilience and determination to better the Pigeon Hole community she is now the school's teaching principal.

Anne wanted the position so badly that she agreed to find her own accommodation so she could be considered. This does not and should not be something that a local has to do to better their community. In 2017 the Gunner government will bring in changes to better the lives of people like Anne, working in the bush, through our investment of \$1.1bn into remote Indigenous housing. This includes more housing for locally-recruited staff.

I am excited about the future of the Territory. I am excited that we have a stable and strong team, led by Michael Gunner. We have an exciting year ahead of us. It will be a difficult one. Others before me spoke about wanting to see change while they are in this place.

The thing I aspire to is being part of a strong team that can make some good changes. The thing that I am interested in is dealing with those issues of inequity, and identifying that although we all have different values we only have one shared future.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I stand in support of the government's economic and social agenda for 2017.

The speech on the year ahead, 2017, was proudly delivered by our Chief Minister at the annual business and social lunch on 9 February 2017. It is clear that the year ahead brings together a number of key issues that Territorians voted on in August 2016, and it includes creating jobs, investing in children, empowering the bush and building safer, fairer and stronger Northern Territory communities.

Yesterday I spoke at length about the benefits of the infrastructure developments and announcements from our Treasurer, which will support more work for local businesses and jobs for Palmerston and all Territorians. The Brennan electorate is very pleased with the Buy Local plan, investing in jobs and supporting strategies that ensure local businesses and local people come first.

A few things that will be happening in Palmerston and creating jobs include the new Palmerston police station and police resources, the Palmerston hospital, Palmerston road works, Palmerston victim conferencing and youth services, upgrades to our local community facilities, Palmerston schools infrastructure and staff, plus a re-engagement centre for children. These projects alone will support local business and provide many more employment opportunities for local people.

Investing in our children is a central policy of our government. From day one our government has put Territory children at the centre of this government. Every time we meet we ask ourselves, 'How will we benefit our children of the future?' This question is central to the outcome we are looking for. Some of these strategies are long-term, but they are smart policies. No matter what government is in place in the future, very firm and strong foundations will be set in place for all children in the Northern Territory.

I am a strong believer in evidence-based approaches, although they are sometimes long-term approaches that are required to change behaviours, social culture and infrastructure. Long-term approaches are not headlines on newspapers, quick fixes or approaches that will wait until the ambulance falls over the cliff before we act. They are about investing in solid evidence-based solutions to issues that look at what we can do before the issue becomes a problem. These approaches are well known as prevention and early intervention strategies, something that has not been supported in the Territory for the past four years.

Investing in our children is a good example. As the Ministers for Education and Health often state, if we get children in schools with good support and wraparound services on day one, term one, then in the long run they will have a far better chance in life and will be far better prepared for the challenges they will face in a new and ever-changing world. They will also be more likely to be positive contributors to our community.

We need to start now, and this government has started. The short-term approaches are also important, and we acknowledge that, but it must be a balance of approaches as no one person is the same as another. Our services and approaches must also be diversified enough to ensure we are catching those who fall through the gaps.

Reinvesting in teachers, support staff and school facilities is a smart approach and this government has set the platform for this to happen.

In public health they discuss this as an upstream, downstream approach. If the 'upstream'—government—can set the policy platform then the 'downstream' services can provide long-term, evidence-based approaches that then flow on to our people and our children. This is the approach we have taken and I applaud the Chief Minister for investing in this approach.

Investing in the bush is well under way. This week we have heard from our members from the bush, who have informed this House that buildings, repairs and more developments are happening as we speak. They have acknowledged the hard work being done by Minister McCarthy and his team. I lived in Alice Springs for over 10 years and have worked in most remote communities across the Territory.

I am very pleased to support investing in the bush as this is focusing on the Territory as a whole. We are all together in this and every person counts. Making the bush a place where people want to stay, live and feel safe is a fundamental need of any person, wherever they live, and the bush is no different.

I am extremely pleased to know that Alice Springs is receiving an iconic Indigenous art gallery that will be the centre of an Alice Springs revitalisation plan. When I lived in Alice Springs it was a hub of activity. It had so many businesses and services, and so much tourism and sport. It was at its highest peak. People flew in from all around the world to Alice Springs direct. They enjoyed the local hospitality and then spent time to see the local sites. Then they would drive to Ayers Rock or Kings Canyon, return to Alice and spend more time there again, and move on with their holiday. Making Alice Springs a gem in the desert will bring back that tourism, and regrow local businesses and jobs. For local, rural and remote Territorians it is sensible

and it is smart. I look forward to the completion of the Indigenous arts centre—one of its kind—being built in Central Australia and to see Alice Springs prosper and grow once again.

I must not forget to mention Tennant Creek and Katherine, as my hard-working colleagues from these areas have advocated very well for their local people to gain their own future developments in the 2017 year ahead. Well done, and your local people and services should be very proud of you. I am sure over the next four years there will be more good stories from the Central Australian team.

The Darwin CBD announcements are also welcomed. It is true, Clare Martin was a visionary. The Waterfront is a testament to that when many others in opposition knocked it. Today there is proof that it has worked. Most Territorians visit and enjoy the Waterfront's facilities and recreational activities. When people talk about Darwin, the Waterfront is usually the first thing they speak of and tell others to visit. Many families that live in Darwin and Palmerston even holiday at the Waterfront every Christmas. It is now considered one of the NT's best attractions. The Chief Minister has announced the next stage to this venture is to attract tourists and locals in the NT to the CBD. This is smart and sensible policy. Opening up the CBD area and establishing pathways through it will benefit our local retail businesses and increase tourist interest. It is simply about getting people back to the CBD.

By working together with Territorians we can create a far better Territory. Territorians are our best advisers. They inform policy that is developed for our Territory families and children. We are a government that consults, listens and works very hard to improve the great Territory we all call home. There is much more to do, as we have only just begun the transition into government after the now-famous election, working through Christmas, and now at the beginning of 2017.

I will continue to be a strong advocate in 2017 for my electorate and ensure our election commitments for Brennan are implemented and on track. The Member for Drysdale and I thank the Chief Minister for his commitment to Palmerston and the new Palmerston team. We look forward to the future of Palmerston.

Mr COSTA (Arafura): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk on the Chief Minister's very important statement on the year ahead, and I will highlight the significant and positive outcomes this will have for the people in my electorate of Arafura.

Access to proper housing remains one of the most crucial elements of a functional society, because we cannot expect people to hold down a job or get to school on a regular basis if they do not have proper housing facilities. In my electorate of Arafura this is one of the most consistent issues raised with me when I speak with people. But, well before I was elected or even a candidate, I was well aware of the challenges we face. This has been a challenge from government to government, regardless of which party has been in power. That is why I am very proud to be part of a government whose vision includes a record investment in remote housing. We are a government that will do our fair share.

As the assistant minister for homelands I will continue to work with our strong team to deliver for all Territorians. Our commitment of \$1.1m over 10 years represents the biggest investment by any previous government of any kind. This government recognises that we will not overcome the health, education and employment challenges we face unless we tackle the issue of overcrowding in the bush.

I am particularly excited about the Room to Breathe program. This initiative will see government working closely with communities to build granny flats and expand verandas and outdoor sleeping spaces, and to provide healthy outdoor eating and living areas. This will result in more free space inside the house and tackle the systemic problem of overcrowding.

This government brought forward \$15m of the \$1.1bn remote housing program for this financial year, a move I fully support because it represents a team that is committed to the bush, and we are already seeing benefits in my electorate of Arafura.

A total of \$10m will be used to build additional bedrooms and living spaces in existing houses through the Room to Breathe program to ease overcrowding in existing houses. The remaining \$5m is being spent on more public housing repairs and maintenance.

Repairs and maintenance is just as important as creating new living spaces, and I was pleased to see this area receiving a boost across the Territory, with additional works scheduled across the Territory, including in my electorate of Arafura. It is important to note, this government is committed to jobs, education and housing, and these three aspects cannot exist without the other. We are a government of action and

consultation. We have consulted with key land regional councils, Indigenous business and local businesses throughout the Territory.

The \$1.1bn investment represents a government willing to do its fair share and, as a result, I believe this gives us a much stronger case to make the Commonwealth come to the table to provide support in order to improve the lives of Territorians in the bush.

As the assistant minister for remote health I know how crucial it is to improve access to health in remote and regional areas, and this government is already getting the job done through the stimulus package announced by this government which includes a targeted \$2m for remote health centre minor new works. This work will create local jobs and improve the quality of life for remote Territorians by improving access to health services. As I have said, we are already getting this very important job done.

The \$2m in targeted programs will deliver over 30 projects across the Territory, including the electorates of Stuart, Barkly, Nhulunbuy, Arafura, Arnhem and Namatjira. This will see work done in some 20 health services. I applaud the Minister for Health on her strong support and vision for the delivery of remote health and I look forward to working with the minister in my role as assistant minister for remote health delivery.

This government is also committed to strengthening the cultural links for the management and protection of our national assets through our support of Indigenous ranger groups. Indigenous ranger groups play a crucial front line in conservation and natural resource management through their skills and knowledge. I personally know many people who are rangers and they are pillars of our community.

Locals, especially the young ones, look up to our rangers. We recognise that rangers do such an important job, often in very tough conditions. That is why this government is providing funding to help the groups buy essential items, such as vehicles, boats and communication equipment, and setting up a fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land and sea country.

Improving the support from government to our amazing rangers is about preserving and protecting the environment and supporting jobs on country. We have also established an Indigenous carbon unit so communities can participate in the emerging carbon economy. This has been welcomed by ranger groups and this government will be consulting on the roll-out of these initiatives in the very near future.

As the local Member for Arafura I can say to the people of my electorate that this government is focused on jobs, kids, trust and the bush, and we are delivering on those key agenda items. Action speaks louder than words, especially in the bush, and I am confident the pace we have set and the level of commitment we are displaying is a refreshing change for remote and regional Territorians.

Debate adjourned.

PAPER TABLED
Travel Report – Member for Goyder

Madam ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table a travel report from the Member for Goyder, dated 14 February 2017.

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

Continued from 24 November 2016.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, the Auditor-General's November 2016 report is, as always, comprehensive, professional and independent. We have an excellent Auditor-General, following in the footsteps of a series of excellent Auditors-General.

These are hallmarks of her approach and I congratulate her and her staff on the preparation of the audit report. The office of Auditor-General is a vital institution of our NT democracy and a key component of the government's institutional arrangements to enhance the framework of accountability and reporting on administration of public finances.

It is government's expectation that agencies will carefully consider the findings of Auditor-General reports, and implement relevant recommendations. I am confident the community shares this expectation. I will comment on the recommendations relevant to the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation.

The Auditor-General has made substantial findings and recommendations relating to the Northern Gas Pipeline. The primary objective of the Northern Gas Pipeline audit is to provide an overview of the project and assess the performance management systems in place leading up to the announcement that Jemena Northern Gas Pipeline Pty Ltd had been contracted to construct and operate the Northern Gas Pipeline.

The Auditor-General's report makes a number of positive findings about the management systems in place in the run-up to the contract announcement. The department was commended for the quality of the contracts administration manual developed for the Northern Gas Pipeline project. The use of the data room was a successful tool that provided a secure and efficient method of providing information to the project team and shortlisted proponents. The probity adviser concluded that the process had been undertaken with due regard to probity.

In addition to these findings, the Auditor-General's report makes a number of sound recommendations for enhanced management and reporting of major projects. These are:

- that the department develop and implement a framework for public procurement of services required to support procurement or initiation of major projects, which the agency has agreed to progress
- that the department develop and implement a framework for managing cost overruns and considers risks relating to open competitive tenders where the private sector is asked to design its own solutions and innovations during the tender process. The Department of Trade, Business and Innovation has agreed this recommendation will be managed from project to project
- that the department consider establishing a streamlined reporting framework to monitor actual spending on projects like the Northern Gas Pipeline; this recommendation has been implemented.

I thank my department for being responsive, and I thank the Auditor-General for her report and commend it to honourable members.

Mr McCARTHY (Housing and Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to respond to the Auditor-General's Report to the Legislative Assembly as it relates to the former Department of Housing, the former Department of Local Government and Community Services, and NT home ownership.

The report outlines the results of the end-of-year review for both former departments and NT home ownership. An additional audit was also undertaken to look at the performance management systems of the contract management of housing stock.

In September 2016 the current department was provided with the findings and associated recommendations of the audit. The scope of the audit included urban and regional locations, and focused on contracts relating to repairs and maintenance, minor new works and capital works. Town camps were included in the scope of the audit, but homelands were left out.

Overall, the contract management audit detailed 19 findings relating to various aspects of contract management, and identified areas for improvement in the future. Central to the recommendations made by the Auditor-General is the establishment of an agency-level contract management framework.

Other recommendations included:

- introducing policies, processes and procedures to ensure consistency when managing contracts
- revisiting contract performance indicators to ensure they are fit for purpose and consistently enforced
- introducing compliance with departmental policies and procedures as part of criteria to evaluate an employee's overall work performance
- investigating and addressing the reasons for delayed recording of property inspection and contractor performance results

- investigating all properties classified as pending and determining the probability of them being returned to stock or written off.

The Department of Housing and Community Development noted all 19 findings of the audit. For two of the recommendations the department confirmed that the activity was already occurring or that it was satisfied with the majority of the current arrangement. For the remaining 17 recommendations the department either accepted or agreed to alternate action. The department has committed to improving performance controls identified within the audit, which will improve housing services to Territorians.

A number of activities have already commenced to support compliance and greater efficiency within the department, including establishing a data management working group to identify data quality issues and work with units to resolve them; improving reporting measures to support existing daily and monthly reports; and commencing a project to improve asset information, data quality and management as part of an integrated asset management plan.

I am pleased that in her report the Auditor-General acknowledged the complexities of housing, stating:

The complexities and challenges faced by the Department in managing the delivery of social housing programs are acknowledged.

It is true that housing is a complex area and there are many challenges faced in the delivery of housing for Territorians. We are committed to improving housing and homelessness across the Northern Territory. I acknowledge the important work of the Auditor-General and the commitment to addressing the issues identified by the audit in contract management of housing stock so that all Territorians have access to appropriate housing that suits their needs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, every year the Darwin City Council acknowledges some of our finest citizens who, throughout their lives, have made enormous contributions to our community. I will say a few words about our Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and the Darwin Community Event of the Year.

The Darwin Council's Citizen of the Year is Peter Poole, a long-time Territorian who spent much of his life living and working across the Territory. In 1974, like many long-term residents, Peter was in Darwin when Cyclone Tracy hit on Christmas day, destroying his home in Wanguri. Peter, a civil engineer, finished rebuilding his home in 1979, went on to complete a first aid course and subsequently joined the Darwin division of St John Ambulance in February 1979. This would be the start of Peter's 37-year-long career of dedicated service volunteering for St John Ambulance.

Throughout Peter's volunteer service he spent 18 months in the Tennant Creek division, travelling around the Barkly region to places such as Ali Curung and Newcastle Waters. Upon returning to Darwin, Peter spent time as a divisional officer as well as a divisional superintendent, and eventually was commissioner of the district for three years.

Peter also played an active role in supporting cadets coming through the St John volunteer program with training, competitions and lectures. When I was younger and living in Alice Springs I completed a first aid course and joined the St John Cadetship Program. It was a great way for me and many other young people to develop a greater understanding of the type of work that goes into being a paramedic, as well as developing knowledge of basic first aid.

We often see the volunteers for St John out and about in the community, helping out at sporting events, fun runs, shows and ceremonies, talking to the community about the fantastic work they do. I believe basic first aid training is important for everyone to have, and if you can keep that first aid certificate up to date it is even better.

The employees and volunteers for St John have done some extraordinary work, none more so than the night after the Bali bombings, when victims were flown into Darwin for treatment. Peter recently described this night in an interview with the *NT News* as one of the most difficult jobs he has ever been tasked. It is often in our darkest moments that we see the best in humanity. The work that Peter and many of his colleagues in the emergency services did in response to the Bali bombings will never be forgotten by the families and friends of the victims.

Peter has been a major contributor to the wellbeing of our community. I congratulate him on receiving the Citizen of the Year Award and his 37 years of dedicated service to St John Ambulance.

Another great role model is Philadelphia Hughes, who was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year. Young people play an important role in today's society; they are leaders who shape the way government, business and NGOs operate. Philadelphia has a remarkable resume and is a prime example of the commonly used phrase, 'You can achieve anything if you put your mind to it'.

After not completing high school, Philadelphia has tackled every educational challenge thrown at her; upon completing her Certificate IV in Frontline Management she was awarded Most Outstanding Student in her class. This achievement motivated Philadelphia to pursue further study and she is now undertaking a bachelor's degree in Psychological Science through the NT Public Sector Indigenous Cadetship Support Program. For Philadelphia the list of achievements does not end there. In 2015 she was awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Award at the Australian Training Awards.

To my mind some of her most important work has come as a Lifeline telephone volunteer crisis supporter assisting those struggling with depression or simply looking for someone to talk to. She has also been an Aboriginal student ambassador at Charles Darwin University, encouraging, motivating and assisting others to complete their tertiary education. Her motto is, 'Never stay comfortable; keep striving and stay hungry for knowledge.' I wish Philadelphia the best of luck with the remainder of her studies.

Finally, I acknowledge and congratulate the co-founders of the Malak Marketplace, Lina Paselli, May Aggabao, and Sachi Hirayama, for being awarded Darwin Community Event of the Year. Darwin's markets are internationally famous for their variety of food, culture and art. They bring our community together and celebrate all that is good about our great multicultural city. I must confess, my favourite markets are my local markets, the Parap markets, but it is great that Lina, May and Sachi have taken the challenge on to create opportunities for locals to support small businesses. I wish Lina and all the stall holders the best of luck for 2017. The Member for Karama talks the markets up all the time and I look forward to getting out there with her in 2017.

All those who were nominated but missed on an award, your contribution is invaluable. You are the people who bring our community together. Thank you.

I want to bring to the attention of the House the sad passing of Mr Robert Prickett, affectionately known to many as 'Dusty Bob'. Bob passed away on 3 January 2017 aged 90, after a long battle with prostate cancer.

Moving to Darwin in 1957, he and his wife, June, settled into the tropical lifestyle with Bob taking up a position within the Commonwealth Works department's water supply area. Bob was involved in the construction of wastewater treatment ponds for Darwin, Alice Springs and native settlements, and water supply and distribution systems.

In the 1960s Bob became the first water supply engineer within Commonwealth Works. During this time he completed a Master in Public Health Engineering from the University of New South Wales, and received a Winston Churchill Fellowship to study sanitary engineering at master's level at the School of Public Health at Berkeley.

One of his most notable acts of leadership and innovation in his position within the Commonwealth Department of Works was his preparation for Cyclone Tracy. As the story goes, Bob was responsible for the planning and set-up of electric diesel generators, which meant he could operate independent of power supply in the event of a cyclone hitting Darwin. This led to Bob reconnecting the Darwin Hospital's water supply within 24 hours of Tracy's devastation.

On a side note, Bob identified a fault in the way Darwin stilt homes were designed, in particular that their roofs were susceptible to peeling off if a cyclone were to hit. He strengthened his own house by using steel

rods, connecting the roof to the foundations. Once Tracy had hit, Bob's house stood complete while houses around him were destroyed. Word is, a refrigerator hit his house and only caused minimal damage.

Bob was equally known for his gruff and straight-talking demeanour as he was for his compassion and community contributions. He was always thinking of others, whether it was in his profession, community work or while battling prostate cancer.

Throughout his lengthy battle with cancer, his determination to help others led him to sponsor a Churchill Fellowship on prostate cancer treatment to help others suffering from the often fatal disease.

His many friends who knew him explained his generosity and his openness to help anybody. Whether it was a place to stay when they visited, volunteering his time to many different organisations and service clubs or giving an opportunity for everyday people to broaden their horizons through his Churchill Fellowships, Bob was always there.

Bob was your quintessential Territorian, someone who fiercely defended the values he believed in, was ready and willing to help others when needed and was open and accepting to all he met. Nothing was ever too much for Bob. Bob's legacy will always live on, not just in stories but also in his generosity. After his passing Bob gave all he had left in this life to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. He will continue to contribute to the health and wellbeing of all Australians through his fellowship.

I now bring to the attention of the House an exceptionally fast Central Australian, Mr Daymon Stokie. On the weekend of 17 to 20 November 2016, on the other side of the world, one of Alice Springs' own became the first Australia and third ever international rider to win one of the biggest and toughest motorsport events on the planet, the 49th SCORE Baja 1000. It was a big weekend for Daymon, as he was also celebrating his 26th birthday.

For those not familiar with the famous Baja 1000, it is a world-famous motorsport race through the Mexican Baja California peninsula. The Baja 1000 allows various types of vehicle classes to complete on the same course, including motorcycles, buggies, Trophy Trucks, production vehicles and custom race cars. It is also thought to be motorsport's oldest desert race in the world.

At the age of nine, Daymon received his first off-road motorcycle and has seen multiple Alice Springs Motorcycle Club Deep Well titles, Mount Ooraminna 12-hour titles and top five finishes in Central Australia's own nationally and internationally renowned Tatts Finke Desert Race.

Following Daymon's top five finish in the 2015 Tatts Finke Desert race, United States rider Colton Udall, who had travelled all the way from Oceanside, California, and was experiencing Finke for the first time, recruited Daymon to join him to race in the US.

Daymon competed in his first Baja 1000 in 2015 with his three-man team, finishing an impressive fourth outright and admitting the whole experience was 'pretty crazy'. Daymon caught what can only later be described as a lucky break for the 2016 Baja 1000 when team manager and lead rider for the top Ox Motorsport team—the man responsible for getting Daymon to the state in 2015—Colton Udall, broke his collarbone while pre-running the course just days before the event.

To give you a brief rundown of how the teams work, the Ox Motorsports team effort includes an A and B team with six riders in total; three for each team. The A team bike carries the front plates 1X, which refers to the defending champion of the Pro Moto Unlimited class in the international SCORE World Desert Championships. Daymon was originally set to ride in the B team aboard the 3X bike with Colton heading up the defending A team on the 1X bike. Colton made the decision to move Daymon onto the 1X team to take his spot just two days before the race. To add to the pressure, the 1X team won the race and the international World Desert Championship in 2015, so Daymon had the hopes of many riding on his shoulders for a back-to-back win.

Daymon and his teammates now had to contend with more miles to ride, more pressure to perform and the added anxiety to win without the team's best rider. This year's Baja 1000 race track was a 1350 kilometre loop starting and finishing in Ensenada, Mexico and running down the Baja Peninsula and back up the other side. It takes in sandy coastlines, rocky mountains, dusty silt plains, which Territorians call bulldust, and is equally known as one of the most dangerous races in the world, attracting tens of thousands of spectators.

Daymon was given the hard task of riding his 400km stint at night, which he had not prepared for. It did not seem to faze him as he took up the challenge and finished the five hour-long, 250 mile stretch of the race, still in the lead before handing the bike over to his teammate to take home the win. Daymon, along with his teammates, finished the race in the time of 18 hours, 16 minutes and 42 seconds, winning the event back to back and securing the international World Desert Championship for the second year in a row.

I cannot help but feel connected to my roots when hearing of the Finke Desert Race competitors making it on an international stage. It makes me proud to know that the legacy of something my grandfather, Peter Gunner, helped create in 1976 is growing future local Territorians able to race competitively at the same level as some of the best in the world. To see years of wins, defeat, broken bones, blisters and thousands of hours of riding accumulate into becoming Australia's first Baja 1000 winner, we can only imagine the high that Daymon must have been riding on. We wish him all the best for his future in desert racing, as I am sure there will be plenty more highs to come, including the elusive Finke Desert Race win.

It is also worth noting that Daymon will line up against 599 other riders in this year's Tatts Finke Desert race, with the initial entry capacity of 500 being filled within eight hours. The field was then increased to 600 and within 24 hours of the announcement of the additional 100 places, the field was full again. With a full bike field and this year being the 30th running of the cars in Finke it is set to be one of the biggest years of Finke's history, and this Labor government is excited to be 100% behind the Territory's most iconic motorsport event.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that February is ovarian cancer awareness month. On Tuesday it was great to see so many members in this Chamber wear their teal ribbon with pride. One in 77 women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime; it could be you, your sister, your mother, your grandmother, your girlfriend, wife, friend, aunty or someone you know. Each year more than 1200 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and, tragically, around 800 women will die from the disease. That is roughly two thirds of women diagnosed dying of this vicious cancer.

On average, three Australian women are diagnosed every day; these numbers are far too high. Unfortunately, when most women are diagnosed their cancer will be at an advanced stage where the cancer has spread and is difficult to treat successfully. More than half of these women will not live for five years after their diagnosis; it is a tragic and terrifying prospect facing women. On a more positive note, if ovarian cancer is found in the early stages, up to 95% will survive well after five years. This tells us all how important it is that more women need to be diagnosed at an earlier stage when ovarian cancer is treatable.

There is currently no reliable early detection test or screening program for ovarian cancer. The regular Pap smear does not test for ovarian cancer, so to achieve this diagnosis every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer has previously been called a silent killer, but we know the symptoms are not silent. Almost all women with ovarian cancer experience symptoms, even in the early stages. Being aware of these symptoms and risk factors, and talking to your doctor if you are concerned, could save your life.

As it is ovarian cancer awareness month I acknowledge the great work of Territorian Alice Burton in working to put ovarian cancer on the public agenda. Ali is a radio and television presenter based in Darwin in the Northern Territory. I take this opportunity to highlight a wonderful ovarian cancer fundraiser that I will be attending on Friday evening, called the Cockteal Party. I will join Ovarian Cancer Australia NT Ambassador Ali for the annual Cockteal Party and help fight ovarian cancer. Sisters, mums, co-workers, girlfriends, nans and fellas, I invite you all to come along to Oaks Elan on Friday 27 February and learn about the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer and the importance of early detection. There will be guest speakers, raffles and prizes, plus the opportunity to glam up and enjoy a fun evening out.

The details are Friday 17 February, Oaks Elan, upstairs in the air conditioned comfort, between 5 pm and 7 pm. Tickets are \$35 each and include complimentary drinks, canapes and a donation to Ovarian Cancer Australia. Tickets can be purchased at Darwin Tickets. A special thank you goes to the sponsors: Oaks Elan, Savvy Social, Breanna Kearle of Bree Designs, and Mix 104.9. I encourage all women to trust their instincts and, if something does not feel right, go and see your doctor.

Women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer report four types of symptoms most frequently: abdominal or pelvic pain; increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bleeding; needing to urinate often or urgently; and feeling full after eating a small amount. The Cancer Council Northern Territory conducts a number of support groups to cater for a wide range of clients. Support group meetings provide interaction

with peers and the opportunity to share experiences. It is a supportive environment which allows discussion of cancer-related issues.

Meeting themes are varied and guest speakers are invited from time to time. There are occasions when the meeting time, date or venue may be changed to fit in with the availability of guest speakers. If you wish to attend a meeting for the first time or would like some more information, please call the Cancer Council Northern Territory office to confirm dates and venues on 8944 1800, or email admin@cancernt.org.au.

The Cancer Council provides a number of groups, including the Men's Cancer Support Group; the Women's Cancer Support Group; the Cancer Information Group; the Women's Advanced Cancer Support Group; the NT Ostomy Support Group; the Breast Cancer Social Support Group—Belladonna's and Flamingo Belles; and the Katherine Cancer Support Group.

There are other community-based support groups in Darwin, Katherine in Alice Springs. For more information please do contact the Cancer Council Office on 8927 4888. Cancer Council NT also provides telephone and Internet support services which are professionally facilitated to support you in the comfort of your home or your workplace. Participation is free and available throughout the country, and if you would like to know more you can call the national call line on 1300 755 632 or the Cancer Council NT office.

Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, [*the member read the names of nine children*].

These are names of Yolngu children who we currently know have been forcibly removed from Yolngu country in recent months and years by the NT Government. Two are teenagers, while the rest are young children. The family believes they are now in Darwin. I want to say to these children, you are loved, you are Yolngu, you are Djapu, Wangguri, Marrangu, Liyagalawumirr and Gumatj. You are citizens of Yolngu nations.

Your ngandi—mother, bapa—father, ngapipi—uncle, gnathi—grandfather, mari—grandmother, marimu—father's father, and momu—father's mother did not give you away. You are not orphaned; there is no such thing in Yolngu society. There is always another kin that can care for you.

Know that your family fought for you. You were taken by force and they never wanted you to go. Your people and your nation did not want you to go. Your family and your nation are fighting for you now.

We are sorry you have been stolen from us. We are sorry we could not do more. In the face of a system that threatens our existence, we are sorry we lost hope for a moment. Perhaps we should have been braver. We want you back. Never believe you cannot come back. We are reaching out for you, and we will continue to fight for you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nhulunbuy. The names of the children will not be recorded in the *Hansard*, as they are in the care of the department.

Ms MOSS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to take a few moments to talk about the incredible achievements of three NTFL foundation clubs: the Buffaloes, Waratahs and Wanderers, which all recently celebrated 100 years in the NTFL.

On Tuesday the Member for Drysdale gave a wonderful snapshot of the rich history of the Darwin Buffaloes and what they mean to the community. I was fortunate to attend the Buffaloes gala ball, and it truly was a memorable night. I congratulate the mighty double blues for putting on such a great event, and for 100 years of football excellence.

The two other foundation clubs that have given so much to Territory footy are the Wanderers and the Waratahs. The Member for Sanderson will talk some more about the Waratahs this evening.

Ms Manison: Go the Tahs.

Ms Purick: Go the Saints.

Ms MOSS: Nice 'go the Tahs' from the Member for Wanguri.

To be a feature of the Territory sporting scene for a century is a wonderful achievement, and these proud clubs are very dear to us all.

As the minister responsible for sport I want to acknowledge the amazing achievements of these three clubs and the contributions they have made to Territory life.

The Northern Territory Government helped the Wanderers and Waratahs celebrate this significant milestone with a centenary anniversary reception held here at Parliament House. It was fantastic to see so many members joining in that celebration. I was honoured to host both clubs and their supporters.

The Wanderers celebrated their 100 years in the NTFL competition with a centenary dinner held on Saturday 28 January. I was delighted to attend this fantastic event, and I thank the club for allowing us to share its celebration.

The Wanderers formed in 1916 and are founding members of the Northern Territory Football League. They have a proud history as an integral part of the NT community, with a strong supporter base in Darwin and strong ties with the Katherine and Arnhem Land regions. They were very successful, winning the first four premierships in the NTFL competition, and their most recent history of winning flags ensured that celebrating this important 100-year milestone was a memorable and notable occasion.

The Wanderers and Waratahs celebrated their 100-year anniversary in an historic foundation cup clash at Gardens Oval on Australia Day, a tradition the two clubs initiated 10 years ago. Club President, Ben Cocker, worked hard to ensure the week of festivities and the gala ball were a huge success. I congratulate him for that. The club did a wonderful job recognising the dedication of past players, volunteers and supporters who made the club what it has been over the last 100 years.

The celebrations included the naming of Wanderers as team of the century, which saw on the AFL NT hall of fame Russell 'RJ' Jeffrey named as captain; club legend Gus Wanganeen named as vice-captain; Steve 'Bully' Abala named as coach; and Paul Motlop as assistant coach.

I was also honoured to be a guest, as were many members of this Chamber, of the Waratah football club as they celebrated their 100-year anniversary in the NTFL with a fantastic centenary dinner on 27 January 2017 at Skycity. They were also formed in 1916 and were founding members of the NTFL. The Waratahs are a proud club with a rich football tradition. They are the only club with involvement in every year of the competition that has ever been played.

The Tahs have won 15 league premierships, including three consecutive premierships from 1928–29 to 1930–31. They have won six premierships in the NTFL's women's competition. The club has seen nine players win the Nichols Medals, with club legend Peter Ivanoff winning two as the NTFL's best and fairest player.

They have won five best and fairest in the NTFL women's competition, which includes two dual medallists in Ange Foley and Steph James. We have been watching Ange Foley on the television playing the last couple of Crows games. The club can also proudly boast having the first woman to kick 100 goals in a season. The sublimely talented Abbey Holmes is also part of that great team.

The Waratahs played their first home game in the 1960–61 season at the Waratahs oval, when the club became a true sports club represented by many different sports under the banner of Waratahs. The 2001–02 NTFL season marked the first season the club played at Garden's Oval, and they still call this famous stadium home.

Club President Trevor Oliver, with support from many others at the club, worked hard to ensure the 100-year celebrations were a success. The sentiment of the evening was evident as the dedication of the past players, volunteers and supporters who have made the club what it is over the last 100 years was acknowledged.

The night was made all the more special with past players and their families attending, such as Dennis Ganley and his wife Joan, a couple in their 90s. With club stalwarts like the Ganleys attending, you recognise the importance sporting clubs play in people's lives in the Territory.

I was thrilled to be in attendance to see the Waratahs named team of the century, which included Dennis Ganley named as captain, Anthony Hoban as vice-captain, Bill Martin named as coach, and Pat Skelly as assistant coach.

Congratulations to Buffaloes, Wanderers and Waratah football clubs on reaching the centenary milestone, and thank you for your immeasurable contribution to Northern Territory sport. I am sure the next 100 years will bring you as much success as the first 100.

Ms PURICK (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about the exploits of individuals and sporting people in the rural area. Tonight I will talk about people involved in the horse world. Surprise!

I acknowledge the hard work, commitment and expense of becoming accredited coaches in the world of dressage. It is not easy trying to achieve this in the Northern Territory because the people required to do the assessments for coaching levels do not live up here, so people have to travel interstate. It is a self-paced qualification and some do it faster than others, depending on their financial situation.

Recently Nicole Mutimer, who lives in Darwin, became an accredited coach at level one in general; Jane Palmer also achieved dressage level one; Karen Ruzsicska is general level one; Jenny Jones has been accredited for introduction level; and Vanessa Lines not so long ago became level two. There are three levels, and those women have achieved extraordinary things. There could be men—but at this stage there are only women involved.

Also in the Territory at intro level are Amy Power from Alice Springs and Petra Bookall from Katherine. We also have Heather Holt, who is general level one, and Vanessa Lines is also level one in dressage and level two in general. I will not go into what that means, but it means something very special to the horse world.

It is interesting, the levels these women achieve; there are three separate modules that need to be completed. The first is in horse management, which is everything to do with managing the horse and horse husbandry, second is riding, because to become a coach you have to be a reasonably accomplished rider; and the third area is in coaching. The coaching module is the most difficult and can only be started once the riding and horse management modules have been completed.

As an example of the difficulty, the level one general coaching module comprises up to 10 individually assessed practical lessons across three different disciplines: jumping, cross country and dressage. Nine of these were done with a group of riders, not one person. Each individual lesson must be assessed by a coach educator—that is the person we do not have up here. You need to engage at least three coach educators. There are none in the NT, so in order to be assessed candidates have to fly interstate to visit the coach educators or get them to come to the NT. Sometimes they come up for competitions and can also be judges or come for coaching.

Each practical lesson also involves arranging suitable and available riders and horses for the candidates to teach. It is no good trying to teach people if you have no horses or people to teach.

Equestrian NT provided three coaching scholarships in 2016 and has just offered four for the year 2017 to Territory people to assist candidates to become accredited or upgrade their existing accreditation. The full process can end up costing thousands of dollars and a lot of time and commitment away from your home, because the people are not here to assess you.

In addition to the people I have mentioned, Karen Ruzsicska has achieved level three jumping accreditation. Karen is the only person in the NT to achieve a level two, and has now achieved level three. It was, indeed, a busy year for Karen and a huge commitment to the sport of dressage and show jumping.

Many people think I am a horse person, but I can advise people I am not a horse person. They are way too big for my liking, you need a step ladder to get onto them, you have to wear very tight pants, and you have to wear a helmet that gives you hat hair. No, no, no; not for me. Give me a dog any day.

Mrs Worden interjecting.

Ms PURICK: I pick up on the interjection from the Member for Sanderson. Yes, we will get it into the Arafura Games. I will do that for all the funny people in the rural area.

On a related horse matter, I attended the dressage club's Australia Day competition at Freds Pass Reserve, which, not surprisingly for horse people, was not held on Australia Day but the Saturday following it. They are horse people, and they dance to a different hoof beat.

There was a lovely display of beautifully groomed horses, and the riders were looking pretty good too. What I love about these horse events is that there is no age barrier and no gender-specific events. Young people from 12 years of age can compete against an adult of any age. That is probably another reason I do not ride, as I would be mighty cranky if some smart Alec terrific rider who was a mere 12 years old beat me. I have seen that; young people beating adults. The adults get a bit upset, but that is another story. Like any sport, children can get involved from a young age, and horse riding is no different. There is a young fellow in England who qualified to compete in a prestigious horse of the year event last year, at the mere age of three years old. Young Harry Edwards-Brady and his young horse, Moortown Divine, at four years of age—that is, the horse—the youngest age a horse can be for that event, took part in the 70-minute event and came an impressive seventh out of 23 competitors. Despite the event being one where the rider and horse are led—Harry was led by his mother, Emma—the young fella is still on a horse for 70 minutes, needing to pay attention to do whatever riding he has to do.

What child of any member here would sit up straight, pay attention and do well for an hour and 10 minutes?

Mrs Worden: Not even at 15.

Ms PURICK: Not even at 15. At my age, I am flat out paying attention for 10 minutes before getting distracted by some shiny thing.

Well done to Harry Edwards-Brady.

I digress—the Aussie Day competition. It was a great, enjoyable, easy day—for me, anyway, sitting under a big, shady tree and sipping wine—and another successful event for the Darwin Dressage Club. Thank you to the club members who made the day possible, the volunteers who set up the arena and packed it down, and the families to supported the riders and made it all possible.

The eventual winners for the Australia Day competition were the prep champion, Melanie Cobbin; elementary champion, Sam Overall; preliminary champion, Kiara Reynolds; and novice champion, Anne-Marie Hayman. Two of those are children; one is 17.

Congratulations to the award winners and to the people who have achieved great things in coaching, as I mentioned before, and contributed to the equine community, making it a better place for everyone.

Congratulations to young Harry, as I am sure in 10 years' time he will be an Olympic rider.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, we also had a great Australia Day celebration. Not only was there the formal side of it, run by Litchfield Council, where people were 'citizenised', as I call it, and lots of awards were given out for Senior of the Year, but I was more interested in what happened in the afternoon.

We have a family fun day, when we ask families to enjoy an afternoon of free games, food and drinks. The idea of the day is to give parents a day when they can sit down, at no cost, with their kids and have a fun afternoon. We play some strange games on Australia Day. We play bocce, a good Italian game; cornhole, a good American game; and speed Scrabble in the air conditioning, so no people die of heat exhaustion outside. We play cricket, quoits, skittles and hookey. We play those last three games to teach young people that there are other sports in this world, besides those on your phone, which are good fun to play.

I went to Camping World in Berrimah, and when I was getting some prices for the games they asked if I was interested in horseshoes. Coleman camping store, which sells eskies and camping gear, sells four big horseshoes in a nice little bag. These are not for your ordinary horse—it would be a big horse. You put two stakes at either end and, as you sometimes see in the old westerns, you have to throw these heavy horseshoes around that pole. You might think it boring, but people love it. It is fun, simple and does not require too much. You do not want to wear thongs because if you drop the horseshoes you will know all about it.

We moved away from the hot pie, cold coke competition. There was one person winning the prizes every year, so we went to paper plane flying. You would be amazed how many people loved that. We had competitions for adults and children, male and female. They had a minute-and-a-half to make their plane. The one who throws the furthest from the starting line wins. This year someone threw a paper plane that went on for 30 or 40 metres. It went like a rocket, dived into the ground and got stuck there.

We had a great day. Lo Castro Foods donate ice cream every year. This year it was six buckets. They donate to schools as well. Reidy's Lures are always willing to donate lures, which are always popular.

I want to thank a few of the people who helped out. The Southern Districts Cricket Club helped with the cricket matches. All the games were going at once, so it is pandemonium when you have somebody playing one game who is required to be playing in another game, and another. The people who try to keep the pandemonium to a minimum are Mark Brustolin; Annie Black; Spud Murphy, who does a lot of voluntary work around the place with sound; Angie, my daughter; Trish, my sister; and Kim. I have missed a couple of people. I do not know why they do it, but every year they help out.

The other great people who help out are those at the Howards Springs Volunteer Fire Brigade. Every year they cook up the steak, sausages, bacon and eggs, and we have soft drink, which is all free. This year we asked for a gold coin donation towards the cost of the meat because some people abuse the idea of getting things for free and disappear home with a pile of steaks.

The Howard Springs Volunteer Fire Brigade is having its 30th anniversary this year. I reckon it is one of the best volunteer fire brigades in the Territory. I am not knocking any other volunteer fire brigades. I have Koolpinyah Volunteer Fire Brigade; the Member for Goyder has Bees Creek and Humpty Doo, and with her expanded boundary she has a few others. There might be Lambells Lagoon ...

Ms Purick: Beatrice Hill, Acacia ...

Mr WOOD: Acacia, yes. They are all great volunteer fire brigades. I suppose the difference is that Howard Springs is part of the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service. Maxine Way has been the captain of that volunteer fire brigade for I do not know how many years, but it is well run. Plenty of people work there, and I think it is a credit to her determination and her ability to last through what is not always an easy job. People might think, 'Oh well, you just put out fires', but she has to give out the fire permits, put up with complaints about why there are no fire breaks here—or, 'Why are you not over here?'

It is not always an easy job and at times it can be quite dangerous. Maxine is a really fantastic person in our community. She is also a great seamstress—I do not know what the word is today, but she is a seamstress. If you have ever played cornhole, and maybe you have not, you will know it is a great game to play. You have little bags of corn, but you have to have them sewn up. They are made out of a special material that can handle being thrown around. They are all filled up with corn at a certain weight and then sewn up again. Maxine is able to do all that as well.

I thank all those people for making it such a wonderful day. When people thank you for the day, it is great. We also have a local family, the Thompson family, who always volunteer with a jumping castle as well, which is very much appreciated. Nobody asks them, they just turn up with the jumping castle and allow people to use it free of charge.

There was a debate this morning about finding out whether we could get the termination of pregnancy bill put to a parliamentary committee, which I still think is the correct way to go. I did not appreciate the comment the Chief Minister made, that I am trying to kill this bill. I cannot kill this bill; it is a government bill and has brought forward to the parliament.

Even though I do not support abortion and I do not like having to go through all this, we will debate this bill in March. My main concern is that this bill is complex. This bill touches many areas that are important to us as human beings, but it is also important to us as legislators. I will try my best to amend it, if possible, and I probably will not support it in the end, but it needs to be looked at very carefully. That is my main thrust.

I am probably pushing uphill, but I will not give up. At the same time, I am a member of this parliament. In any legislation we deal with I ask that it is looked at carefully. There have been times where legislation has gone through probably a bit too hurriedly and it has come back to bite us. We have had to amend legislation because it was poorly put together in the first place.

As much as people will have a different point of view from me on this issue, because it is so important, people should understand that I am saying what I saying because, firstly, it is government policy and, secondly, I think it is the right thing to do for such an important piece of legislation. I will not harp on this debate any more but I need to clarify my reasoning in my persistence in trying to get this to a parliamentary committee.

Ms LAWLER (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I wish to talk about the exceptional young Territorians who were recognised recently at the Northern Territory Board of Studies student awards. On 2 February I had

the honour of hosting the awards ceremony in Alice Springs, and on 10 February I hosted the Darwin event.

The NT Board of Studies recognises student achievements at major awards ceremonies in Darwin and Alice Springs every year, with the top scoring students from across the Territory in primary, middle and secondary years officially awarded for their efforts in the 2016 school year. In 2016 there was a record total of 1399 students successfully completing their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training. This figure includes a total of 221 Indigenous students, an increase of 34 students from 2015.

I was especially pleased to see that 15 Indigenous students from remote areas completed their NTCET at their local school, with an additional 22 remote Indigenous students completing it through the NT School of Distance Education, which is the old NT Open Education Centre. The NT Board of Studies awards pay tribute to the tremendous work of students, and they acknowledge the educators and families who helped them to excel. In 2016, 26 of our Territory students achieved an A+ merit in one or more of their subjects. This means they achieved a mark in the top 2% of students undertaking that subject.

The following students were recognised for this exceptional achievement with a certificate of merit, presented by His Honour the Hon John Hardy OAM: Casuarina Senior College, Sarah Macpherson-Oxley and Desiree Reynolds; Katherine High School, Hayley Lye; Marrara Christian College, Jack Cartmer and Katrina McKeough; St John's Catholic College, Gloria Korwa; Taminmin College, Jessie Innes; Darwin High School, Aaron Berthon, Franjesca Cercarelli, Deanna Chin, Leon Danicic, Jack Davis, Tully Hemsley, Lana Laureles, Douglas Lee, Max Oliphant-Hand, Rachel Park and Natarsha Whelan; Good Shepherd Lutheran College, Chloe Bonnell; St Phillip's College, Dean Sullivan and Gabrielle Borchers; Essington School Darwin, Beatrice Carter, Millie Hunt, Jessica Osborne and Ayden McDonald; and Centralian Senior College, Jade Thorogood.

These students achieved their A+ merits in a diverse range of subjects, including visual and creative arts, many of the sciences, maths, Indonesian, women's studies, English and research projects. The students who were recognised at the awards came from across the whole of our Territory. This was particularly evident in the Administrator's Medals for Primary and Middle Years Scholars. Shae Ford, who is from Fossil Downs Station and studies with the Katherine School of the Air, received the medal for primary years. That is like being identified as a fabulous primary years student, from across the Territory. Unfortunately Shae's dad could not be there on the day, but he sent a message to me to congratulate her, which was lovely to do.

Siena Stubbs from Yirrkala studies at Nhulunbuy High School and received the medal for middle years. Siena's mom is Merrki, the co-principal at Yirrkala School, and Will Stubbs runs the art centre. When I was in Alice Springs I was fortunate enough to give the Administrator's medal to a little girl from Larapinta Primary School, Rajnandini Bohra, who received the medal for her scholastic achievement and citizenship.

Many students complete their NTCE, but several of our Territory students complete the International Baccalaureate at Kormilda College. I was pleased to present the following five Kormilda College students with certificates of merit for exceptional achievement in one or more of the IB subjects: Rhianna Gaden, Georgina Myerscough, Rebecca Spain, Andrew Whitesmith and Felicity Williams.

Additionally, Rebecca Spain was recognised with the International Baccalaureate Most Outstanding Student Award. These results and the exceptional achievements we celebrated at the awards nights highlight the quality of education in the Northern Territory. A number of other awards were awarded on the night, and there are a range of sponsors, whom I thank profusely. Many have sponsored the awards for a long time.

It was also an honour to recognise the following top 20 NTCET students for 2016: Aaron Berthon from Darwin High; Millie Hunt from the Essington School Darwin; and Dean Sullivan from St Philip's College, who I have mentioned previously. Dean did his schooling at St Philip's, and it is hard to be a boarder and still be one of the top students.

Continuing with the top 20, Katrina McKeough from Marrara Christian College; Hayley Lye from Katherine High School; Sarah Macpherson-Oxley from Casuarina Senior College; Sri Heraganahally from the Essington School Darwin; Ayden McDonald from Essington; Thilini Pandithage from Casuarina Senior College; Rachel Park from Darwin High School; Jack Cartmer from Marrara Christian College; Ritwik Dasgupta from Darwin High School; Hannah Carter from the Essington School Darwin; River Pachulicz from St Philip's; Marianna Diamandopolous, Joel Jettner, Jack Davis, Themelina Roditis and Emily Stephenson from Darwin High School; Kaila Gordon from Essington; and Demi Tcha from Essington.

I presented the following awards on behalf of the Chief Minister: Most Outstanding Stage 2 NTCET Student of 2016 went to Aaron Berthon from Darwin High School, an exceptional student and a wonderful Territorian. I look forward to following his career and his further studies. A brilliant student, it was lovely to meet him.

Most Outstanding Stage 2 NTCET Indigenous Student was Marcus Valastro from Darwin High School. I know Marcus; I have known him since the day he was born. He is a good family friend and an exceptional footballer with Waratahs, playing A-grade. He is a brilliant Territorian and I look forward to seeing Marcus' wonderful achievements in the future.

Most Outstanding Stage 2 NTCET Distance Education Student was Shannon Fuller from the Northern Territory School of Distance Learning.

It is important to place these people's names on the record. They are exceptional Territorians. It is wonderful to be able to pay tribute to them, their teachers, who go the extra mile, and their parents, who have worked hard, looked after them and did all the right things. They have fed and watered them, and done all the things that get a Year 12 student across the line. Well done to the parents, teachers and principals of those schools.

I also acknowledge the NT Board of Studies members, including the Chairperson, Ralph Wiese, for recognising our students, and Hazel Horne, the executive officer of the board, who does an amazing job year-in year-out, putting the awards together.

It was a pleasure to present the awards and recognise these exceptional Territory students.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I rise to reflect on Tennant Creek's impressive performance at cricket's Imparja Cup and other sporting events over the weekend in Alice Springs. As you can imagine, being the local member I am extremely proud and thankful for the opportunity to share this information with the House and with the Northern Territory.

It all started from a match played between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek in 1994. The chief organisers were Shane and Mervyn Franey from Alice Springs and Ross Williams from Tennant Creek. By 1998, Northern Territory Cricket had become involved in organising the tournament, and in 2001 Cricket Australia turned the tournament into a national competition.

This year more than 500 cricketers competed in the various competitions associated with the Imparja Cup, a record number for the tournament.

I had the opportunity to watch the Tennant Creek men's team play an Imparja Cup game at Purkiss Reserve, where the men's team defeated Katherine Crocs. They then went on to play in Alice Springs, where they defeated Darwin and the Top End Thunder teams to advance to the finals. I want to make special mention that Darwin are five-time champions in this event, so this makes the victory that bit sweeter.

In the qualifying and semi-finals, Tennant Creek defeated the All Sorts and Desert Eagles, enabling them to reach the final. After a 30-year wait, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek played off in the Major Centre Men Division T20. Tennant Creek batted first and scored an impressive 5 for 145. Alice Springs tried hard but could only manage 9 for 97.

This was the first win for Tennant Creek since the tournament went national in 2001. I might also add that Tennant Creek was the only undefeated team, and dominated the statistics with five Tennant players in the top seven run scorers.

A big congratulations to all those who played, and special mention to Tim Hardingham, Taki Shioji, Tommy Gillett and Andrew Baker for making the all-star team.

In the Schools Division the Tennant Creek Year 7 Clontarf boys dominated to win their third title in four years.

Go Territory women; go Tennant Creek women! Tennant also did extremely well in the Community Women's Division. This is the first time in 10 years that Tennant was represented. Despite only one loss, the Tennant team finished an honourable third.

These results have been achieved through much hard work, dedication and generous sponsorship, but challenging facilities, so it makes me very pleased that the Michael Gunner Northern Territory Government has committed \$5m to upgrade Purkiss Reserve in Tennant Creek, which will support our sport and recreation programs.

On another note, I want to acknowledge another sporting event for Tennant Creek which took place last weekend. Our rugby league team played in the curtain raiser match before the National Rugby League Eels and Titans game. Despite having no league competition, and only having a few weeks to prepare, Tennant really did the town proud. It was a great game and a great crowd. In terms of atmosphere, with the new jumpers and outfits, Tennant really stood up to the occasion.

The Alice Springs Desert Rats were a very well-drilled team, more resembling a Kiwi All Blacks rugby union outfit. They had a backline that looked like they had played together since I was in J grade. It was a superb team and they pulled off some set moves and exciting play. But Tennant took it up to them; the score was significant for Alice Springs in the end, but Tennant fought hard right to the end.

It is also important to note that 35 years ago, if you went to Purkiss Reserve in Tennant Creek, there was no oval—it was a rectangle and rugby league played there. I remember coming from the bush on one of my early trips into town and seeing rugby league played at a high standard in Tennant Creek.

Australian football now dominates the Territory and the regional areas, and good luck to it. We have some great sporting talent in that field. But, whenever rugby league is mentioned, Tennant Creek come out of the bushes and take it up to whoever puts up the challenge.

Well done to Tennant Creek in the Imparja Cup, and we look forward to seeing those reps there again next year.

Ms AH KIT (Karama): Madam Speaker, tonight I acknowledge my beloved Darwin Buffaloes Football Club for its milestone 100-year anniversary, which was celebrated recently.

The club was formed in 1917 under the name Darwin Warriors and was mostly comprised of Aboriginal men from the Kahlin Compound. It has since undertaken many changes in not only its name changes to Vesteys, Darwin Buffaloes Club and the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club, but it has also grown to support 12 teams, with girls and women having the opportunity to participate as well.

The Darwin Buffaloes have celebrated 23 premierships wins, of which I have been privileged to witness the last two in the 1988–89 and 2005–06 seasons, and a total of 18 players have taken out the league's Best and Fairest award.

A number of Darwin Buffaloes players possess talent beyond measure and have excelled on the field, including former West Perth Champion, Bill Dempsey; former Adelaide Crows legend, Andrew McLeod; former Hawthorn player, Cameron Stokes; former Carlton player, Joseph Anderson; and our latest export, Jasmine Anderson, who is playing for the Adelaide Crows in the AFL Women's competition.

I am a proud one-eyed Buffaloes supporter and former committee member who, unfortunately, does not possess the skills to pull on the boots, but I am a fantastic, loud, and encouraging supporter, for the most part.

My family, like many other Darwin families, has a long history with the Darwin Buffaloes. My grandfather, Jack Ah Kit, was a proud administrator of the club before my time, and his passion and work for the club warranted the naming of the premiership Best and Fairest award being named in his honour.

My dad, John Ah Kit, or Jak, is a proud life member and former President of the Darwin Buffaloes. He attends as many games as possible and is still as vocal from the stands today as he was when I was a little girl.

My brother Jonathan has dedicated many years of his life as a player, coach and volunteer for the Darwin Buffaloes, a commitment he still upholds today as the assistant coach for the under 18 team. He, like many others, sacrifices and contributes year-in year-out for the love of the sport, the club and the Buffaloes family.

The Darwin Buffaloes committee, volunteers and supporters have continued to work extremely hard to keep this wonderful club moving forward. I take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the members I served with on the Darwin Buffaloes committee, including Uncle John Paterson, Uncle Jimmy Anderson, Auntie Trish Kurnoth, Bob Garner, Andy Newall, David Atkinson and Steve Stokes, to name a few. To all committee members, past and present, I take my hat off to you all and thank you for everything you do for our fantastic club.

I wish all our players, coaching staff and administrators the very best for the remainder of the current 2016–17 NTFL season and for the next 100 years.

Shuffle up the Buffaloes.

Madam SPEAKER: Saints still rule.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, you will be disappointed with my speech as well. I am standing to place on the record the achievements of the Waratah Football Club in their centenary year.

Madam SPEAKER: Oh, dear.

Mrs WORDEN: I said it would be disappointing for you. The Waratah Football Club is very close to my heart. I was fortunate that in 1997 my husband made the decision to move from Darwin Football Club with his great mate, Graham Ross, to join the Waratahs, a decision he has never regretted. This was the start of many wonderful years that have been recorded in this book, written by Nigel Adlam, which is the source of much of my information tonight. It has left my family with some of our most cherished memories and I am sure there are many more to come.

Our Chief Minister is now the great patron of this club. I am not stealing any of his thunder, but it would be remiss of me not to talk about a club that means so much to me. The Waratah Football Club is one of the three foundation teams in the history of the AFL—we have heard a bit about that tonight and last night—in the Northern Territory, along with the Darwin Football Club and the Wanderers. Two weeks ago all three clubs hosted events to mark 100 years, which is an amazing feat, and congratulations to them all, but tonight I want to focus on the Tahs.

Running a successful club takes a lot of work, volunteers and great supporters. Over its 100 years it would be impossible to put a figure on that as the number of people who have contributed would be in the thousands; a big thankyou to them all. The Waratahs were founded in late 1916 by a group simply wanting to play a bit of footy on the weekend. This was the first year an official game of footy was recorded as being played in Darwin; it was on the old Darwin Football Club ground, which is now the Esplanade. I am sure that group did not think at the time about what they might be creating. That club is the only club with 100 years of continuous history, playing every season.

There were some great names involved even in those early years—people like the legendary Vic Lampe, who was a local headmaster, played for Tahs across football and cricket and is often called the father of football with his drive to set up AFL in the Northern Territory. The Tahs were originally known as the red and whites, and it is thought the name Waratahs came into being in the Vic Hotel in late 1917. From my lengthy 20 years' experience with the club, that would be typical.

As with most early sporting teams in the Territory, the first Waratah teams were mostly government and interstate workers, but there were also two legendary local Indigenous players in that first line up named Reuben Cooper, from west Arnhem Land, and Willie Allen, a local Larrakia man. From all reports, Reuben was a magical player and was rightly named last year in the AFLNT Team of the Century.

It is notable that the Tahs have a long history of including Indigenous players in its teams and, considering that in the 1990s they were taunted by other teams with names such as 'cream puffs', Indigenous players have featured in all of the highest points of the club and woven into the fabric of their history. There is a whole chapter dedicated to the racist treatment of Indigenous players in Adlam's book. It is not specific to the Tahs but to the poor way in which mixed-race people were treated by the sport, locally and nationally. However, this did not stop some of the great names such as Puruntatameri, Kantilla, McAdam, Bush and Rioli, to name a few, pulling on the red and white.

Over the last 100 years the Tahs have made many finals, winning their first in the 1920–21 season by defeating Vestey's 48–27. They went on to win another two grand finals in the 1920s and a further three in the 1930s. The 1940s were interrupted by war—this week we will reflect on 75 years since the bombing of

Darwin. Football was not played in Darwin for four long years because of this. The Tahs won two more premierships in the 1940s, two in the 1950s, two in the 1970s—I sense a pattern here—and then in the late 1990s, when my family had become part of the Waratahs family, two drought-breaking premierships after 22 years without a premiership under Team of the Century coach, Bill Martin.

As the secretary of the club during those years, I note that most of us felt a mix of awe and fear of Bill. He was formidable on and off the field, but he got outcomes and now has legendary status with those of us who value what he did to motivate the players, including my husband, Wayne. Under that finals winning pattern the Tahs should be on track for two more grand finals very soon; I just calculated it.

There are some legendary times from my time at the club that it would be remiss of me not to mention, great people who have done much more than other volunteers across many years: our club matriarch Auntie Cathie Nickels; stalwart Bobby Jenner; former president Julian Kerr; the recently deceased and much-missed Ali Johnson; Ronnie Baker; Brian Price; and reserves coach Paul Carroll for the record-breaking 10 consecutive grand final teams for the division two team.

I will not list the players who provided us with the hard-tacking, tough playing style that we loved in the 1990s, as there were too many to note, but I will place on the record, before I finish, the names of the 22 players who were selected in the Waratahs team of the century: Denis Anley, captain; Anthony ‘Herbie’ Hoban, vice-captain; Peter Ivanoff; Willie Rioli; Bob McKenzie; my great friend, Chris Williams; Alfred ‘Snowy’ Close; Matthew Wakelin; Keith Nickels; the charismatic Tommy Sandry; Hank McPhee; Percy Scorer; Lincoln Withers, the hard hitter; Gilbert ‘Gilly’ McAdam; Bill Eacott; Gary Argus; Mike Poulter; Arch Wilkey; Braun Bush, who is godfather to our youngest daughter, Alekna; Charles McKee; Frank ‘the nudist’ Matthews; and last, but by no means least, the late, great Maurice Rioli—and, of course, coach Bill Martin and assistant coach Pat Skelley.

Congratulations to them and their families for this wonderful achievement.

There is not enough time to record the full 100-year history of the magnificent Tahs tonight, but I urge members and listeners to do yourselves a favour and go out and buy the book by Nigel Adlam, *Waratah Football Club: a 100-year History: 1917–2017*.

Ms MANISON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, it with great sadness that I rise to place on the record my remarks on an employee of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics who tragically passed away. I adjourn tonight in memory of Marcia Hremeviuc, an employee of the department, who died in a car crash on the outskirts of Alice Springs earlier this year.

Marcia was travelling with her partner, John Morris, who also worked at the department, to check road conditions after heavy rain when the tragedy happened. Her death has deeply shocked the tight-knit Alice Springs community, particularly her workmates, who speak so highly of the quietly-spoken 66-year-old.

Marcia’s workmates say she was the kind of person who would bring in beautiful flowers from her garden and give them to those she knew loved their fresh fragrance. They were the most beautiful roses and it would brighten their day.

Her workmates described her as quiet and unassuming, and a team member who would get on with her job of managing urgent minor repairs for government buildings. Marcia carried out her task with expert precision, keeping on top of paying many invoices and raising the service orders. She was a quiet achiever in the workplace. Though she mostly avoided being involved in office politics, she was always up for a one-on-one chat, especially if it was about one of the many places she had visited with John, having taken beautiful and amazing photos.

Marcia formed a close bond with co-worker John Morris, and together they enjoyed many weekends and holidays tripping around our rural road network. They both had a love of photography and Marcia was quite good at it. Their desks are the envy of the office, adorned with their beautiful pictures.

She had an appreciation of the small things, be it the bark on a tree or the ripples on the water. Marcia had a love for the simplicity of life.

Marcia was well-liked in the office and across the broader Alice Springs construction community, with which she worked every day, coordinating and following up on the urgent minor jobs. She could always be relied upon to get the job done and work out the finer details. She had a good sense of humour and a sweet tooth, always willing to accept the many lollies, chocolates or doughnuts that circulate through our area.

They might be small things but, at the end of the day, it is the small things people do that are appreciated, and they will now be missed.

Marcia was a brave lady, a true modern-day pioneering woman, conquering the wild west in a male-dominated industry all those years ago. Living simply, out of town in her bush retreat, she would describe how she had spent her weekend stamping off a couple of dingoes and saving a calf while the rest of the townies were having coffee dates and shopping trips.

It has also been reported that she was an aviation pioneer, clocking up 10 000 flying hours. Her workmates say she was an amazing lady. She was always humble, easygoing, reliable and dignified. She was admired for her forthright opinions which were based on deeply held beliefs and convictions. Marcia was an integral part of the team and she will be missed.

Marcia was not a mainstream person; she lived life on her terms and did not blindly follow the crowd. She was an individual who knew what was important in life and lived it accordingly. My deepest condolences go to Marcia's partner, John, and her family on their loss, and to the staff of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, who have lost a respected and admired colleague. Rest in peace, Marcia.

I have another sad thing to place on the record. I was approached a month or so ago by a lady by the name of Lyn Parke, who tragically lost her beloved grandson, Justin Morgan-Parke, last year to a drowning incident. Lyn has requested that this petition be placed on the *Parliamentary Record*. I will read that petition and then seek to table it, following advice I have received from the Clerk. This is very important to the family.

The petition is titled, 'Justin Morgan-Parke was taken too soon – close the dangerous loophole that lets kids drown.' It is gut-wrenching:

My friend's 3 year old boy Justin Morgan-Parke drowned in January. A beautiful little soul has been lost, because he wandered off for a minute. It didn't have to happen.

Even though it's been mandatory for pools and spas to have fences for more than 10 years, there's a dangerous loophole that means Northern Territory pools don't have to be fenced off if the property is larger than 1.8 hectares.

This is so important, a child drowns every week in Australia. What's the point in even having these regulations if they don't cover all properties?

NO parent should have to live through this pain again

I seek leave to table this petition on behalf of Lyn Parke. Rest in peace, young Justin.

Leave granted.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to congratulate the Buffaloes, Waratahs and Wanderers ...

Madam SPEAKER: Not another one. I want to go home!

Mr SIEVERS: Bear with me—who recently celebrated their 100 years in the NT AFL, 1917 to 2017. As the assistant minister for sport and community events, I was very fortunate to attend the Buffaloes Football Club's 100-year celebrations with my parliamentary colleagues, Minister Moss, Minister Vowles, Minister Lawler, Ngaree Ah Kit MLA and Kate Worden MLA.

The Darwin Buffaloes' 100-year celebration and awards night was a highlight of 2017. It was one of the best-run functions I have attended, and this is due to the hard-working members and volunteers. I sincerely wish to thank the hard-working president, Mr John Paterson and his family, the members of the Darwin Football Club organising committee, Cindy Paterson, Naomy, Savannah and Sonia Briston, Mandela Yu, Muki Muir, Alison Brien, Geoff Dupuy, Darren Kwong, Samantha Fry, Marijana Tadic and Donald Christopherson, who put together a night we will never forget.

One hundred years of football is a fantastic achievement by any club. I would like to ensure the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club's achievements are well documented and written into the history of our great game

and recorded in our *Parliamentary Record*. Darwin Buffaloes are a family club. It was one of the main attractions to me when I played, coached and joined the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club many years ago.

Blue and blue is in my blood and I know that everyone in the club feels the same way. On the night I listened to 100 years of passionate stories by players, coaches and supporters. These stories hold the substance of what the Darwin Buffaloes Club is and stands for—the foundations that make it such a great club. It puts family and children first, works as one team on and off the field, and in tough times this club tightens together to face any adversary it is met with.

I was particularly moved on the night by Andrew McLeod who played 340 games for Adelaide Crows, is a dual Norm Smith Medallist and is son of Buffaloes great, Jock McLeod. Andrew told a story on the night, after he was rightly named the Buffaloes Team of the Century Captain, and his story captured it all for me.

Andrew's story went like this: he has reached nearly every Australian Football League player's dream and awards over his formidable career, and at the highest level of our game on the national stage, but from the day he could hold a football as a young child all he ever wanted to do in life was play football for the great Darwin Buffaloes. Well done to Andrew, Jock and the family.

Ninny Briston was also named in the first 12 in the Buffaloes Team of the Century on the night, and his father, Sabo, made the top 60. Ninny was mentioned on the night as a player who others looked up to and always wanted to play football with. Andrew McLeod described Ninny Briston as being the bloke the great Muhammad Ali was talking about when Muhammad said, 'This fella was so fast that last night he turned off the light switch in his hotel room and was in bed before the room got dark'. Congratulations, Ninny, Alice and all the Briston family for a well-earned award for a favourite Buffaloes son.

Then there is our very own Steven Stokes, who is a star in the Chamber and a star on the football field with the Darwin Buffaloes—another player name in the Buff's Team of the Century. Steve's family, as with many other families in Darwin, has done so much for the Buffaloes over many years. I remember Sammy, Frank, Cameron, Peter, Jarrod and Bradley all being around in my days with the Buffaloes, giving me so much support. Well done to our Steven Stokes; I am sure the family are all very proud of you.

The 22 finalists named in the Darwin Buffaloes Team of the Century are Andrew McLeod, the captain; Mathew Whelan; Greg Bruce; Leo Castillon; Basil Damaso; Bill Dempsey; Jimmy Anderson Snr; Ronald Quall; Joe Sarib; William Ahmat; Daryl White; Steve Abala; Ninny Briston; Don Bonson; Ali Muir; Jason Jones; Rueben Cooper; Walter Lew Fatt; Robbie Ahmat; Mark West; Steven Stokes and Don Stokes. The finalist coaches were George Liveris and Aldo Rosetto.

Many of the other greats just missed out on the 22 finalist list, like Tommy Lawler, John Paterson, Norm Hagan, David Ross and the list goes on and on with many great Darwin Buffaloes players. We are all very proud of them for putting on the blue and blue jumper.

There are so many more people to thank from the Darwin Buffaloes, such as the committees, the volunteers, the players, the Buffettes, the supporters, the children and the families, through every one of those 100 years. I look forward to another 100 years for the Darwin Buffaloes and seeing players like my young daughter, Savannah, and her cousins Liam and Timmy, being finalists in the next Team of the Century.

The best thing I can say in respect to every Darwin Buffalo is, shuffle up the Buffaloes.

Madam SPEAKER: Saints still rule.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I will definitely not speak about football. I rise tonight to talk about bulk-billing. This has been an issue in Katherine for a significant amount of time. The absence of a bulk-billing clinic in the town has, again, been the focus of sustained media reporting over the past two weeks, and I share the community sentiment that Katherinites need access to such a service as a matter of urgency. They need the same level of access that is afforded to all Territorians.

Private medical practitioners should not bear the brunt of community anger over a lack of bulk-billing services in Katherine. The criticism aimed at a private clinic in Katherine has been unfair, unjustified and misdirected. I am adamant that there needs to be a general practice clinic that affords bulk-billing access to every resident of Katherine; this is not an unreasonable need or want.

The current Medicare rebate has placed additional pressure on the cost of private healthcare treatments in regional areas in addition to placing unfair pressure on general practitioners, and the impact of the rebate freeze is not understood well by the general community. It is a complex issue, but it is clear that it is not the responsibility of private businesses to pick up the slack created by a lack of foresight of the federal government in its decision to extend the Medicare freeze to 2020.

I will respond to some claims that have recently been made that Labor eliminated bulk-billing in 2011. I am unaware that bulk-billing has been scrapped by any government, current or past. There might be some confusion about the federal Labor healthcare reform of 2011, in which they proposed changes to federal funding of health services. This reform was called the National Healthcare Agreement.

It is my understanding that bulk-billing ratios have not increased since circa 2012. Indexation of rebates for other medical services—specialist, consultant physician and psychiatry consultations, and operations and anaesthesia—last occurred on 1 November 2012.

The 2013–14 and 2014–15 federal budget measure to pause indexation until July 2016 amounts to a four-year freeze of the Medicare rebate that the government will pay towards the cost of specialist medical care. This has been extended to 2020.

This is a budget presented by the current federal government which, unfortunately for us, is not a Labor government. The private health insurers may decide not to carry the government's savings by indexing their schedules of medical benefits. They may decide to freeze indexation for a similar period of time. If that happens, there will be a drop in the current high rate of 89% of privately-insured services that have no out-of-pocket costs.

This four-year price freeze and its impact on the cost of private healthcare treatment is not well understood by the general community. There is no legislation that mandates a privately owned and operated clinic to provide bulk-billing. Bulk-billing is at the discretion of the clinic owners and operators. This is a fact. There is also no legislation mandating that said clinic must provide an explanation as to why it chooses not to bulk-bill.

The private medical clinic in Katherine created a service that it felt was sensible, empathetic and appropriate. It asserted that it would be financially unsustainable, for various reasons, for the clinic to offer bulk-billing to every patient and for every procedure. For this reason it established walk-in, bulk-billing clinical hours. This seemed amenable in my opinion, and it provided an affordable service to those who cannot afford to pay the full consultation fee.

During my campaign in April 2016, I stated that if I were to be elected as the Member for Katherine I would advocate on behalf of the electorate for support from government to research and consider strategies that would:

- a) support existing infrastructure and service providers, and assist those service providers to improve efficiency and increase capacity
- b) address the challenges surrounding provision of health services in a rural and regional environment that is facing growing numbers in its seniors population.

The Australian Medical Association last year launched a national campaign against the Medicare rebate freeze. Professor Owler stated at the time of the launch:

The Medicare patient rebate freeze extension means that health is going to cost more for all Australians, but particularly the poorest, the sickest, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged ...

The seven-year duration of the freeze until 2020 is a body blow to patients and to medical practices.

I wholeheartedly support his statement.

During the 2016 federal elections, the Liberal government made outlandish claims that Labor was running a scare campaign by saying that the Liberal National Party would kill off Medicare. I supported federal Member for Lingiari Warren Snowdon during his campaign for re-election, and during that campaign I reiterated to constituents in Katherine that if they wanted to ensure that Katherine residents have access to bulk-billing, they should vote for Labor.

Often I was told I was just running a scare campaign, that I was a Labor tool, a Labor stooge. Five months after being re-elected, the federal Health minister, who is now the ex-health minister, Sussan Ley, announced that 23 medical procedures and diagnostic procedures were being removed from the Medicare benefits scheme.

The reality is, while delivering a vital health service, a private clinic is no different to any other small business in Katherine in that it employs staff, invests money locally to stimulate the town's economy and is required to operate in a financially sustainable manner.

I will continue to lobby through the Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, and the federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, to investigate ways in which the federal government can implement measures that will facilitate setting up a bulk-billing service in Katherine as soon as possible, and to lift this prohibitive Medicare freeze.

Let us be clear and honest about this; there has never been a bulk-billing clinic in Katherine. When there were two clinics in town each had a policy that bulk-billing would be at the doctor's discretion. The issue we currently face is that we have one generalist, mainstream health clinic. As a community we need to support that clinic with our patronage whilst also working towards facilitating opportunities for the possibility of another clinic, whether it be private enterprise or otherwise. It would alleviate the waiting times for appointments and offer more choice for Katherine residents. This is called forward planning, succession planning.

We need to continue lobbying the federal government to lift this prohibitive Medicare freeze. This is not a new issue, but if the town is to be a critical cog in the plan to develop northern Australia it needs accessible health services that reflect its importance.

The Department of Defence has committed to spending about \$500m on RAAF Base Tindal over the next 10 years, and the Katherine region is set for major agricultural investment following the recent decision for us not to proceed with Stage 3 of the Ord River irrigation expansion. The town has been identified as having a key role to play in the economic development of northern Australia, so it is not good enough that Katherinites do not have access to bulk-billing general practitioners. It is not the fault of the current service providers in Katherine. I urge Katherine residents to continue to support our one-and-only clinic. If it were not for it being there and keeping its doors open we would be far worse off than we are now.

I will remind everybody that it was only last year that the one and only GP clinic in Gove closed its doors because of the Medicare freeze and the lack of patronage.

Whether the answer to this problem is supporting existing infrastructure and service providers through improved efficiency and increased capacity or building a new stand-alone clinic, I do not know. But I am committed to ensuring that the concerns of Katherine residents about the lack of bulk-billing services in their town are heard at the federal and Territory levels of government. The health of Katherine residents cannot be a political blame game, nor will I continue to make it that.

I implore the federal government to acknowledge what is happening and to expedite a solution that will provide the people who call Katherine home the same access to bulk-billing as other Territorians. I also implore the federal government and the federal Health minister to acknowledge the undue pressure placed on remote and regional towns like Katherine by continuing the Medicare freeze until 2020.

Mr KIRBY (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge all the people who make the wonderful Chung Wah Society such a beautiful part of the Northern Territory's culture and the very fabric of our society.

We all had the pleasure of seeing their noisy, bright and energetic Lion Dance Troupe performing at our opening of parliament last Tuesday. I think if you look closely there are still some remnants of the lettuce up on the window that, hopefully, the cleaners can get down safely at some stage.

I used to live across the road from the Chung Wah Temple in the beautiful city of Port Darwin, and the essence of the Chinese community spreads through every electorate of the Territory now, as it has for decades.

At one time the Chinese population outnumbered the European population in the Top End. Many worked for the government of the day and by the late 1800s the Chinese were the largest non-Aboriginal group of

the time. From the goldfields to the railway, retail, agriculture and fishing, the Chinese influence through the NT has helped form who we are as part of this nation.

Chinese people of those early times faced much discrimination through Australia, and I am sure those in the Territory would not have been exempt from these judgments, such as not being able to work in the public service.

After World War II our Chinese population forged ahead as they cemented their place through business, politics, sport and recreation.

The Chung Wah Society has been at the very fabric of our society for many years now. The society was originally established in Darwin in 1946 as a social and sporting club, and it now has over 300 members. The society now has a seniors group and other support groups that spread their goodwill through the community.

The temple in Woods Street features a fascinating museum with photos and stories about significant Territorian Chinese families. There are often functions and social gatherings at the rec hall at the temple. The long-term Territory families are entrenched in our folk law—who could forget the touching vision and photos of Mrs Mary Lee when she famously met US President Barack Obama in Darwin a number of years ago.

It was an honour to have the Lion Dance Troupe come to the Port Darwin electorate office a few weeks ago to perform their colourful and cultural blessing a few weeks ago. It was also a pleasure to take part in the blessing in the main hall this week.

We were recently fortunate enough to be on the Chief Minister's table at the Chinese New Year Ball with Dennis and Debbie Low. Donna Quong, Austin Chin and the committee did a fantastic job with the entire night, and the Lion Dancers were not the only dancers for the night. The costumes and efforts by the all the young dancers were amazing. The Chief Minister developed a particularly close relationship with the lion, which I am sure he will remember for a long time.

Once again, I congratulate the Chinese community, especially the Chung Wah Society for their decades of passion and influence right through the Northern Territory. I am sure every member in the House will have fond memories of their involvement with the Chung Wah Society in some way, shape or form.

We, as a government, look forward to working closely with the Chung Wah Society over the years to come to ensure its rich culture is celebrated through the Territory, as it deserves to be.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Names of Children in Care Expunged from Parliamentary Record

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, earlier this evening in adjournment the Member for Nhulunbuy listed the names of children in regard to his speech. I advise that the names of those children will be expunged from the *Parliamentary Record* given the nature of the care they are in.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.