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## **Trust in Government**

### **Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER**

Today the *NT News* revealed huge cracks in your government. Within 12 months Labor has descended into the very chaos and dysfunction it railed against in opposition. How can Territorians take your government seriously when your dishonesty about Dan Murphy's has been exposed, ministers are actively leaking to the media and backbenchers are disgruntled?

### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I confirm that I am the Chief Minister and I carry responsibility for all our decisions, for better or for worse. We are doing our best, as a government, to deliver for Territorians; that is what drives us. Sometimes we make mistakes along the way and, as Chief Minister, that is my responsibility to bear.

I lead a very strong and capable Cabinet and Caucus. I am deeply grateful to them. We are supported by extremely capable staff. I support my team and my team supports me. I am very grateful for that. We always act for the best interest of Territorians. That is why I get up in the mornings and go to work.

We have a big agenda to deliver for improving outcomes and services in the bush, including commercial imperatives. It is not just about wellbeing; it has to be about creating a positive economic framework too.

Jobs are really important across the entire Northern Territory. There are lots of Territory businesses doing it tough, and we shape the budget around that in full consultation with business. That is what occupies my time.

There is a trust agenda that we have to work on as a team. We know that. We inherited a very bad situation after the last government. We have taken considerable strides to improve trust in the Territory. During next week's sittings we will introduce the ICAC legislation, which is very important in restoring trust in government. The donations inquiry has commenced with Justice Mansfield. We are doing important work in that trust framework.

That is why I get up in the morning and why I stood as Chief Minister in the last Territory election. It is what my team and I are working on, and it is what we are here to deliver for the best interest of Territorians.

## **Jobs – Investment in the Northern Territory**

### **Mr SIEVERS to CHIEF MINISTER**

What is the government doing to create and support jobs right across the Territory?

### **ANSWER**

Member for Brennan, thank you for the work you do in Palmerston. Just like everywhere in the Territory, people in Palmerston are looking for security and employment. They know that a secure and rewarding job is the best way to improve quality of life. That is why we are investing in jobs. It is what we need to do to attract people to the Territory and keep them here.

There is no doubt we are facing some tough economic times. Many businesses said 2016 was the worst year they ever had. We shaped our budget around the economic circumstances that Territorians are facing. We had a very large infrastructure spend. We inherited an economy after four years of CLP having no plan, so we took a jobs plan to the election, sat down with business through economic summits, and now we have a very clear jobs plan.

Our budget supported that to make sure we are delivering jobs for Territorians. We had to keep that money flowing: \$1.75bn cash infrastructure budget to drive jobs; \$42m in direct economic stimulus through the Immediate Works Grants; the Home Improvement Scheme, which we copped our mistake there and brought it back bigger and better; and the home renovation grant, which was really important to support first home owners. Those schemes generated an estimated \$145m for the economy, which was very important for creating jobs in the Territory.

In June we delivered the economic development framework infrastructure strategy and plan. That is a 10-year plan for how we can work in full partnership with the private sector to ensure we are unlocking opportunities and are working towards a shared vision for creating and driving jobs in the Territory.

We announced our Defence advocate, a fantastic appointment. Former Air Vice Marshal Margaret Staib is the Northern Territory's first Defence and National Security Advocate. She is a champion for us in Canberra for the \$20bn investment over 20 years. She is doing excellent work.

We signed the project facilitation agreement with major company TNG Ltd. It is one I am very excited about. It is an \$850m vanadium-titanium-iron project halfway between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, near Ti Tree. I like it because it is good for Central Australia, and it will also be good for the north because they are looking at building a refinery here. That is a fantastic project we are working on.

We have also done the project facilitation agreement with KGL Resources Ltd for the \$190m Jervois copper-silver-gold project, which has the potential to create many jobs during construction and operation.

We had a great time in Tennant Creek a month ago for the Jemena pipeline. Edna Beryl, the new gold mine there, is fantastic. We are also working on the shiplift, vibrant CBDs in Darwin and Alice Springs, the logistics and agribusiness hub in Katherine, and the mining services centres in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. We have a very good work program to create those jobs for Territorians.

### **NT News Article**

#### **Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER**

On Katie Woolf's radio show this morning you said the *NT News* lied in its article about the Caucus revolt against you. Do you stand by your comments that none of your Cabinet ministers spoke to the *NT News*? Are you shooting the messenger by blaming the *NT News* for reporting on the chaos and dysfunction in your government?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, we came to government after four years of chaos and dysfunction. We became experts at identifying it. We know what it looks like. It looks like the CLP. We do not have it in our ranks.

I will be very clear about this. I said it this morning and I am happy to stay it again. The issue reported in today's paper has not been raised with me, one on one, in Caucus or in Cabinet. I had a meeting this morning with Caucus, as we always do before parliament, and put the issue on the table. It has not been raised. I stand by that.

I have full trust in my team. I meet, talk and work with my team. There are plenty of opportunities to raise issues with me. I am a very approachable person and am always happy to talk through things. We have robust conversations in Caucus and Cabinet and one on one. That is what we want. We set those team values early. We saw what happened with the CLP, and we welcome and enjoy having tough conversations because that is how you get a better Territory.

People can raise issues with me. I know, based on conversations and experiences, that if someone had that issue they would raise it with me. Many issues have been raised with me. We are always working on the many issues facing the Northern Territory that we care about, which saw us put our hands up for this job.

Jobs for Territorians, recognising the tough economic times, crime, recognising there are people who are experiencing trouble—we work with them through the police, early intervention and investment in kids. We have generational issues. We need to invest in kids to break the cycle of antisocial behaviour, chronic illness, incarceration rates and unskilled workforce. We have to build many houses in the bush. We have to do that with locals and make sure there is sustainable employment. We have to investigate and look at innovative structures, and we are doing great work on that.

There are many issues that matter to Territorians. They also matter to our team, who are very happy to constantly raise those issues about how we can do these things better and faster. That is what drives our team. If my team has an issue, they are welcome to raise it with me. They have not raised this with me.

### **Same-Sex Marriage Plebiscite**

#### **Ms NELSON to CHIEF MINISTER**

How are Territorians disenfranchised from participating in the postal plebiscite on same-sex marriage? What is the NT Government doing to raise its concerns with the Commonwealth Government?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, this is an important issue for a lot of Australians, not just for those of the same sex who want to marry. There are a lot of people who believe in equality, and this issue has gone beyond a first order issue; it is something that needs to be done. We have reached a point where it is inevitable in Australian politics.

We are going through a postal plebiscite process. As a Territorian and as the Chief Minister, my side is clear; I support the yes side of this argument. A practical issue confronting Territorians is that it is very difficult for a remote Territorian to participate in this postal plebiscite. No matter which side of the argument you are on, whether you are a no or a yes, I believe anyone navigating through this postal plebiscite process, anyone who would like to contribute and have their voice heard, should have their voice heard. But a lot of remote Territorians will not.

I am extremely concerned about this \$122m exercise. I genuinely feel that it will exclude a lot of Territorians. I have written to the Prime Minister outlining my significant concerns. I am happy to table my letter to the Prime Minister to the House. Only 82% of Territorians are presently enrolled; that is an issue. That means that more than 25 000 eligible voters are not enrolled.

There is also a high level of mobility among our Indigenous electors. During an election cycle we take great care to ensure everyone gets a chance to have their voice heard, but that is not happening here. I am worried that many Territorians, particularly those in remote communities, will be silenced through this process. A high number of Territorians speak English as a second, third or fourth language. How do we cater for that? There are significant concerns here.

These concerns are exacerbated by the downsizing of the Australian Electoral Commission office from 15 staff members to three, and the office being relocated from Darwin to Queensland. That is not reflective of the service needs that we have in the Territory—recognising our mobility issues, getting people on the roll, maintaining them on the roll and making sure Territorians have their voice heard.

These decisions show a lack of understanding for the Territory context, for distance, for mobility, for remoteness—about keeping people enrolled and making sure they have the opportunity to have their voice heard. This is a significant concern for all Territorians. No matter what side of the vote you are on, no or yes, every Territorian should have the opportunity for their voice to be heard through this process.

I believe in 'yes', but all Territorians should have the opportunity to put no or yes. That, unfortunately, will not happen with this postal plebiscite, and that is why I have written to the Prime Minister.

### **Police Outside Bottle Shops**

#### **Mrs LAMBLEY to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY SERVICES**

On Thursday 22 June of this year I asked you in parliament, 'Will your government be scrapping or reducing the temporary beat locations in operation in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs?' to which you answered, 'No'.

Minister, could you explain why there has been a reduction in police outside of bottle shops in Alice Springs over the last few months?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, it is important to keep confirming and clarifying this policy. There are police outside bottle shops under this Labor government in support of the Banned Drinker Register, just as there were with the previous Labor government.

There has been no reduction in services outside bottle shops in Alice Springs. As we come closer to the implementation of the Banned Drinker Register, people are becoming more mindful of when police are standing outside bottle shops.

There has been a constant issue since the BDR was scrapped in Alice Springs about maintaining police outside of bottle shops. When we were in opposition I heard complaints when I was in Alice Springs about police being called away for training or responding to an incident. There was never a guarantee—this is one of my concerns about police outside of bottle shops.

There was never a guaranteed presence because of the pressure on police, and that is why it was important to bring in the Banned Drinker Register to make sure there was a permanent solution at the point of sale for the selling of alcohol to problem drinkers. There had to be a permanent solution. The BDR does that.

There has always been this constant pressure on police about their presence outside of bottle shops. They are required to respond to accidents. If they are the nearest person to an accident, they are required to respond. They need to be proactive. They have training and professional development requirements that they have to do. That puts significant pressure on their roster.

This has been an ongoing problem; it is not a new one. This is why the BDR is so important; it provides a permanent solution at the point of sale.

I felt comfortable giving that answer last sittings about how we will work between the BDR and police. Police are very supportive of having the BDR in place and knowing that if they get called away, as happened consistently both before and after the last election, they have the Banned Drinker Register there.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Police Outside Bottle Shops**

**Mrs LAMBLEY to CHIEF MINISTER**

Will police outside bottle shops be reduced or scrapped under your watch? You seem to be shifting in your position. You are telling us there will be a reduction at different times. Could I have some clarification please?

**ANSWER**

The Member for Araluen is being creative. I was clear in what I said. There were police outside bottle shops under the last Labor government and under this Labor government. Police will be there in support of the BDR. I explained the circumstances that existed under the last government and this government that have led to police needing to do other things.

I have been clear about what our position is and how we work with police and the Banned Drinker Register.

#### **Moody's Credit Outlook**

**Mrs WORDEN to TREASURER**

Can you please advise how the recent Moody's update and credit opinion is helping to create jobs and secure a better future for Territorians?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, we were elected to government because of our commitment to return stability and trust, to manage the economy wisely and invest in jobs for the future of the Northern Territory. We are committed to this.

In May I handed down the first budget of the Gunner government. In that budget we were faced with unprecedented challenges due to the \$2bn GST cut. We have a slowing economy that is transitioning. We hear from businesses that they are doing it tough. It was critical to invest in jobs. That is why we invested a record \$1.75bn in jobs across the Northern Territory.

Under the previous government Moody's downgraded the Northern Territory to Aa2. When I delivered the budget there were many questions about how it would impact the Territory's credit rating with Moody's.

After the delivery of the budget I sat down with Moody's and had extensive conversations at a Northern Territory Government level. I was very pleased to see that in Moody's deliberations it has endorsed an Aa2 stable outlook for the Northern Territory. This is an endorsement of the decisions we made in the budget when Territorians needed a government that would invest in jobs and the future of the Northern Territory to maintain, sustain and grow its economy, particularly at this time of transition.

We have made decisions to ensure we have the right economic stimulus. We have a record repairs and maintenance budget to make sure we have jobs targeted at local tradies and businesses across the Northern Territory. We have invested through our Immediate Works Stimulus Package. We made changes to our first home buyer policies and incentives to ensure more people stay in the Northern Territory and invest in their future here. We have strengthened Buy Local procurement.

We are doing the things we need to do to ensure we protect jobs and invest in jobs for the future. That is what the budget we delivered in May was all about. To have the credit rating come in with a stable outlook is an endorsement of the tough savings measures we put on the table.

We are committed to being fiscally responsible and managing the Territory's economy.

### **Indigenous Employment**

#### **Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS**

I understand the government has plans to roll out a strengthened Indigenous development plan intended to maximise Aboriginal employment in government contracts. Could you please advise how this scheme will be monitored to ensure contractors have the number of Indigenous employers they claim to have?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I want to put on the record where we are at with the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum. This was hastily put together by the previous CLP government in 2014. The advice I received was that, as well meaning as this program was—it was about ensuring government contracts were supporting Indigenous employment to create more opportunities for Indigenous Territorians to get a job and get training for a sustainable job in the future.

This was policy on the run by the former CLP government. This was another one of its thought bubbles. The advice I received was that this was put together in a matter of a couple of weeks. We are now looking at the consequences of that.

We suspended the program because six matters have been referred to the police and Auditor-General for full investigation, but at that time we had already commenced a body of work to look at making changes. We have a number of departments working together to look at how we can make changes to deliver a better program, one that will deliver better Indigenous employment outcomes, be workable with industry and business, and get full value for Territory taxpayers.

In regard to scrutiny and compliance, last week I instructed the department to ensure there were additional audit and compliance functions within the agency. We need a strengthened level of work there. This is a department that puts through millions of dollars each month in procurement. It is important that we have a more robust framework in audit and compliance measures.

When we came to government there was about \$398 000 a year committed to audit and compliance within the agency. We brought the agency together with infrastructure, lands and planning, and transport. That became the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. From that point we wanted to strengthen audit and compliance, and we did, to an investment of about \$854 000 a year.

Through that process we started picking up anomalies within the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum, which we have reported to police in order to strengthen monitoring and compliance within the agency. But more work can be done. We will wait for the outcomes of the police investigation and the work being done by the Auditor-General. We will take their findings and recommendations very seriously. We want to see better Indigenous employment outcomes through government procurement.

### **Alcohol-Related Harm Costs**

#### **Mr KIRBY to MINISTER for HEALTH**

Can you please update the House about what steps this government is taking to address the high cost of alcohol-related harm throughout the Northern Territory?

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. I am concerned this might be pre-empting debate, given we are debating the BDR in the House.

**Madam SPEAKER:** It is not a point of order because this is about alcohol measures which could be any number of things, not just legislation.

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, every Territorian has the right to feel safe in their community. Alcohol causes so much harm in our community, from Central Australia to the Top End. Those who abuse alcohol do not do the right thing. The harm they cause our communities is unacceptable.

The statistics from Menzies School of Health Research estimated the social cost of alcohol harm for the Territory was upwards of \$640m in the year 2009. That equates to over \$4000 per adult, compared to only \$950 per adult nationally.

The statistics go on to say that 50% of all assaults are alcohol related, and up to 65% of domestic and family violence incidents are alcohol related. Forty percent of road fatalities involve illegal blood alcohol levels. We have thousands of emergency department presentations that are alcohol related. We all know the harm alcohol causes in our community. That is why this government is being tough on alcohol, and we make no apologies for that. We are being tough on the harm alcohol causes and those who abuse it.

Territorians like to drink and many do so responsibly, but for the members of our community who drink excessively, the consumption causes harm to them, their families and our communities. We all have stories from our communities.

In March we commissioned a comprehensive alcohol policy and legislation review. I had the privilege of appointing an expert advisory panel, led by the former Chief Justice Trevor Riley, to review and seek the views of experts, stakeholders, industries and communities.

That panel has received more than 120 written submissions from around the country. It has had the opportunity to meet with communities from urban and remote areas. I thank everyone who has provided a submission and participated in that review. We have uploaded the reviews online, and I am impressed with the well-considered, detailed proposal.

I encourage those listening to look at those submissions online. The panel has heard the evidence of what works, what needs to be done and what we can do to change the way problem drinking is impacting on our lives. The panel is now analysing that vast body of work, and we will publish the panel's recommendations in full. Then, as government, we can provide a response. As a community we can continue the conversation, because the abuse of alcohol extends right across the Territory. It is a generational issue that we need to tackle.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to further updating the House on the review and its outcomes.

### **Correctional Industries**

#### **Mr WOOD to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE**

There is no doubt that prisoners gainfully employed inside or outside of prison benefit, and so does society. Holtze prison was especially designed with that in mind with—amongst other things—art, metal and woodwork workshops; a bakery; a laundry; a kitchen; and a garden. Plus, there is other outside work where people are employed in various private industries, as you can see in today's *NT News*.

Is it true that your government intends to cut some or all of these programs? If so, what will the cut mean in dollar terms to Corrections? How many prisoners will be affected? How much revenue will you lose? What will prisoners do now?

## ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know the member is passionate about this. He has taken the time to visit the facility located in his electorate and look at the programs there. We also sat on the Public Accounts Committee, which looked into correctional industries. I was an opposition member at the time, but we had a detailed look into what can be offered.

NT correctional industries is structured to help prisoners break the cycle and be work ready when they leave incarceration. The number of prisoners participating in industry and employment at any one time depends on the availability of opportunities both within and external to the facilities. That also needs to be mapped with the prisoners' eligibility for participation in Indigenous training and employment.

The criteria for participation includes very careful security ratings. As much as we are trying to empower these people and give them skills to get their lives back on track when they exit prison, we also need to make sure that community safety is a priority. We need to look at their health, behaviour et cetera.

Budget 2017–18 provides \$1.85m for the Work Not Play program, which gives prisoners the opportunity to develop in appropriate work readiness programs. This is wide ranging, depending on the prisoner. Some of it might be education based, including basic literacy and numeracy skills. For others it might be the opportunity to participate in voluntary or paid employment.

I am happy to provide the statistics to the member opposite to outline who participates in paid or voluntary employment. A number of prisoners participate in programs. For some prisoners, upon release that helps them, and there are statistics on that.

We want to see this area grow to provide people with skills, education, training and work readiness. Around 80% of prisoners currently participating in Sentenced to a Job, either in voluntary or paid employment, are Indigenous Territorians.

**Mr WOOD:** A point of order, Madam Speaker: relevance. The thrust of my questions was, is it true that your government intends to cut either some or all of these programs? I know there are programs out there.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, if you could answer the member's question.

**Ms FYLES:** Budget 2017–18 allocates \$1.8m for the Work Not Play programs. To break the cycle of people re-offending they need to have education and participate in employment and volunteer opportunities. An integral part of corrections is giving people the skills so they are ready to re-integrate into the community.

**Mr WOOD:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. With 10 seconds to go, can I get the question answered? Is it true that your government intends to cut either some or all of these programs?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, you have the call.

**Ms FYLES:** It is quite clear that there is a budget allocation. It is a focus of this government to break the cycle of people reoffending.

**Mr WOOD:** A point of order, Madam Speaker!

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Nelson, the minister has a few seconds left.

**Mr WOOD:** Madam Speaker, I have waited patiently for two minutes and 55 seconds.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The minister has time to answer the question.

**Mr WOOD:** It will be 'yes' or 'no' then.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, you have the call.

**Ms FYLES:** There is a budget allocation towards this. It is a priority of the government. It is giving people skills ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.



### **Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme**

#### **Ms AH KIT to MINISTER for TERRITORY FAMILIES**

The government is undertaking a review of the Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme to ensure it is more fair and sustainable into the future. How is the government ensuring senior Territorians have a say on these changes? What has been the response so far?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama has done a lot of work in her electorate to ensure people know about and have access to the survey so they can participate in this process.

Last night the Chief Minister hosted a senior's event in the grand hall. It was a great opportunity for him to reassure senior Territorians that the scheme will be bigger and better after this review. This is the goal of the review. We have not cut money from the review. We have more money in the budget.

Everyone was concerned when the CLP—in fact, under the then Minister for Health, who is the current Member for Araluen—locked out seniors who were self-funded retirees. Since that decision in May 2014 they have received nothing under the scheme. It was yet another interesting decision from the CLP.

We want to be fair to seniors who have contributed much to the Northern Territory, but we also need a system that is fair and sustainable. As a good government, we have to review a system that has been so clearly rorted. Our focus on this scheme is to get it right so it is fair and equal. We need to make sure it works.

The bottom line is that while other governments have tinkered around the edges they have not gotten to the core of the issue, which is making sure we have a sustainable system that is transparent so unscrupulous businessmen cannot take money from senior Territorians for their own purposes.

We also know that it is not fair to have a scheme in which some people get over \$6000 a year and others get under \$100. That is clearly not fair. We need to ensure it is accessible to all. This is one of the many reasons the scheme needs to be reviewed.

The Chief Minister touched on this before; we are in a situation in the Northern Territory in which there is a significant trust deficit in government. That has been shown in this review process, with a few loud voices doubting our intentions. I stand here as a minister and say my interest is making sure we have a fair scheme that is sustainable and able to be accessed by all Territorians because we know that right now it is not.

We have over 25 000 people who access the scheme, but many of them do not access a single cent each year. That is because the scheme is not designed for them, for people living in rural and remote areas. People who own their own home are privileged in the scheme. My interest is in a fair and sustainable scheme.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.

### **Banned Drinker Register**

#### **Mr MILLS to CHIEF MINISTER referred to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and MINISTER for JUSTICE**

While your ministers were in this parliament promoting the virtues of the new BDR I decided to talk to some of the locals in Bennett Park next to this building, something I often do because I see the park as a reality check against the words we speak in here, particularly around social issues such as alcohol and homelessness.

The five Territorians—if I had time I would give you their names—who are visiting the area told me they believe alcohol is a problem for them, that they have health issues. They know the BDR starts on 1 September, but they are unfazed. They said if they are on the list they will get someone else to buy alcohol for them.

How does your BDR propose to deal with this, the Achilles' heel of your new scheme?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I will speak to this but the Attorney-General wants to add some at the end.

I have been speaking to the Police Commissioner about this because we are aware of secondary supply being an issue. It is something the police targeted last time the BDR was introduced, so it is not a new issue for them. They deal with it now in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine because of police outside bottle shops. There are provisions on secondary supply in the BDR bill. The police are working on secondary supply and the problems it could cause.

Mobility is an issue. We saw that with the police outside bottle shops in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine. People moved to Darwin and Palmerston where they could get alcohol. Our neighbouring states, WA and Queensland, sometimes feel that pressure too. Through the implementation of the BDR last time we saw that was an issue. People will try to access alcohol outside the Northern Territory.

The two issues regarding access to alcohol are secondary supply and mobility. We have plans for that. The Police Commissioner is working on the plans for secondary supply. I do not reveal the operational plans of police, but I assure you those plans exist.

**Ms FYLES (Attorney-General and Justice):** Madam Speaker, I am conscious that there is a bill before the House, but the member asked a very important question.

The BDR is not only about banning alcohol sales to those whose drinking causes harm to themselves and the broader community. There is also \$15.5m to develop specialist assessment services and withdrawal services in the Top End, which will be co-located at Berrimah.

Part of the BDR is the technology, the roll out and the register; but, the other part is putting resources towards providing these people with case workers and engaging with their primary health providers so we can support their rehabilitation.

The AMT is a failed, flawed model. We know that; there was a report.

**Mr Wood** interjecting.

**Ms FYLES:** We know your views, Member for Nelson.

The AMT was hugely expensive and showed no evidence of helping people. We need to provide support to the many Territorians addicted to alcohol. Not only will they be given case workers and engaged with their primary health providers, but we will have created integrated pathways to treatment services.

Harm caused by alcohol in the Territory is the biggest social issue we face. We are determined to tackle it. As the Minister for Health, when I speak to health staff at Royal Darwin Hospital, at Alice Springs Hospital— we have to stop and take on these issues. We are doing that by putting in place the Banned Drinker Register. There are treatment pathways for people. We also have the broader alcohol policies review.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.

**Room to Breathe Program**

**Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

How does the Room to Breathe program benefit Territorians in remote communities?

I have recently returned from travelling across several communities in the Arnhem electorate, where I have seen the Room to Breathe works. Some of them have already been completed. I provided you with some feedback on my thoughts and community feedback on Room to Breathe, and I am wondering if you received other feedback from Territorians about the program.

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question and for her support of the Michael Gunner Labor government policy on housing in remote areas. The Member for Arnhem is right; she has briefed me. It is great to hear responses from the regions, particularly from local members.

As a minister, it is also good to see this firsthand. I am very proud to say that there are 124 families in remote areas across the Northern Territory who are benefiting from Room to Breathe. I thank the Chief Minister for his leadership in bringing \$10m forward into early works. He told us to get this started, and we are now well and truly launched into the \$1.1bn program over 10 years.

Room to Breathe is now across 22 communities in the Northern Territory. Some works are complete and some are ongoing. We targeted Indigenous business enterprises in regional councils, which have commenced work. There are some great stories about housing, but there are also very important stories about training for employment and jobs.

In Areyonga there are five locals working on-site, with work due to be completed in the next week or two. Four locals have gone through Certificate II training and will begin work at Kybrook Farm, near Pine Creek. Lajamanu has nine Indigenous Territorians and four local Lajamanu community members working. That is four new Territorians in the workforce. In Ramingining, for the Member for Nhulunbuy, ALPA has 10 local Yuelamu people working on the Room to Breathe program. It was an honour to visit that electorate and meet people from Ramingining to understand the program and speak with locals about it.

Since coming to government, we have delivered or have under way 130 new remote houses and more than 500 upgrades, increased repairs and maintenance, and started Room to Breathe. We will see housing activity in this financial year and beyond in all 73 remote communities.

Member for Nhulunbuy, I took away a very important image when the Chief Minister and I visited Ramingining; your local people were working and training, and the construction sites were active with community decisions on what people wanted in that infrastructure. The most powerful image for me was watching kids looking at and talking about what was happening and celebrating their family members delivering better community outcomes for their people through that construction.

### **Police Numbers and Recruitment**

#### **Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER**

During the election campaign you promised an additional 120 police on the beat, but after almost a year of Labor government there are fewer police than when your government was elected. What impact is the surge in police assaults—which your government has done little to address—having on police recruitment?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, firstly, I will correct the record; there are more police now than when we were elected. We have put in place a four-year recruitment plan for police. We are recruiting police as quickly as we can without reducing standards. We literally cannot recruit any more police over the next four years than we already are.

I also have to correct the other falsehood that was just put by the Leader of the Opposition. Police assaults are not going up; they are going down. But any assault on police is one too many. While it is trending down, it is still completely and utterly unacceptable. Police and other first respondents—it is not just police—respond to incidents that require them to put themselves at risk. They run towards the problem while others have to run away. That is the job of police. It is a difficult job. That is why we respect them. They are often in harm's way.

We value and respect the work police do. Without doubt, police need to know they have support. Since we were elected, 120 body-worn cameras have rolled out across the front line. That is a measure that has occurred during this term of government to date. We believe those body-worn cameras—which were trialled under the CLP, so this is not trying to claim false credit. They were trialled under the CLP but we have rolled them out. They have helped de-escalate problems earlier in the piece. It is not the perfect solution because police still go into situations where people are fired up and things can happen. But we know those body-worn cameras help de-escalate things and have led to that downward trend in police assaults. We want police to know they are safe.

We have five-year statistics on assaults on police, and we know the impact of the body-worn cameras. We are recruiting police as quickly as we can. We planned that recruitment in full consultation with the Police Commissioner and the Police Association. We do not want to reduce the standards of police. This is as fast as the police recruitment college can go without dropping standards.

The best part is the four-year plan to recruit police is mapped against attrition, so we know that four-year plan will deliver on the broken promise of the CLP regarding the 120 officers. We want to get away from this false debate regarding police numbers, and that is why we put the four-year plan in place. It is in the budget; we made sure there is certainty behind the support and funding of it, and that police are confident in recruiting. We knew we would deliver the 120 officers.

We are honouring our election promise. I am happy to correct the record for the Opposition Leader, who needs to get his facts straight. It is very important.

### **Jobs – Mining in East Arnhem Land**

#### **Mr COSTA to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and RESOURCES**

What work is being done in the mining sector to create jobs and job pathways for Indigenous Territorians in East Arnhem Land?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here with great news about the mining sector, especially for the Gumatj people in Nhulunbuy.

I had the pleasure of attending the Garma Festival with the Chief Minister and the Minister for Education a couple weeks ago. It was an amazing experience that drew a massive crowd from all over the country and other parts of the world. Opposition Leader Bill Shorten was there for the third time, and the Prime Minister was also there. That shows the importance of the Garma Festival.

I also had the pleasure of opening the Gulkula mine and training centre, along with traditional owners and the Prime Minister. It is such an exciting project for the Gumatj people. It is the first Aboriginal-owned venture to establish a mining operation and associated training operation on land, scheduled under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. It was a momentous occasion.

The Gulkula Mining Company, which is owned by the Gumatj, the traditional owners, will mine bauxite at the Dhupuma Plateau Bauxite Mine.

What does this mean for the future of the Gumatj people and other people of that area? We are trying to create jobs and a future for all Territorians. With this mine, and specifically with the training centre, we will see that happen. There are 24 attendees who will receive training in machine operations and rehabilitation, maintenance, environmental monitoring, camp management, catering and administration. Once they graduate with a Certificate I or II into specialised industry streams they are guaranteed employment on country, working for their people. They will join the five other full-time employees.

This is a magnificent announcement and a great outcome. I congratulate all the young men and women, and wish them every success, as do we all, in their training and future. This government is about delivering for Aboriginal people on their land. Your land; your culture; your job; your future.

The resource sector is a vital cog in creating jobs for Territorians. This is a fantastic project which we are proud to support in any way we can. Again, I congratulate the Gumatj people.

### **Homelands Schools – Election Promises**

#### **Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS referred to MINISTER for EDUCATION**

Whilst travelling to homelands around my electorate I became aware that there were expectations from some homelands at the time of the 2016 election. Those people are still waiting to see those commitments met. Can you please tell me what initiatives this government has put in place to specifically develop homelands schools?

#### **ANSWER**

I am happy, Member for Nhulunbuy, to follow up on any specific issues you want me to pursue in regard to expectations on homelands. I can speak in general about our homelands policy and the Education minister can speak specifically about homelands schools, if you like?

**Mr GUYULA:** The question I have is specifically asked by people to ask you as Chief Minister.

**Mr GUNNER:** In regard to community-led schools we are very supportive of that process and are working through it. We have seen Gunbalanya lead the way with the Australian Electoral Commission vote, which saw the board set up and control that school. We are happy to work at the manner and pace at which local communities want to work.

The Minister for Education can add more. I am always very happy to follow up if you have a specific question about a specific school.

**Ms LAWLER (Education):** Thank you, Member for Nhulunbuy. I think I understand because when I was at the Garma Festival I was approached by the chair of the school board of the Yirrkala Homelands School, and she had a conversation with me about the process of them having greater autonomy, independence and say about the education programs they will deliver at those homelands schools.

This is something that we, as a government, are very focused on. It is about Indigenous people having a greater say in what they want delivered in education and how they allocate resources. It is about selection of principals and it is about school autonomy.

One of our election commitments was on community-led schools. The Education department is working with the Department of the Chief Minister on that process. I am very happy to have conversations about that. It is a time line and needs to be done properly because there is a heap of things that need to be done. There needs to be training on governance, if the community needs those skill sets. Then, do they move towards independence ...

**Mr GUYULA:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! This question was given to me by someone, and it was specifically asked of the Chief Minister.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Nhulunbuy, that is fine to address the comment to the Chief Minister, but the Chief Minister has passed it to the Education minister because she is the more appropriate person to answer the educational component of your question.

**Ms LAWLER:** Thank you very much, Member for Nhulunbuy. I have been to Yirrkala homelands and I am sure the Chief Minister is more than happy to also travel there. He was at Garma with me as well.

We have committed \$1m to upgrades of those homelands, which is already being rolled out.

You are talking about homelands schools as a group, having greater connection ...

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, your time has expired.

### **Jobs – Preparing Students**

#### **Mr McCONNELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION**

It is reported that many of the jobs taken up by young Territorians will not exist in 10 to 15 years. What is this government doing in response to that change in the likely employment of the future?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, the questions today have been about jobs. One of the key roles of schools is to prepare students for the future. That is something I am very proud to be a part of.

This government is focused on innovation and preparing students for jobs of the future. That is tricky work for schools because we do not know what those jobs of the future will look like, but we know there needs to be an increase in digital literacy skills. There will be increased automation of jobs. We are focused on that.

As an election commitment we committed to rolling out coding in our primary and secondary schools as well as increasing the prominence of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We are delivering on that. We have been upskilling teachers in digital literacy and expanding enterprise education across schools.

Some of you may have seen media on a program called She Flies, which provides girls with the opportunity to fly drones during the school holidays. It was wonderful to hear about this. Some of the girls are saving their pennies to buy their own drone; they are so interested in that concept.

This is not just about town schools. I was at Titjikala School earlier this year. It was amazing to see students translating sentences they had written in English into coding. They were coding their sentences using coding languages. It is about skilling kids across the Territory but also about developing our teachers.

Some of you may have had the opportunity last Tuesday to see Skills 2021 in the Main Hall of Parliament House. It was wonderful to see about 1000 students all very well-behaved—I am sure security had no issues on the day—moving from site to site and learning the new technologies. Some were doing Minecraft, others using virtual technologies. It is important for us, as a government, to train teachers in those new technologies so they can deliver for their students.

It is about preparing our students for the jobs of the future by building their confidence in digital literacies and coding. Those new technologies are vital.

### **Audit and Compliance Functions – Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics**

#### **Mr WOOD to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS**

Following the question from the Member for Nhulunbuy, you recently announced in a press release the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum was to be suspended. A week later you announced your department was to receive an extra \$1m to ensure a greater level of scrutiny in contract procurement across the Territory. Why is this money needed when in last year's annual report the chief executive of the department said in his letter to you:

*In accordance with the requirements of section 15 of the Financial Management Act, the internal audit capacity available to the Agency is adequate, and the results of internal audits have been reported to me.*

If that was true, why is there a need to spend an extra \$1m when they have adequate audit capacity already?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, after the annual report of 30 June 2016 we saw the merger of infrastructure, transport, and lands and planning, which became the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. Given that department's workload—this financial year we are have a \$1.75bn infrastructure program—I do not think \$398 000 a year for internal audit and compliance functions is sufficient.

When the department came together one thing I wanted to do was ensure there were robust processes in place, as did the new chief executive, so additional funding was put in place. It went from \$398 000 to \$854 000.

Last week I announced an additional \$500 000 for audit and compliance functions. I want to have confidence that we are getting value for money for the taxpayer, that the programs are working and that we are getting construction projects out the door in accordance with the contractual arrangements we and Territorians expect. It is very important.

After what I heard from the department, I wanted to see additional work in that space. It was needed. I wanted to have the confidence that we had more checks and balances in the system, so that is what I have asked the department to do.

To go back over the history of the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum program, in 2014 the previous CLP government put this program together. The advice I received is that it was hastily done. It was policy on the run, a thought bubble, done in a matter of a few weeks. We came to government in August 2016 and heard concerns about the program. We beefed up the auditing compliance within the department in October and subsequently found some anomalies in the system which were investigated by the department.

In February there was one case in which discussions had commenced, and it was formally referred to police and the Auditor-General in March. The department has been working with police and the Auditor-General

since then. We have seen another five cases referred to police, which is why we have suspended the program.

I wanted to have more confidence in the checks and balances around this system, in the procurement in this agency and the workload it has. That is why we are putting more checks and balances into the system. The Auditor-General is important in this process. We will be waiting to hear what the Auditor-General says about the program, the agency and the police investigation.

We will take recommendations and findings that come from that very seriously, Member for Nelson. We are happy to brief you and any members of parliament along the way.

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