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Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Wagaman Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 5/6 students from Wagaman Primary School, accompanied by their teachers, Mark Renner and Irene Vavlas. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 7

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message No 7 from His Honour the Administrator, notifying assent to the bills passed at the June sitting. The message is dated 29 June 2017.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 224, I move that leave of absence be granted to the Member for Spillett for the duration of the August sittings due to her hospitalisation during this period.

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): In accordance with Standing Order 224 I move that the leave of absence be granted to the Member for Spillett for the duration of the August sittings due to her hospitalisation for this period. We know the Member for Spillett is expecting another baby and we are very excited about that.

This is the parliament that is delivering a lot of children. We have been in communication with the Opposition Leader's office so that we, as a government, can provide whatever support is needed. In accordance with the standing order we grant this leave of absence.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Open Day

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to a brochure on your desk, advertising the upcoming open day on Saturday 2 September for Parliament House, Government House and the Supreme Court. Please encourage your family, friends and constituents to tour the three special and important buildings to learn about the roles each of these institutions play in the governments of the Northern Territory.

Association of Independent Retirees

Madam SPEAKER: I was asked by the Association of Independent Retirees if a book could be provided to each member, and that has been placed on your desk for your interest.

Menzies School of Health Research

Madam SPEAKER: The Menzies School of Health Research has set up in the main hall, and I encourage you to go along and have a chat with them. When they came last time it was very interesting and rewarding.

VISITORS
Robert and Pauline O'Connor

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to welcome to Parliament House the parents of Serjeant-At-Arms Sean O'Connor, Robert and Pauline O'Connor, from Gladstone Central Queensland. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION
Statement Regarding Privilege Motion

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table a letter circulated to members prior to today's meeting. The Chair of the Public Accounts Committee has sought precedence to move a motion concerning privilege. Pursuant to Standing Order 229 I give my reasons for granting precedence.

I determine that this is an occasion where the Assembly's power to judge and deal with contempt is required to provide reasonable protection for the Assembly. This is our first opportunity, as the Assembly is meeting for the first time since the complaint of breach of privilege was received by the Public Accounts Committee on 4 July 2017.

I now call on the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, before I move this, I welcome Wagaman Primary School students, who are in my electorate. I see them in school and now they get to see me at work, which is a nice change.

I move that the Assembly refers to the Committee of Privileges for inquiry and report. The complaint of a potential breach of privilege received by the Public Accounts Committee on 4 July 2017 alleged punishment of the complainant for giving evidence to the committee in its inquiry into taxi licensing and regulation.

In the course of conducting the inquiry referred by the Assembly into taxi licensing and subleasing, the Public Accounts Committee received a complaint from a person making a submission to the committee. They claimed they were deprived of their source of work, which they had for nearly two years, because of their submission to the committee.

This is a matter of grave concern to the committee due to the injustice this person would suffer if this allegation was accurate. Such action would undermine the committee's ability to conduct its inquiry and the ability of the Assembly to get an accurate understanding of the workings of the taxi industry for which it makes laws.

Intimidating a person to prevent them from giving information to the Assembly or its committees would be a clear and gross breach of privilege of the Assembly. I note parliamentary privilege has nothing to do with members' entitlements—means the powers necessary for the parliament to do its work effectively.

The *House of Representatives Practice* defines 'privilege' as:

... the special rights and immunities which apply to the Houses, their committees and their Members, and which are considered essential for the proper operation of the Parliament. These rights and immunities allow the Houses to meet and carry out their proper constitutional roles, for committees to operate effectively, for Members to discharge their responsibilities to their constituents, and for others properly involved in the parliamentary process to carry out their duties and responsibilities without obstruction or fear of prosecution.

Making laws and keeping the government accountable for the benefit of the people of the Northern Territory is vital work which should not be obstructed. In the case of the Public Accounts Committee the Assembly has referred its inquiry issues relating to the regulation of the taxi industry. To inform the Assembly on this matter, it is essential that all industry participants are free to provide their perspective to the committee. Otherwise the committee's recommendations and consequential changes to the law and government action could be founded on distorted information.

I note the words of the House of Representatives Committee of Privileges in 1980, affirmed by the Privileges Committee in 2001:

If the Parliament fails to provide the protection to which ... witnesses and prospective witnesses are entitled, the effectiveness of the Committees, and through them, the Parliament and the nation, will suffer.

Having received this complaint the committee agreed I should write to you to seek precedence for this motion to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee. The appropriate body to investigate this matter is the Privileges Committee, not the Public Accounts Committee. The PAC did not conduct any investigation

into the matter, but it identified this as a serious allegation and resolved to refer it to the appropriate body for investigation as soon as possible.

It is not my intention in this debate to set out the details of the allegations or the parties involved, nor do I wish to prejudice the substance of the allegations. The Privileges Committee is the appropriate body to consider such details.

It is vital that such an allegation is properly investigated so witnesses and prospective witnesses can have confidence to freely give information to the Assembly and its committees.

Madam Speaker, I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Ms FYLES (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Sanderson for bringing forward this motion in her capacity as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee to refer this matter to the Privileges Committee.

The government will be supporting this referral. The Member for Sanderson has noted the importance of parliament having strong protection for witnesses and those who provide evidence to committees. Further, the Member for Sanderson noted that if such protections are not in place then the committees may not receive all the available evidence, causing legislation to be developed which does not truly reflect people's experiences.

Importantly, any breaches of those protections must be investigated and upheld where necessary. This Assembly and the Standing Orders Committee are finalising the implementation of the scrutiny committees. This will mean bills introduced to the Assembly will be referred to the scrutiny committees, and the committees will have the ability to call experts to give evidence relating to proposed legislation. The committees can then make recommendations to the parliament based on this evidence.

We need to ensure there are strong protections in place to anyone giving evidence to parliamentary committees.

The government is supportive of this referral and looks forward to the process and the final outcome.

I will do the paperwork at a later stage. For this specific referral to Privileges the Member for Wanguri has asked that she be removed from the Privileges Committee due to the fact it relates to her ministerial portfolio, and the Member for Drysdale will take her position for this referral to reflect the portfolio and the nature of the referral.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Madam Speaker, having been the one who referred this matter for investigation to the Public Accounts Committee—it was always apparent this would be a sensitive topic for people to decide to be a witness for hearings. Corruption is a sensitive issue. We knew from the start—or I did, having done a lot of the preliminary research into this matter before referring it to the PAC—people could be risking their employment as a result of being involved in the inquiry.

The question I have is, what efforts did the PAC make to ensure the discretion and confidentiality of people placed in the precarious position of having their employment at risk? I had a discussion with the Chair of the PAC regarding confidentiality for people who might engage with the inquiry. My concern is the PAC did not provide enough anonymity, or the option of anonymity, for these people to be involved in the inquiry.

I look forward to the outcome of this investigation by the Privileges Committee. Perhaps it is another reason for us to reflect on how our committee structure works. I note the comment made by the Attorney-General, the Leader of Government Business, regarding the decision to introduce portfolio scrutiny committees. This has been a long process.

The Select Committee on Opening Parliament to the People tabled its report and approximately 25 recommendations to this parliament months ago. It seems that only now the Standing Orders Committee is presiding over the recommendations, which were presumably referred to it four or five months ago.

I am bewildered as to what this government wants from their committee structure; it is unclear. The government seems to be indecisive. I would like to get direction. I do not know why it referred the matters to the Standing Orders Committee; it could have made its own decisions rather than having the committee structure make the decisions. I would like to know what this government wants from its committees because it is not apparent to me.

I withdrew from the Estimates Committee because of the ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! We are talking about referral to the Privileges Committee, not the Estimates Committee process.

Mrs LAMBLEY: You raised the portfolios for scrutiny committees, not I.

Madam SPEAKER: There is a certain amount of latitude involved. It is talking about referral to Privileges Committee but does involve one of the committees of parliament.

Mrs LAMBLEY: That is a good example of how this government does not want to talk about how it can be properly scrutinised.

Get your acts together. Be very clear on what you want our committees to do and how you want them to function. If the PAC has not provided this person adequate anonymity and support through being a witness in the taxi inquiry, you need not look any further than yourselves.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the opposition will be supporting this referral motion. One thing we have considered is anyone who speaks to a politician, member of parliament or committee needs to be assured they will not suffer consequences as a result. I hope the Privileges Committee send, on behalf of this parliament, a strong message that anyone should be protected if they speak to the people representing them.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I support the motion before the parliament. The motion sends a signal to people that regardless of whether it is a taxi industry inquiry or any other inquiry, we need to ensure people appearing before committees are protected. This is an example of someone losing their job because they spoke out on issues in the taxi industry. That will be part of the discussions of the Privileges Committee. It will be interesting to see what comes out of it.

The Leader of the Opposition also raised an important point. It is one that has bugged me ever since I have been in parliament. That is, public servants have to come to me in secret if they want to discuss an issue because they are scared they will lose their job.

Members of parliament should be able to speak freely to members of the public service, who may have some complaints or may have issues they wish to raise. I have raised many issues in this parliament regarding information given to me by public servants. Many times those public servants have been scared of being reprimanded or losing their jobs. In an open and transparent parliamentary system, members of parliament should be able to talk to public servants regarding matters that raise questions about how departments or the government are run. That would be a healthy thing.

You have to distinguish those who are rumour-mongering and looking for political advantage. However, there have been a number of times in which people have come to me with the idea that there are issues within the department. They know they cannot raise them within the department, so they come to me. They make sure, of course, this is done anonymously. Perhaps we also need to redefine how we deal with those who come to members of parliament with issues they need to discuss in private without having the fear they could lose their jobs.

I think the issue brought forward by this motion is a very important issue. I have no doubt that the Privileges Committee—and this is only the third time the Privileges Committee has sat. It is not common. I think one of our members of this House was threatened with going to the Privileges Committee. I am not sure whether that was real or just political argy-bargy.

Mr McCarthy: Take my name down off the waiting room, will you?

Mr WOOD: There were two people before the Privileges Committee; sorry, Member for Barkly. It is a very important part of this process that we should take seriously, ensuring the investigation run by the Privileges Committee is thorough, open and transparent. If issues arise from that, we should ensure those issues and recommendations are fully carried out.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, as a member of the PAC, in considering this matter we recognise its significance quite clearly. With government's stated objective of restoring the confidence of the Territory community in its parliament, we were left with no option but to have this allegation assessed. It is important to state this is an allegation.

In order for the processes of this parliament to be respected and the people of the Northern Territory to have confidence in their parliament, the matter needs to be properly investigated and the explanation provided to the Territory community. The other matters raised regarding the activities of this government are yet to be answered. This is a positive step—with the objective being to restore the confidence of the Territory community in its parliament.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I thank all speakers for their contributions particularly the Member for Blain. The PAC has seen significant challenges this term and this is one of them.

It is a balancing act between ensuring confidentiality safeguards exist and those providing evidence to the PAC are able to do so in an open and frank manner. To give the Member for Araluen some assurances, whilst we advertised and allowed people to submit confidentially, given some of the language barriers and understanding by people providing evidence to the PAC, the committee made a decision to treat all evidence as confidential even if it was not marked as confidential.

I guarantee all the evidence provided in written form has been treated as 100% confidential. We had hearings in Darwin and Alice Springs, which were advertised open hearings. The people who provided evidence at those hearings were given the opportunity for the hearing to be confidential at any time. No-one took up that offer, but it was available and reiterated at the beginning of every session.

The committee has discharged itself in a highly confidential manner, probably well beyond what we are bound to do. The confidentiality of people's submissions has been guaranteed. This is the appropriate thing to do. There has been much discussion about it. I thank Madam Speaker for her support. I also thank the members of the PAC for their consideration with the rest of the inquiry that is afoot.

Motion agreed to.

ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION BILL (Serial 25)

Continued from 10 May 2017.

Mr HIGGINS (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the time has come for every Territorian, including all of us in this place, to put aside partisan objectives and truly work towards reducing alcohol-related harm in the Territory. The opposition is in favour of all real solutions that will help minimise the harmful effects of alcohol in the Territory, including the re-introduction of the Banned Drinker Register.

One of the first motions the opposition brought into the 13th Legislative Assembly called for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to alcohol harm. That motion was rejected by the government, which was surprising, given the public statements from the Labor government indicating that there seems to be an appetite for a broad-based approach for tackling alcohol issues.

More recently, the opposition made a submission to the government's Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review headed by former Chief Justice Trevor Riley. That submission once again calls for bipartisan approach to alcohol issues. Instead of putting forward particular policy directives, it outlined issues the review should consider and some of the key points concerning those matters that should be considered, as well as input from the community and experts.

In other words, the opposition is committed to doing precisely what the Labor government claims to be doing—not dictating partisan policy but leaving it to the trained professionals and community members who will be affected, to determine the most effective policies for reducing harm and improving ways the Territory deals with this serious problem.

There is little question the Labor government's approach to alcohol harm minimisation, since coming to government, has been somewhat haphazard. At times the Labor government seemed more willing to take the road of least resistance relating to alcohol policy, adhering to the interests of the liquor industry rather than those of the public.

We are having an alcohol review, but we are also being told the review will not impact the Labor government's policy with regard to a number of important issues such as floor prices, lockout laws, the floor space cap and the BDR bill that will be debated today.

Playing political games with perhaps the most important issue facing the Territory as a whole is clearly misguided. There is no single policy any political party advances which will cure alcohol misuse in the Territory. To think so is absurd. In fact we have enormous problems even measuring the impact of any particular program in the real world. For example, in 2011 there were wildly conflicting figures and observations concerning the effectiveness of the BDR during the approximate nine months. This caused confusion, making it difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about the policy.

Labor has cited numbers showing an increase in hospitalisations following the repeal of the BDR. But this evidence seems to be undermined by sources such as the head of Emergency at RDH, who told Sky News earlier this year that there is no evidence-base in terms of the BDR. Conversely, upon cancelling the BDR in 2012, the previous Country Liberal government produced evidence suggesting that alcohol-related assaults and protective custody incidents actually decreased after the BDR was abolished.

This brings us to the most compelling point in the whole debate. Any proposed solutions to problem drinking should be considered individually based on the evidence supporting the particular program. If there is no evidence to support a new idea such as the BDR or any other program, then evidence gathering and independent evaluation must be part of the legislation and policy framework.

As Dr John Boffa of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress stated in 2013: 'The real problem with government alcohol initiatives is an ongoing reluctance on the part of the NT Government, Labor or CLP, to establish longitudinal datasets across a range of indicators tracking the effectiveness of alcohol measures. If government is serious about making meaningful change, data should be made available to researchers and the public, in order to provide for independent evaluation'.

Disappointingly, the BDR bill does not include a statutory provision for independent evaluation of the program, nor has such an independent review been announced by the Labor government. Such an omission speaks of a lack of self-awareness as well as a lack of an evidence-evaluating platform to gauge the success of the initiative as the primary failing of the BDR the first time around.

The Northern Territory Police Association highlighted this in a 2014 submission to the House of Representatives inquiry into harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This stated the BDR was not accompanied by an independent evaluation process, and for that reason partisan political assessments hold sway in much political debate on the issue. This sentiment was echoed by the People's Alcohol Action Coalition in 2014, which publicly called for the reintroduction of the BDR to be accompanied by resources of evaluation included from the start.

The inconsistent evaluations of available evidence that plagued the BDR during the first incarnation will continue unless a clear plan for scientific evaluation is developed and implemented. In order for Territorians or the government to intelligently evaluate the BDR this time, scientific data collection must be implemented along with funding for an independent evaluation of the program after enough data has been collected, perhaps following one year of run time.

VISITORS

Wagaman Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 5/6 students from Wagaman accompanied by their teachers, Helen Bevan and Donna Stephens. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr HIGGINS: As the Attorney-General stated in June:

I make no apologies for wanting policy backed by evidence and expert opinion.

I would not endeavour to state the case any better and the Labor government must tell us how the evidence will be gathered and how the effectiveness of the BDR will be measured. Will they commit to an independent scientific evaluation of the BDR legislation after one year?

Attorney-General, will you commit to that today?

One issue that should have been properly discovered and debated through the course of public consultation and committee hearings—the Labor government promised Territorians this last year. In this place in November the Attorney-General said:

I will take it upon myself to brief all members of the House as that legislation evolves. It is complex piece of legislation. The proposed new parliamentary committees will provide an opportunity for careful consideration of the new legislation by members, an opportunity for everybody here in this House through that committee stage, if that is to go ahead.

The proposed new parliamentary committees have not been implemented prior to this legislation being debated in the Legislative Assembly, which is a matter of concern.

In addition to the scope of evaluation, if any, there are additional details of the bill not included in the bill itself. Instead they will be subject to the will of the executive. These include everything from equipment to be used as part of the BDR to the scope of services made available to problem drinkers following the discontinuation of alcohol mandatory treatment.

There are concerns about the antiquated nature of the scanning machines. Rolling out old equipment will lead to inconvenience for Territorians who do not misuse alcohol. They will front long lines particularly on weekends, to purchase a bottle of wine to have with dinner.

The Gunner Labor government had over a year to plan for this but only recently decided on a trial of new equipment to be deployed at drive-through outlets. Industry has identified the old hardware has now passed its seven years of effective life, which is ancient for computer technology.

Far more important is the issue of rehabilitation. Treatment, rehabilitation and support pathways would have been the subject of discussion at public or committee hearings on the BDR if they had been held. The lack of adequate resources for rehabilitation was a major failing of the BDR when it was first introduced in 2011.

The Northern Territory Police Association stated in its submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs in 2014:

The weakness of the BDR was that the government of the day failed to apply adequate resources to the rehabilitation aspects of the policy and as such it failed to bring about long term change for the alcoholics who were on the register. This failure ensured that the BDR was vulnerable to criticism and it arguably created the political environment that ultimately led to its dismantling.

The danger of that circumstance repeating itself is unacceptably high. As the opposition highlighted previously, the 2017/18 budget cut over \$8m from alcohol and other drugs funding. Cuts spread across the Department of Health, Top End Health Services and the Central Australia Health Service.

If protecting people who misuse alcohol from severe or serious harm is the true objective of the BDR as Section 3 of the bill suggests, these cuts do not make sense. The BDR includes a narrow treatment pathway in Section 26, providing that a banned adult may be referred to assessment or treatment on their own application. Section 12 also allows a court to make appropriate orders for assessment or treatment only if a Banned Drinker Order is revoked. There is inconsistency here. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation should be the premise of the BDR, not an exception to it.

Treating chronic alcoholics will never be 100% successful, or anywhere near it as any treatment professional will tell you. Often those who start treatment will need to attend numerous times before they are successful. The key is getting the person to accept they have a problem and become mindful of the physical and other effects that addiction can have on their lives in order to begin the process of change.

This was the premise of alcohol mandatory treatment. Some addicts are so consumed by their disease they will not voluntarily seek treatment, but they need to learn that treatment is the only way to improve their lives.

Politics aside, the reality of the AMT and the results produced are much more nuanced than have been depicted. In fact, certain aspects of AMT worked. Similar to the BDR, the legislated objective of AMT was to assist and protect misusers of alcohol from harm, providing for the mandatory treatment and management of those misusers with—among other things—the aim of stabilising and improving their health.

Under the AMT framework, persons taken into protective custody three or more times within two months were required to undergo an assessment by Department of Health staff. In contrast, the BDR provides for mandatory assessment only when a family member or guardian of the person subject to an order requests such an assessment. Based on the results of the assessment under the AMT, the person would then appear before the AMT tribunal, which could either make a three-month mandatory treatment order or release the person.

AMT was an experiment from its inception. Such a thing had never been attempted. However, unlike the BDR, part and parcel of the AMT legislation was the collection of data and commissioning of a scientific study delivered by PWC in January 2017. The PWC evaluation of AMT established some elements of the scheme were successful, while others could be improved.

For instance, the evaluation found that 40 of the 225 AMT participants had no apprehensions following the AMT study period. Put differently, approximately 18% of the participants were not taken into police protective custody following their period of rehabilitation. When considering the peer review success rate of Alcoholics Anonymous is between 5% and 10%, 18% is a respectable success rate, particularly for a new program not patterned on existing treatment paradigms.

While there were objections to the mandatory nature of AMT, many of the participants admitted they would not have entered into treatment voluntarily, however, once they had completed their assessment period and were ready to see the tribunal they were willing to consent to the treatment.

Additionally, the assessments and medical care provided as part of AMT proved to be extremely helpful to participants. All of the respondents to the PWC survey indicated their health had improved, their involvement in the health checks was of benefit, and they were satisfied with their medical care. Many AMT participants cited the availability of quality health care as motivation to seek and continue with treatment.

Stories told by many participants interviewed for case studies indicate that although initially not motivated to seek treatment, after the assessment period, or a few weeks into treatment, they were willing to stay. Accordingly, while initially resistant to AMT, participants were more willing to participate in the program after it had been demonstrated they would be looked after. That is a lesson surely worth applying to any future treatment regimes.

The reason given for scrapping AMT was, in the words of the Attorney-General, 'alcohol mandatory treatment did not work and was incredibly costly'.

How will the BDR more effectively and efficiently deal with problem drinkers? What improvements will be made to the AMT framework for treatment that will improve the success rate of the BDR associated treatment beyond that of the AMT? How will this be done while simultaneously stripping over \$8m in funding from the alcohol and other drugs funding?

We are aware of some changes to be made to the assessment, rehabilitation and treatment framework under the BDR. The Attorney-General announced on 26 July that as part of the BDR, the sobering-up shelter in Coconut Grove will be closed. In its place the former site of alcohol mandatory treatment will serve as the new co-located sobering-up shelter, rehabilitation centre and assessment centre. A 12-week rehabilitation program will be offered with referrals accepted from clients and their families, clinicians, courts and other rehabilitation organisations.

This all sounds very positive, but there are many questions about the operation of the co-located sobering-up shelter and rehabilitation program. Perhaps the most important question is, will courts be encouraged to utilise coercive treatment options, utilising the BDR instituted facilities?

For example, Section 39F(1)(b) of the *Sentencing Act* provides that a court may impose a condition on a community-based order that the offender must:

... undergo assessment and treatment for the misuse of alcohol or drugs ...

Similarly, Section 40 of the *Sentencing Act* provides that a court may suspend a sentence of imprisonment, subject to such conditions as the court thinks fit.

The BDR bill does not amend the *Sentencing Act*, so it seems reasonable the courts would be able to refer offenders to the new co-located assessment and treatment program.

Other important questions include, will correctional services be allowed to refer as many offenders as they like from prison to participate in treatment or assessment in order to decrease recidivism rates for those addicted to alcohol? What structures will exist for the reporting of absconders, particularly those subject to current or ongoing court orders? For example, if a client is ordered by a court to participate in the 12-week BDR treatment program, will the fact they have absconded be immediately reported to police? What security procedures will be put in place to ensure those currently under a court order or who have committed a violent offence in the past are separated from people who have been voluntarily referred?

These issues have not been directly addressed to date, making the decision to forego public consultation more confusing.

What provisions of service will be made for those existing treatments? Aftercare and post-treatment pathways were flagged by the Attorney-General in November as an important focus for the BDR, stating that aftercare is something that is:

... very important and that this government will focus on. For people coming out of treatment, often not within their home community, we need to help transition them back to community – that is an important part of succeeding.

However, there is no mention of aftercare in the BDR bill and no reference to it in public statements made by the Labor government today. AMT provided wraparound services. The PWC report stated:

Aftercare provided by AMT services takes a holistic and integrated approach considering not only issues of alcohol use but also comorbidities, housing and financial needs, and the family and community context of the person.

Will the BDR scheme provide the same level of services? If so, how will it do this for less money while achieving greater success? More importantly, how will this success, if it is to exist, be scientifically measured and reported to Territorians?

There are also some specific operational issues which may undermine the effectiveness of the BDR and deserve consideration going forward, for instance, as part of an independent evaluation of the program in a year's time.

First, the BDR scheme only applies to takeaway alcohol sales. It does not have an application for pubs and restaurants, meaning problem drinkers may be refused takeaway alcohol at a bottle shop, yet allowed to walk a few metres away to purchase as many drinks as he or she likes from a pub. This exact problem was described by Melanie Herdman from Miwatj Health when the Attorney-General travelled to Nhulunbuy a few weeks ago to oversee the installation of the BDR equipment.

As Ms Herdman told the *NT News*:

There are some of my family members who come out of the pubs blind drunk, and how do we manage that system?

That is a fantastic question. I wonder if the Attorney-General would be willing to answer it.

Ms Herdman highlighted the ripple effect such drinking at the pub has on the community, including those living with the drunk person having to deal with the aftermath of alcohol misuse, all too often resulting in domestic violence, food shortage and other significant effects on the community.

The reality is that not all publicans are as conscientious about responsible service of alcohol as they should be. Patrons are allowed to buy as many drinks as they can afford, causing a significant problem which may be as damaging as takeaway alcohol. Without strict enforced limits on the service of alcohol at pubs, the BDR will not make a dent in alcohol misuse. For example, during the first incarnation of the BDR there were widespread reports of sly grog and responsible service violations at numerous well-known spots across the Territory.

Enforcement limits on the service of alcohol work. A recent study entitled *Managing Alcohol Consumption: a review on licensed clubs in remote Indigenous communities in the NT*, concluded licensed clubs located in Aboriginal communities can reduce the harmful effect of alcohol misuse, counteracting problems such as domestic violence and antisocial behaviour, so long as sensible limits are placed on the service of alcohol.

For example, a pub may have a limit of four drinks. When the four drinks are exhausted it is time to go home.

I have seen this system operating under a similar principle at the Peppi club in my electorate. Anyone having a drink at the club at Peppi will find some very strict rules regarding who is allowed into the club and checks on whether they have a sober driver. Patrons must have a driver's licence and cars are checked for registration. The club must provide food. They have entertainment during the period and there is a security guard on duty. Hours are restricted and only mid-strength alcohol served. There is no reason similar systems cannot be implemented on a wider basis, not only in Aboriginal communities but also Darwin and Alice Springs.

If those on the BDR are able to access alcohol—and they will—whether it be from a pub or on the secondary market, we must look at innovative solutions to minimise harm beyond the BDR itself. Similarly, there are no limits on quantities of takeaway alcohol purchased by persons not on the BDR. This means a secondary or grey market for alcohol could exist and proliferate in the Territory. While there is one person in a group not on the BDR, that group will have access to alcohol. Similarly, as long as a person on the BDR has a mate with a ute, they can drive it to the bottle shop and fill it to the brim with liquor, completely defeating the purpose of the BDR.

Some of the older people in this House, and I am sorry to refer to them as that, will remember the ad on television. Someone loaded a ute with alcohol and after adding a bottle of sherry, the ute collapsed. The two drivers in the front said, 'I think we have overdone it with the sherry'.

This needs to be addressed, perhaps through a limit on the amount of alcohol that may be purchased by a person on any particular day unless a special condition exists, such as a party or commercial event, for which a permit could be issued.

The BDR does not prohibit the purchase of bulk alcohol from interstate. There is no provision in the BDR bill for the legislation to apply to out-of-state liquor retailers. If it did, any such extraterritorial application would likely invite legal challenge, as the Territory legislature does not have an express grant of extraterritorial legislative powers.

More importantly, the BDR does nothing to address the extremely worrying increase of illicit drug use in the Territory. As reported a few weeks ago, the Territory is in the midst of a drug crisis. MDMA and cocaine use is the highest in the nation. Steroid possession has risen by 614% in the past year, and ice arrests have more than doubled since 2014–15. However, Territory Power and Water could not even be bothered to take part in the national wastewater drug monitoring program to determine the true extent of the problem in the Territory.

Like the grey market for alcohol that will accompany the BDR, the black market for illicit drugs will likely increase with the reintroduction of the BDR. If alcohol is more difficult to obtain, alcohol-dependent people will likely gravitate towards abuse substances that are more easily procured such as MDMA, cannabis and ice.

This is not solving the alcohol problem. It is shifting the problem to more dangerous and often more addictive, substances. This potential unintended effect of the BDR makes the decision to decrease funding for alcohol and other drug treatment by over \$8m even more troublesome and short-sighted.

The BDR is not a silver bullet and likely will not, by itself, make a significant or lasting impact on alcohol misuse and related harm in the Territory. In addition, there are a number of other measures required to complement existing strategies. These are the things the alcohol review is looking at.

For example, we know floor prices worked previously in the Territory. There is evidence right across Australia and the world supporting their effectiveness in reducing alcohol-related harm. Similarly, there is a wealth of evidence supporting reduction of the density of liquor outlets having significant impact on alcohol misuse. Tailored lock out laws, restrictions on the service of alcohol at bars and clubs and other point of sale intervention also work. We know that.

The question is whether the Labor government will commit to implementing all the recommendations of the alcohol review. Whether the government accepts all of the recommendations will be the real test of its resolve for tackling alcohol misuse in the Territory.

The BDR may prove to be a useful tool in decreasing problem drinking in the Territory. Its true utility is yet to be determined. A scientific study by an independent research party must be commissioned to test the efficiency of the BDR with changes based on any recommendations made. In addition, the assessment and treatment aspects of the bill must be carefully funded and supported. Hopefully in practice, assessment and treatment will prove an important resource for the courts and Corrections to reduce crime recidivism. That remains to be seen.

The BDR must also be complemented by any other measures recommended by the alcohol review panel, otherwise we are simply engaged in partisan politics as usual. That will not reduce alcohol harm in the Territory or drive meaningful change.

The opposition will be supporting the introduction of this bill and we hope that the government takes on the comments I have made.

Ms MANISON (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I support the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill which is targeting alcohol, the biggest cause of harm in the Northern Territory.

Every day we see the devastating impacts of alcohol and the harm it tragically causes across the Northern Territory. This is not an issue isolated to a single community or area. The impact of alcohol stretches far and wide, from small remote communities to large urban centres, the city of Darwin and across the Northern Territory. Alcohol has a devastating impact on our community.

I am very proud we are bringing back the Banned Drinker Register as part of our efforts to tackle alcohol-related harm in our community. Bringing back the Banned Drinker Register is a key commitment we took to Territorians at the last election. Territorians gave us an overwhelming response that they wanted the reintroduction of the Banned Drinker Register. They were there in August 2012 when we saw the BDR taken away overnight with nothing to replace it. We observed the consequences of that. It was irresponsibly removed with nothing to replace it. I will go into detail about that later in my contribution to this debate.

I acknowledge the Minister for Health who has worked hard to get through this complex piece of legislation. There was deep level of consultation required with the community, businesses and people right across the Northern Territory. We have to acknowledge the work of the Department of Health and the Attorney-General and Justice. Police have done an incredible amount of work—some very heavy lifting on this complex piece of legislation important to the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge the work of my colleagues here, the members of this parliament, who have talked to the community about the Banned Drinker Register in order to collect their views and thoughts. It is an important body of work that goes right across the Northern Territory. We agree we need to take action on alcohol abuse. This legislation forms an important part of that.

We are well aware of the impact it has on the broader community. Territorians have a right to feel safe and this legislation goes to the heart of community safety. We see the impact of alcohol abuse in our streets, homes and businesses.

We are committed to tackling the causes of crime and antisocial behaviour. Alcohol is a great cause of dysfunction. It is important we do everything we can to combat alcohol abuse and employ appropriate rehabilitation strategies, which are the key to this.

The vast majority of Territorians drink responsibly and we acknowledge alcohol is part of day-to-day life for many people in their social activities. But we must not ignore the cost of excessive and irresponsible alcohol consumption. As members of parliament, we must do everything we can; bringing forward this legislation is part of that.

It is not the be all and end all solution. It is an important part of our efforts to ensure to tackle alcohol-related harm using an evidence-based approach ensuring we have a holistic approach to alcohol management, rehabilitation and treatment to give people the support they need to overcome alcoholism.

Many of my constituents were keen to see the BDR returned. When the BDR was taken away overnight by the previous government with nothing to replace it, it effectively opened the flood gates of alcohol abuse right across the Northern Territory. You could see the impact overnight. I remember one evening observing the takeaway lanes of an inner city bottle shop that looked like a nightclub on the street. I had not seen anything like that before at this particular place.

A few days after the BDR was removed I went running in the northern suburbs—I was in the Member for Sanderson's electorate—pounding the pavement. I was stunned by what I saw at five o'clock in the afternoon. I continued to see scenes like that over the coming months across Darwin as there were many problem drinkers who had sudden access to more supply of alcohol. We saw the consequences of that.

The feedback from my electorate at that time, and it was consistent over the next three and a half years, was they wanted to see the BDR back. They did not see it as an inconvenience to show a licence to be scanned quickly. They did not feel it was any different to handing over one of their cards to make a payment nor did they see it as an invasion of their privacy or some of the other ridiculous arguments I have heard.

People viewed it as being part of a community committed to tackling the issue of alcohol abuse, making the community safer. They saw it as a responsible measure to tackling alcohol-related harm and the supply of takeaway alcohol, which fuels a lot of alcohol-related harm.

I have had conversations with people who work at bottle shops in my electorate. One of the local managers in my electorate has said consistently to me for the last few years, 'Whatever you do, bring back the Banned Drinker Register. I want to see the Banned Drinker Register back. It gave me the tool to be able to say no more often when I knew the people—who might have presented okay at the time—but wanted that tool because I knew that they were problem drinkers'.

It gives them greater tools to be able to say no. Most importantly it is putting the framework and support in place to tackle the issue of alcohol-related harm.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about alcohol-related harm and alcohol-related admissions to hospitals after the BDR was scrapped. There is data to support that and when I checked that data I saw a spike in alcohol-related admissions. If you were to speak to anybody working the emergency departments at that time, including police and ambulance workers, they raised their concern after the swift removal of the BDR. We have heard the community talk about its needs and wanting to see the BDR return, and we are tackling this today.

We know the social cost of alcohol in the Territory has been equated to over \$642m a year. Over 50% of assaults and up to 65% of domestic and family violence incidents are alcohol-related. These figures are unacceptable. We must take strong action to stop the harm caused by alcohol abuse.

This bill is a demonstration of our commitment to health. It is an evidence-based approach to reducing the social and physical harm caused by excessive drinking in our community. We came into government last August with a strong commitment to reintroduce the BDR. I am pleased to deliver on this promise we made to Territorians.

We have carefully reviewed the original BDR from its operations in 2011 and 2012 and have worked through the issues to ensure the BDR is as effective as possible. The original BDR declined over 16 500 sales of take-away alcohol and 6000 people were placed on the BDR.

Stopping the BDR suddenly caused an immediate increase in alcohol-related harm in the Northern Territory. This government has undertaken a long and thorough consultation to bring back the BDR.

I acknowledge the licensees for their participation in this process. They have a very important role to play in declining sales to people placed on the BDR. I would also like to thank the efforts of those people who worked behind the scenes in drafting this bill, including the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

The new version of the BDR is a more inclusive system that addresses the problem of drinkers in our community regardless of race, income or location. People can be placed on the BDR as a result of two low-level drink-driving offences in three years; alcohol-related infringements, such as refusing to leave a licenced premises; or for disorderly behaviour.

The bill proposes a suite of treatment services to best suit the person's needs when they are ready to take action to address their drinking. This approach has the best chance of success to reduce alcohol-related harm and to make our community safer.

We will commence the BDR on 1 September following the introduction of the bill and the passage of this legislation and gazettal. We have commenced communicating with Territorians regarding the start of the Banned Drinker Register and the need to present photo ID for takeaway alcohol purchases.

We will support Territorians by ensuring they have accepted forms of photo identification for the BDR. The government has announced a six-month waiver of fees for birth certificates and change-of-name records from the Births, Deaths and Marriages office and evidence of age cards from the Motor Vehicles Registry. This will come into effect from 21 August.

The BDR makes available suitable levels of therapeutic intervention to individuals aimed at their level of readiness to undertake treatment. Mandatory treatment has not been considered as there is little evidence of it having measurable long-term benefits in reducing alcohol-related harm and harmful drinking. We know that if someone is not committed to changing their behaviour in order to overcome these problems, mandatory treatment is unlikely to work regardless of how much money you throw at it. Evidence supports treatment when a person is prepared to consider a change of their behaviour.

We have not limited treatment to residential rehabilitation. It may also include: alcohol counselling and support; alcohol brief interventions that aim to initiate change in unhealthy or risky behaviour; alcohol motivational interviewing; goal-orientated client-centred counselling style for eliciting behavioural change; medically supervised alcohol withdrawal and detoxification from alcohol; intensive AOD treatment in a community setting; structured assertive day programs and/or group therapy; and residential AOD treatment or other treatment options including mutual aid such as the 12-step program, peer mentoring and recovery champions.

No one can doubt this government's commitment to reducing the harm and social cost of alcohol. Since coming to government we have imposed a moratorium on new takeaway liquor licences and strengthened legislation to ensure Sunday trade remains limited. We have limited the floor space on alcohol takeaway stores and introduced new guidelines for liquor licensing to allow public hearings.

The minister has also begun an important body of work and, with government, brought forward the comprehensive policy and legislation review in March, appointing an expert reference panel chaired by Justice Trevor Riley. The panel is now analysing the large number of submissions and evidence before it and considering which policy approaches have the best chance of working in the Territory.

Developing sound policy responses to what seems, at times, like an overwhelming social problem is the gritty business of government. It is not always easy, but it is the real work of government. We are striving to change things and make people's lives better. We are committed to bringing this body of work and the bill before the House.

We all recognise the harm alcohol causes in our community and throughout the Northern Territory. We know the flow-on effects can be devastating to children. We see too many issues with children in the Northern Territory being caused by the fact they have to face violence, overcrowded homes and neglect. We see the devastating results for the generation that follows where the child has not had the best start in life due to alcohol abuse in the family.

The BDR is not the be all and end all solution. It is an important step in the right direction to tackle what we know to be the greatest cause of alcohol-related harm: the ongoing supply of takeaway alcohol. We know the problems that this fuels in our communities across the Northern Territory.

It is important to have a comprehensive range of treatment for those found to have had engagement in antisocial behaviour, drink-driving and so forth, to make sure we get them on the path of tackling their alcohol abuse problems.

This is a comprehensive bill into which there has been a great deal of effort and consultation. I welcome the opposition's support of this bill and ongoing scrutiny of the progress of the bill over this term of parliament. One of the great shames in removing the BDR overnight was that it was not in place long enough to see results. A major change of policy and major effort of the previous government was not given a fair go, and to remove it without giving it a fair go was not responsible. There needed to be greater data collection and a more comprehensive result. Most importantly, the government needed to consider what else it could have put in place when there were, all of a sudden, 2500 problem drinkers able to purchase takeaway alcohol.

I commend the bill to the House. We look forward to the ongoing scrutiny of the Independents and opposition to the implementation, because it is important that we get this right.

I thank the community organisations that will work with government as we see the reintroduction of the BDR, with more rehabilitation and support to tackle the problem of drinking in our community.

Mr WOOD (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I do not support this bill and I will give you three good reasons why. First, the government made a promise that this bill would go before a committee of the parliament, and it did not stick to that promise.

In November, in reference to the BDR—the Opposition Leader raised this—the Attorney-General said:

The proposed new parliamentary committees will provide an opportunity for careful consideration of the new legislation by members.

This legislation has been introduced, and that has not occurred. That is a broken promise.

Second, this government set up a review into alcohol. Why has this not gone to the review? It is no good saying the Chief Justice will look at this after it has been passed. Here is a classic example of saying all things are on the table—I thought the BDR was one of those things. But this is not going before the review.

Lastly, the complete wiping of the alcohol mandatory treatment program, a program that was not recommended to be scrapped. It was scrapped because the government made a promise before the review concluded. In the election, it promised to scrap it; that is why it was scrapped. Then the government used arguments to back up its election promise, which I think is dishonest. The government would have been better off saying, 'We will consider the AMT's future after we have considered the report handed down earlier this year'. It used the report as a way of trying to back up a promise made before the election.

I am not saying the BDR is a bad thing. I was in this parliament when we discussed it last time, and I did not vote on it. That was because I believed the BDR needed to be trialled. I am disappointed that I have been asked to look at something the government promised would be sent to a committee.

The Member for Wanguri spoke about public consultation. In detailing this bill there has been consultation within the groups that need to know, but no public consultation in the broader community. Not like, for example, the seniors' concessions. There was more consultation on that—even if I think that has its issues. Here is an issue that, as a member of parliament and hopefully of one of the scrutiny communities, I could do something that made me feel like a parliamentarian who is part of this process.

One thing that disappointed me in the last 12 months is that I do not feel in this House—even though we have had plenty of ups and downs from previous governments—that I am fully participating in this process. I have written to the PAC and given ideas of how we can participate more in the development of government programs and be part of helping government with its programs. We are here for the benefit of Territorians, not for the benefit of the Labor Party. I am here for the benefit of this parliament and to help people in the Territory to have a better life, even if that means we sometimes disagree. This is the basis on which I come here.

I am feeling hollow that I will stand here, knowing that someone might say, 'We have 18, you have seven. Too bad'. I hope that does not happen. I hope the comments I make are taken as constructive criticism on a piece of very important legislation that I believe has not fulfilled what the government promised.

The BDR only operated fully for nine months. The Attorney-General said 14 months in her second reading speech. Regardless, I do not believe it operated long enough to be regarded as successful or a failure. I recall the former Member for Karama—who was once Leader of the Opposition—praising the BDR and saying it worked. Then I get the previous Leader of the Opposition, who is now Member for Blain, telling me it did not work. How can any of that can be said after nine or 14 months? It is statistically impossible and I am not sure there was sufficient base data for anyone to say whether it worked or not.

I am happy to support any government putting forward programs which will make a difference. It breaks my heart that this is an opportunity to do something, but instead of following the right process you have gone, 'Election promise, here it is, 18 to seven, it will get through'. You could have brought this parliament and the community forward to deal with this issue. It may have come back exactly as it is or had amendments to the bill which may have made it better.

The database is one of the important things this government should have before it introduces this legislation: admissions to hospitals and drying-out centres; alcohol incidents; police call-outs; DVOs related to alcohol. Will we have this important information in place before we start the program? If we do not, everyone will be arguing without facts to back up what they believe, which was a failing of the first BDR.

I heard people saying there was less trouble around the supermarket at Fannie Bay. I know the area and occasionally go to Fannie Bay. The Cool Spot is a very nice place to go. There might have been less trouble, but where did the trouble go? It might have gone out of sight. The BDR may have fixed the look of the place but whether it changed what it was meant to change—peoples' attitude to excessive drinking—I am not sure.

We need more data. Secondary and tertiary supply has been raised and will continue to be raised. This is what worries me about dropping the alcohol mandatory treatment. Chronic alcoholics will find a way around this law. They might get their own mail-order system going from down south. If you have an account you will not have much trouble getting alcohol via mail.

We all know that many people affected by alcohol have broad families they can ask to go to the local bottle-o to get a couple of cartons of beer or a few flagons of wine. When the government talks about this issue it needs to say how it will restrict secondary and tertiary alcohol supply. How you get around that is not a minor issue; it is a major issue in this debate. Hopefully, in some more of the discussion today we will hear how that will be done.

The Leader of the Opposition raised something which also concerns me. Very little in this legislation says you will get treatment. I have been told the AMT program had a punitive side in which you could be required to attend a community alcohol mandatory treatment facility in the bush, Alice Springs or at the old prison in Darwin. In this bill there is nothing to force you unless, as the Leader of the Opposition said, there is a court order for you to be assessed for compulsory alcohol treatment.

The only thing punitive in this bill—and it was funny that the criticism of the AMT was that it was punitive—is that, even if you have not broken the law there can be a decision made by the registrar to put you on a BDO. There are many good reasons for people to be placed on a BDO and I am not disputing that. If someone is a continual drinker and alcoholic at home, harming their health but not causing anyone else problems, they can be placed on a BDO. That is punitive if they are not doing any harm to anyone. They should be on a BDO. However, if one argues that the previous system was punitive, one could also argue parts of this legislation are punitive and unfair.

Resources was raised during the briefing, for which I thank the department. Do Aboriginal people understand what this is all about? Some will, but I am interested to know if the government is providing some of the pamphlets or fliers in different languages to the communities.

This is a Banned Drinker Register flier. It mentions the types of ID that will be accepted in a takeaway bottle shop. I note one is the Australian Post Keypass card. When we did some checking up on the cost of that, it is not that cheap. The website indicates there is a standard cost of \$55, or \$50 for those over the age of 60. I am unsure whether the government has looked at the cost of that ID, because not everyone will have a licence. It is important that some of this information be in language.

It is good that mobile scanners will be introduced. Most bottle shops have two or three lanes, with the quick buyer, the somewhere-in-between and those who want to browse. At my bottle shop they have eskies from which you can buy one beer. These are next to where you drive in. A complaint I had previously was, 'Why do I have to show my licence for one beer?' I am not sure we will get around that, as a person might go around the corner and come back for another beer. The idea of mobile scanners will mean people can be scanned on the spot, therefore not having to get out of their cars. This will be an improvement. I would like some feedback on whether the technology is up to date.

In my area there is a bottle shop and a licensed supermarket. This area has a lot of traffic from FIFOs, meaning big batches of people arriving on the bus at the one time. Is it possible for a bottle shop to have more than one scanner and would they have to purchase that scanner? Could they have multiple scanners to ensure people are not standing in line? I would be interested to see if that could be the case.

I see plenty of Coles and Woolies vans in the rural area and have noticed you can purchase what you like from the Coles and Woolies websites. Whose responsibility is to ensure the purchaser is not on the Banned Drinker Register?

First of all, when buying it online it is pre-paid and the person in the truck is delivering. How does that work? Will that issue be dealt with or be an exception? This is the same as the issue of ordering from interstate online. This raises another question and I do not know who is responsible for that. When a carton of wine turns up—clearly it is wine, it rattles and has Fred's Vineyard on it—who is responsible if a person

turns up there to take that alcohol? Is there any connection between this BDR system and the delivery through the mail of alcohol?

You might say they are buying it interstate, but there is another person involved—the person in the freight company, or the post office. Do they have any liability or any responsibility in the supply of alcohol—as the intermediary, you might say—to someone who could be on the BDR? I would be interested to hear what the minister has to say about that. I am sure some of this will go before the committee today.

I worry that the government will use the existing AMT facility for its voluntary program and that Mission Australia has been given the contract. We already have a number of alcohol rehabilitation providers, and if the government is moving away from the AMT, then why did it not look at putting more money into existing providers like FORWAARD and CAAPS? Or perhaps put more money into Amity? Amity is not a residential facility but does provide alcohol rehabilitation information and assistance.

Why have we brought another organisation into the system rather than use existing programs and expand their facilities? Instead we have developed a new body at the old Berrimah prison. People are probably sick of hearing this, but I feel the decision to scrap the AMT is a backward one. The Menzies School of Health report does not say scrap it. There is no doubt it costs a lot of money and may not have a large amount of success.

First of all, with alcohol treatment, mandatory or voluntary you will still need to employ very similar people. By scrapping it you have taken the heart away for some of those who work there. The second reading does not say thank you to the doctors, nurses and workers who did their best over the last few years to do something good for those who could not help themselves, those literally in the gutter, nuisances in our society who had very little chance of ever moving out of that hole. To some extent that has been taken away.

I said to someone the other day—I was at the Caltex diner. I travel to high class eating places. There was a staff member from the AMT facility at Berrimah and he shook his head and said to me, 'This is just a bad decision'.

I wonder how many people in this parliament have actually spoken to the people they are trying to help. How many people have been to the one in Alice Springs? I have been there a couple of times and also visited the facility at Darwin hospital. I have been to the Berrimah prison and spoken to the people they are trying to help. I cannot see this piece of legislation doing anything for them.

The legislation does not tell you to get treatment. If you want to drink then you have to get off the BDR. If you want to get off the BDR quickly then you get treatment. If you do not get treatment then you stay on your Banned Drinker Order until it ends.

Does that solve the problem? I do not think so. Chronic alcoholics will not stop drinking voluntarily. Some may but with secondary and tertiary supply, they are not going to worry about this legislation. They will find a way around it. I have lived in Darwin and communities long enough to know people are smart when it comes to alcohol. They are not dumb. Just look at all the funny ways people are smuggling marijuana or carva into communities. Even carva is still being pushed into communities.

People find ways to do things. The AMT provided an opportunity to do something different. People say it was punitive. Have a look at Cowdy Ward. Those who lose the ability to make good decisions in their life are sometimes required to be placed in a facility where they are safe from themselves and safe from society. The AMT was something very similar.

I will finish by saying I am disappointed with the government on this issue. I am supportive of its idea of bringing in the BDR, but it is important to have guarantees that the base data is there. The government need to be more decisive on how it will deal with secondary supply. I do not think there is enough in here to force people to go to rehabilitation, especially as the AMT has been scrapped.

The promise of this going to a scrutiny committee was broken, which made the liquor review redundant to some extent. That is similar to the promise you made at the last election that there would not be any change to closing times. This is something I would expect the liquor review to look at.

You made decisions about floor space, something I would expect the liquor review committee to look at as well. What is the point in doing that if, just like this piece of legislation, you made up your mind as an

election promise? You promised it would go to a scrutiny committee, yet it did not. In the end, nothing changed. It was all about a promise before the election and that was it.

The way this legislation has been brought forward shows a lack of good governance and a lack of commitment to promises the Labor Party made in relation to an important piece of legislation.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Speaker, I support the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill.

The bill is an important piece of legislation in the Northern Territory that will support stronger families and safer communities, and deliver on a key election commitment of this government.

Like all members, I am concerned about the health, wellbeing and safety of people in my electorate of Drysdale, as well as those in the broader community of the Northern Territory. I will speak today about my electorate, but also as Minister for Education regarding the impacts teachers and schools see of alcohol harm.

There is no doubt many Territorians are worried about the harm alcohol inflicts on our society. It is something I hear about as I move around my electorate. People are concerned about the devastating effects alcohol and substance abuse has on our families, children and way of life.

Drysdale is one electorate with a high number of alcohol outlets, similar to Darwin CBD. There are the Gray and Moulden shops which have takeaway alcohol and the shopping centres in the CBD of Palmerston, such as Oasis and Palmerston Shopping Centre. Soon there will also be the Gateway Shopping Centre and we have Palmerston Tavern, Cazaly's and the Hub.

As mentioned by the Member for Nelson, some of the issues are hidden in homes. Most of what we see is very clear in our communities. There are people misusing alcohol in parks and public places in Drysdale. We see fighting, defecating and rubbish and broken glass in our shared spaces. On a Saturday morning at 9 am when the takeaway alcohol opens for business, we observe people streaming in to purchase takeaway alcohol. These people then move to parks and open spaces to drink. We see this in areas such as the park next door to the Moulden shops and the area around Gray shops. It is then up to police to move these people on.

This antisocial behaviour makes it unsafe for children and families to play in some of our parks in Palmerston. It is difficult for all of us to enjoy our public spaces.

Many childcare staff and school staff arrive at work in the morning to be confronted with mess to clean up before students arrive. This takes up valuable preparation and resourcing time. School maintenance officers are also spending time cleaning up. That time could be better used doing proactive things in the school yards or childcare centres. It is disgusting, some of the things—not just disgusting but unsafe.

The Minister for Health mentioned that alcohol harm cost the Territory \$640m in 2009. That is a considerable amount of time ago and I am sure the figure has increased since then. Even more alarming is the cost to human life. We have the highest proportion of deaths attributed to alcohol in Australia. It is double the national rate for non-Aboriginal Territorians and nearly 10 times the rate for Aboriginal Territorians.

Alcohol was a factor for 53% of assaults in the Territory and up to 65% of domestic and family violence incidents, with the NT Police responding to an average of 22 500 domestic and family violence incidents in a year. I am sure the Member for Braitling will talk more about that in her response. These are not just statistics, but are real people with alcohol problems who are harming and killing our friends and family, our sisters and brothers, our neighbours and work colleagues.

We need to act to improve our community. We need to reduce the harm in our homes and communities so we can all feel safe and improve the health and wellbeing of Territorians.

Labor has a plan to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. We have talked about it many times in this House. It was an election commitment of ours to bring back the BDR. When we were doorknocking, at markets or talking to our constituents in the build-up to the election campaign, the BDR was brought up many times. The Member for Wanguri spoke about that as well. People wanted the BDR to come back.

The Banned Drinker Register, scrapped by the CLP government, was working. It was restricting alcohol to over 2500 people and declined more than 16 000 sales to problem drinkers in the first 12 months.

The Northern Territory Police Association has long endorsed the BDR as a highly effective weapon for tackling problem drinkers who have a big impact on the lives of Territorians. Support for the BDR from an organisation like the Police Association speaks volumes about its effectiveness in cutting off access to grog for problem drinkers. Their members are on the ground every day. They see the impact of government policy and pick up the pieces when it fails.

Like the Member for Wanguri said, it is not a silver bullet. The BDR needs to be part of a suite of measures to address the alcohol issues we face in our community. This new legislation will see the previous model strengthened. It acknowledges there are people in our community who struggle with the misuse of alcohol and provides for a much-needed healthcare approach.

Providing access to therapeutics such as alcohol counselling and support, intensive structured treatment programs, and residential treatment services is essential to reducing the harm of alcohol in our community. I know the majority of people are responsible drinkers and understand some in our community will be annoyed by the need to show identification to purchase alcohol. I believe if this measure helps identify problem drinkers and stops them from causing more harm, the few seconds it takes to check ID—even if it is a minute or two—is worth the inconvenience in order to reduce the harm happening in our community.

It is all very well to complain about the problem drinkers in the park, at the front of shopping centres and driving cars. People are using rewards cards more often. We show a number of cards when we make purchases. The time taken to show our licences is well worth it.

This government is taking a long-term approach to break the cycle to ensure ongoing and sustained change in behaviour through intervention, support and education to reduce alcohol-related harm and make our community safer.

We all know alcohol is having a significant impact on our children and young people. If we are going to reduce the misuse of alcohol and the harm it causes in our community, we need to provide children with a quality education that leads to employment. We need to provide mothers and fathers with advice on the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy and support families to care for their children so they grow healthy, happy and ready for learning.

This government knows a great education can change lives. This support begins in our earliest of years. Research shows a strong focus on early childhood education has long-term benefits for the individual and our society. Good outcomes in early childhood help to reduce mental health problems later in life, poor social and emotional outcomes and welfare dependency.

This government understands the importance of investing in early development of children and has demonstrated this by appointing a Minister for Children. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to develop a holistic, early childhood development strategic plan through the children's subcommittee of Cabinet and the expert panel. John Boffa, mentioned earlier by the Member for Daly, is on that expert panel—we met with them last Tuesday. It is wonderful to have the expertise of someone like John providing advice to government. The planned focus is on improving the outcomes of young children. We look forward to its release.

Education will play an important role in our response in developing a better and safer Territory. As with so many sectors in the Territory, education requires long-term generational changes. This means supporting families and their children from birth.

Many families need a range of supports to provide the best possible start in life for their children.

VISITORS
Rosebery Middle School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Year 7 students from Rosebery Middle School accompanied by their teachers. There are two groups of them. Please enjoy your time at Parliament House. I hope you have a good time.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms LAWLER: It is lovely to see Rosebery students. Welcome.

Families need a range of support for their children to have a good start in life. We have talked about our policy and direction of having evidence. The Member for Nelson talked about evaluations. I can assure him the BDR will be scrutinised and evaluated thoroughly. That data will inform all of our decisions.

As part of this plan, we will expand the Families as First Teachers program operating in Darwin, Alice Springs and 30 of our remote communities. By December this year, the program will be available at 38 sites across the Territory, including Palmerston and Katherine. This program was introduced by the previous Labor government and I am glad it has continued to grow. The FaFT program is important for families and young children in our communities. It provides opportunities for families to have a space to share their stories, learn from each other and educators, and be supported to provide their children with the best possible start in life.

Research shows the harm alcohol can do to the unborn foetus. Families as First Teachers is part of the puzzle of how we change behaviours long term. For the family educators, the Families as First Teachers program and our home nurse visits—one of the key components is to talk to families about the harm of alcohol to ensure they are aware that data shows even one drink a day during pregnancy can have a substantial impact on the development of the foetus and the long-term development of that child.

Having a quality early childhood education supports young children's development and early learning. This reduces their vulnerability when they start school and the prospect of becoming disengaged from the education system as they get older. It is our intention to work with families and communities to ensure more Territory children are school-ready. This focus on early childhood education and care has long-term benefits and will be an important part of our long-term strategy to make the Territory a safer place.

Studies have consistently confirmed the value of supporting families and improving early childhood outcomes as a way of addressing social disadvantage and associated crime. One of the key components of our early childhood plan will be to identify those children at risk, who are disadvantaged and need additional support, with programs in place and to provide additional support for those families to ensure their children are school-ready.

As Minister for Education, I am focused on driving improvements in educational outcomes for all Territorians and working with families and communities to achieve our goals. I know that when you are well educated you have a greater choice in your future and are better equipped to positively engage in the community. However, to do this government needs to invest. That is why I am pleased an additional \$124m is being invested in education, directly supporting students in schools over the term of this government.

I have said repeatedly that there are no silver bullets in education. We are working to have outstanding teachers in every classroom, quality educational leaders in each of our schools and for our schools to have strong relationships with families and communities.

This government is committed to providing solutions for right now and for the future. A long-term commitment to tackle challenging behaviours, providing disability and early intervention support and engagement programs will provide better outcomes for young people and improve community safety. We are investing an additional \$124m into our schools over the term of this government to provide the support students need. I have often used the analogy of a river, where we need to do the preventative work upstream with our young people and families.

We also acknowledge there are students in our schools who have foetal alcohol syndrome. How can we support them and ensure they reach their full potential? How can we support the schools in delivering support for those students, ensuring they get the best education they can? How do we support families experiencing domestic violence or who are conflicted through alcohol?

Schools are a microcosm of our society. We need to work in education across a range of—it is right in the face of schools, the issues and challenges regarding alcohol.

Addressing alcohol harm and community safety is more than law and order and health programs. It is about working with young people and their families, especially those most vulnerable, to prevent young people from abusing alcohol later in life.

The education system has an obvious role to play, which starts at the beginning of a child's life. For education to make a real difference in the lives of Territorians, children need to regularly attend school.

School staff, teachers, teacher assistants and principals across the Territory are doing everything in their power to maximise school attendance, but many factors impact on students attending school every day, including alcohol-related harm in homes. This is why we need a community approach.

We can all empathise with and understand that if a child is in a home where there is alcohol abuse, where they experience the noise, violence and interruptions to life—how hard it is for those children to get up in the mornings, when the parents might still be asleep, get organised and get to school.

We need quality programs to engage students in schooling. For young people who are vulnerable to disengagement, or have disengaged for a period of time, there are services aimed at supporting them. We are not repeating the CLP's mistakes by axing programs because they were created by our political opponents. If programs work, we have retained them.

In 2016 there were more than 1600 students enrolled in targeted engagement programs in 14 schools across the Territory. The Clontarf Academy for boys, the Stars Foundation and role model programs for girls provide important mentoring and support to attract and maintain engagement for students until Year 12.

I visited the Malak and Palmerston Re-engagement Centres and St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre in Alice Springs to gain a better understanding of their approaches and how they work with disengaged students. Often those students are from vulnerable families.

There were 80 students enrolled at the Malak Re-engagement Centre with the centre receiving, on average, five referrals a week. The centre provides a realistic, flexible schooling option, setting up young people with complex needs to succeed. The centre aims to build the confidence of students, enhancing their skills to provide them with positive experiences and relationships with the broader community. The centre offers courses in middle years with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional learning.

The senior years offer work-related courses. These include certificate courses and the prospect of students gaining a NTCET. Additionally, there are life skills programs and opportunities to interact with positive adult role models.

Like all our planned improvements to the broader education system, the new Palmerston Flexible Learning Centre started last semester as part of our investment in the area of early intervention to engage young people in education, ensuring disengaged students get a second chance, have opportunities to be well-educated, and have pathways to employment.

To prevent children from becoming disengaged from the education system, we need the whole community to understand the importance of attending school every day. Strong patterns of attendance and positive experiences at school need to start from the early years of a child's life.

This government recognises many children find it difficult to access a high-quality education without the right support, such as children with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, otherwise known as FASD, who find it difficult to learn and engage.

Exposure to alcohol on the developing brain can result in a child being born with FASD. These children will suffer long-term difficulties with speech and language skills, thinking and planning, memory and managing impulsive behaviour, which is difficult in the education setting. They are likely to be impulsive with limited ability to solve problems and find it difficult to regulate their emotions and think through the consequences of their actions. As a result, children and young people with FASD are likely to have poor educational outcomes, increased likelihood of coming into contact with welfare and youth justice services and be prone to depression, which can lead to suicide.

The impact of alcohol harm on these children and the broader community is detrimental. Research estimates a person with FASD costs the taxpayer over \$3m in services over their lifetime. An additional \$8m per year is being invested to better support and educate children with challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental health challenges to improve the outcomes for these children, their families and the school community.

We are improving student access to allied health professionals by expanding the multi-disciplinary specialist support teams and working with the Department of Health.

We have talked about assessing the long wait times for hearing, occupational therapy or diagnosis of disabilities. One of the key things we are working to cut down is the wait times, to ensure those children have access to that support early.

We have introduced new disability teaching scholarships for government and non-government schools. This will help teachers to grow their capacity and their ability to respond to children with additional needs, including children with FASD. The first 20 scholarships were awarded in June this year. We need to develop our workforce to assist teachers in building their capacity to work with children with behavioural and additional needs, including those with FASD. I look forward to those teachers graduating and seeing the work they are doing in our schools.

We are expanding the social and emotional learning program in NT schools as a systemic approach to promoting student well-being and positive behaviour. Currently 64 out of our over 150 schools have either undertaken professional development or are trial sites for this program. Having schools focused not just on literacy and numeracy, but in partnership with social and emotional learning is a great step in the right direction in supporting our students' life skills.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

RESPONSE TO PETITION Petition No 8

The CLERK: Order 123. I inform Honourable members, that response from the Minister for Territory Families to Petition No 8 has been received and circulated to honourable members.

The Galiwinku Women's Space committee to take action to prevent Domestic and Family Violence

Date presented: 16 March 2017

Presented by: Ms Wakefield (Member for Braitling)

Referred to: Minister for Territory Families (Hon Dale Wakefield MLA)

Date referred: 20 April 2017

Date response due: 23 August 2017

Date response received: 14 August 2017

Date response presented: 15 August 2017

I would like to thank the Galiwinku community for their support to reduce domestic and family violence in Galiwinku and for their petition:

To support the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee's to take action to:

- Prevent domestic and family violence through education and mediation*
- Support the victims of domestic and family violence*
- Support the building of a Domestic Violence Shelter in Galiwinku.*

Your request has been heard by our government and is being actioned.

The government has committed \$1m to build a Women's Safe House in Galiwinku in 2017-18 and \$300 000 per annum in later years to run the Galiwinku Women's Safe House.

Our Government understands that responses to domestic and family violence in remote communities need to be community driven and enable optimal safe options. We are committed to working with the Galiwinku community and the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee to design a safe house that is culturally responsive, and meets the safety needs of women and children in Galiwinku.

Territory Families is working with the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee to develop a plan and vision for the Women's Safe House, including what services will be provided, and how they will be delivered. These services may include education and mediation services as well as supports for victims of domestic and family violence and other programs. Visits are being planned for women from the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee to visit other women's shelters in the Northern Territory to share ideas.

In consultation with the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee, a possible place to build the safe house has been identified and approval from Traditional Owners is being sought. Design options are being developed for consultation and discussion with the Galiwinku Women's Space Committee.

Our Government, through Territory Families, is developing a new Northern Territory wide Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Strategy and consultations are currently taking place across the Territory. Territory Families has provided Charles Darwin University and Menzies School of Health Research with funding to review domestic and family violence reduction programs in the Northern Territory, and their impact and effectiveness, especially in remote communities. This Northern Territory wide research and strategy work will provide a basis for developing effective responses to domestic, family and sexual violence in remote communities such as Galiwinku.

ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION BILL (Serial 25)

Continued from earlier this day.

Ms LAWLER (Education): Madam Speaker, to pick up where I left off, we are expanding the social and emotional learning program in NT Government schools as a systemic approach to promoting student wellbeing and positive behaviour. There are currently 64 schools that have either undertaken professional development or are a trial site for this program.

To ensure critical supports are provided in the areas of most need, an external review of school counsellors in NT Government schools is under way. I am looking forward to seeing the results as the counsellors play such a critical role, in assisting the children with the highest needs. To underpin these initiatives, a five-year interagency strategy for students with additional needs is being developed to support a holistic service delivery model to improve student outcomes.

Alcohol education in schools is another area in which we are making a positive difference. Drug and alcohol education in NT schools is focused on building resilience and enhancing each student's ability to make positive decisions about personal health and safety. We all know drinking alcohol can cause short- and long-term harm to young people. By seeking help early they can receive the information, support and treatment required to avoid risky drinking situations and prevent problems becoming entrenched.

Research indicates young people are reluctant to seek professional help, keeping their problems to themselves or turning to friends who often do not know what to say or do. Most young people use alcohol or other drugs but are not necessarily engaged in problematic use. However, from early adolescence experimentation and risk-taking may occur. We can all remember our younger days when experimentation, risk taking and binge-drinking would occur. This is an issue for some young people in school, so it is an opportune time and place to provide educational programs for them to minimise harm.

Evidence shows minimising harm is a useful strategy. For adolescents engaging in some form of experimentation with drugs or alcohol, there is strong logic behind the minimisation approach. This approach has been around for 15 years, particularly for alcohol, as alcohol is one of the recreational drugs most commonly used by adolescents in the Territory.

The Alcohol and Other Drugs area of the Australian curriculum addresses a range of drugs including alcohol, prescription drugs, bush and alternative medicines, energy drinks, caffeine, tobacco, illegal drugs and performance enhancing drugs. The content supports students to explore the impact drugs have on individuals, families and communities.

In order to provide children with knowledge, a key thing we need to do is put education programs in place in schools. Over time you work to change behaviour. It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning, from foundation to Year 10, will learn about the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body; factors that influence the use of different types of alcohol and drugs; the impact of drug use on individuals and communities; and making informed decisions about drugs such as assertive responses, peer influences and harm minimisation.

This is about all levels—what influences youths to experience peer pressure and the impacts of drugs on the body. Schools have access to many resources to support the delivery of the curriculum in a contextually appropriate and engaging way, such as MAKINGtheLINK: Seeking Help for Risky Drinking, a school-based health program promoting help-seeking. It teaches young people the effects of alcohol on

behaviour. The program explains the risks to their brains and their relationships; demonstrating how young people can help each other to seek professional help. This reduces barriers preventing young people from seeking help from professionals, explaining what kind of help there is.

Many of the programs in our schools relating to drug and alcohol education are delivered in partnership with other government agencies and community organisations, for example police and Life Education—we have all heard of Healthy Harold—and Deadly Choices.

While our schools cannot drug-proof and alcohol-proof young people, we can use education focused on harm reduction to equip young people with the knowledge and skills needed to keep themselves safe from harm in a society where there is drug and alcohol use.

This government has listened and will work hard to address these complex issues relating to alcohol abuse and misuse. Education is a key part of the puzzle, there are no silver bullets. This is about working together with our agencies.

This government knows the value of ensuring services are available to allow people to take control of their lives to end the cycle of drug and alcohol abuse and the lasting impact it has on the individual, their family and the wider community.

We are supporting children, families and communities to give NT children the best possible start to life and to break the cycle. We are delivering a range of evidence-based long, medium and short-term strategies to reduce the prevalence of alcohol abuse. This bill will help prevent the misuse of alcohol in our community by providing the right support and reducing access to alcohol for our problem drinkers.

It will help protect people from harm, especially children. This is why I support the bill.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Madam Speaker, this issue impacts my electorate of Katherine probably more than anywhere else in the Northern Territory.

When I speak to my constituents in my electorate office or at one of Katherine's cafes, supermarkets or bottle shops, the subject of the BDR is contentiously debated by every member of the community harbouring extremely strong convictions, either for or against it.

A superficial logic might suggest all alcohol consumption should be banned, but common sense and history shows such an approach is doomed to fail. It is clear the control measures alone cannot significantly and lastingly reduce alcohol-related harm, nor should control measures alone be blamed when alcohol-related harm is present.

The many people working in alcohol-related businesses feel they are assigned an unfair proportion of the blame for alcohol-related harm and suffer under unrealistic public expectations to reduce it. Regulatory and supply control measures are often the first actions put forward to deal with alcohol-related harm. This is an unbalanced approach and most AOD professionals concur effective harm minimisation must include not only supply control, but also harm demand reduction measures.

Accordingly, some people feel that whenever a supply plan is being developed the availability of adequately resourced harm and demand reduction measures should also be taken into account. Why is it that alcohol management is a topic every Katherine resident, no matter their socioeconomic background, profession or political allegiance, will not pull any punches on? Because at the very core, any program controlling the supply of alcohol that fuels antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related harm in Katherine will deliver a positive outcome for the entire community either directly or indirectly.

This is a situation mirrored across the NT that has been debated at length in this Chamber over successive terms of government. The undeniable reality is alcohol abuse impacts every one of us. I unequivocally support the reintroduction of the Banned Drinker Register and the suite of programs contained within the bill. It introduces long-term, sustainable strategies to protect Territorians, especially those on the receiving end of alcohol-fuelled violence and will provide therapeutic support for those who misuse alcohol.

The Territory Labor government will begin testing ID scanners next week to ensure equipment is ready for the Banned Drinker Register's return on 1 September. Minister for Health, Natasha Fyles said, 'The Banned Drinker Register will make the Territory safer by cutting access to takeaway alcohol purchase'. I support that statement.

The scanning equipment needed for the BDR is being rolled out across the Territory and will be tested in six regional areas from the 19 August. Katherine is one of those communities. From 19 August takeaway outlets in these communities will be required to comply with approved identification scanning requirements under Section 31A of the *Liquor Act*. This early scanning will not pick up people on the BDR as the BDR triggers do not start until 1 September.

Early scanning will identify individuals already prohibited from buying alcohol under Section 31A of the *Liquor Act* and they will not be permitted to purchase takeaway alcohol. This includes individuals subject to court ordered bail conditions relating to alcohol and individuals subject to a domestic and family violence order relating to alcohol.

The subject of alcohol abuse in the NT and how to most effectively quash it has become a highly politicised argument. Confusion surrounds what we should be calling the presence of police officers outside bottle shops. This was highlighted by the Member for Araluen, who could not decide whether it was police, the posse or TBLs.

During the failed Giles government, the strategy to address alcohol management seemed to be more about who could come up with the acronym that rolled off the tongue the best, rather than which strategy would make our communities safer.

When the Banned Drinker Register rolls out on 1 September, it will complete a full circle for the program; it was first introduced in 2011 by the Labor government, only to be abandoned in 2012 and replaced by the controversial temporary beat locations introduced in 2014 by the failed Adam Giles-led Country Liberal government.

After the BDR was thrown on the scrap heap, the Giles government waited almost two years to roll out an alternative solution to alcohol management, during which time Territorian lives continued to be destroyed by alcohol. Two-and-a-half years after the point of sale interventions—which is the new fandangled name for the police in front of bottle shops—were unveiled, we can look back over statistical data proving that particular approach did very little to lessen the impact of alcohol-fuelled violence in places like Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

In December 2014, when point of sale interventions—which were actually still called TBLs—were implemented, 32 of the 45 assaults reported to police involved alcohol. Twelve months later, in December 2015, another 45 assaults were reported. Thirty-seven of them—over 82%—were found by police to have been triggered by or involved alcohol.

One of the best months in the TBL's two year history was December 2016, with alcohol being identified as a contributing factor in 65% of reported assaults. That is atrocious. Supporters of the point of sale program can spin the statistics however they like in a misguided attempt to justify the scrapping of the BDR and the introduction of a permanent police presence at Katherine's five takeaway liquor outlets. The raw data does not lie.

I need to add that the police presence in front of the bottle shops are still in place. It has not changed. No new policy has been rolled out and no new government decision made. I do not understand why people are saying that since Labor has gotten into government that has all disappeared and everything has gone to pot again.

In the 29 months since posses came into effect, more than 70% of assaults reported in Katherine still involved some form of alcohol abuse. In less than 12 months it became apparent that the success of the posses in keeping problem drinkers away from bottle shops had unintended and negative consequences for some small businesses. I am sure the statement I have just made will receive more than a few eye-rolls in Katherine. As with the statistics on alcohol-fuelled assaults, the data does not lie.

In many cases, the only thing the point of sale intervention approach has achieved in my electorate is to push problem drinkers into the backyards of other Territorians. That may be acceptable for those who do not care how problem drinkers are managed as long as they are not impacted by it. As an elected representative of the people of the Northern Territory I want to see a responsible, whole-of-community effort acknowledging that shifting the issue does not solve the issue.

Under the framework of the new-look BDR every takeaway liquor outlet will be equipped with identification scanners. Customers will need to present photo ID in order to purchase alcohol. The result is similar to what is being achieved by posses, except valuable police resources will not be swallowed up.

Our dedicated police officers are one of the NT's best commodities and should not be spending their time performing the work of a machine. They should be on the beat, policing and engaging with the community. This is a sentiment echoed by the Police Commissioner, Reece Kershaw, in a statement a few months ago:

The front line is welcoming of any initiative that actually reduces the incidents of people consuming too much alcohol and being irresponsible and committing crimes.

The Banned Drinker Register will provide various social, economic and aesthetic outcomes in communities like mine. One of the biggest positives will be that those on the register will be offered therapeutic support in a bid to conquer their demons.

This Territory Labor government will provide a range of treatment options for anyone on the BDR as part of a holistic strategy but draws the line at transforming the NT into a nanny state in which free will is a distant memory. Under the new-look BDR treatment will not be compulsory—I am sure the Member for Nelson will object. It will be up to the individual whether they need and want assistance in addressing their drinking problem.

Time and time again we have learned, anecdotally and also supported by research, that mandatory treatment is not successful. The recidivism rate is outrageous. If people are not able to acknowledge the problem they have or seek help on their own, they are less invested in changing.

Health is of paramount importance, which is why there will be additional pathways onto the BDR including referrals by hospital emergency staff, doctors, nurses, child protection workers and carers. It is about recognising that the most sustainable and cost effective way to address alcohol abuse now and across future generations is to provide support for problem drinkers so they seek assistance for the chance of a healthier, safer and more productive life.

In 2015 the Katherine Region Action Group conducted a review of alcohol supply in Katherine. Page six of its report stated:

An ID system that linked specific drinkers to alcohol generally rather than all drinkers to specific products might have a broader and more lasting impact.

This is what we are doing.

The current, very limited, ID systems used in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs have had little impact on reducing alcohol-related harm because problem drinkers have long since substituted other products for the casks and fortified wine consumed prior to this system being activated.

While acknowledging TBLs or posses have had a dramatic—in some people's opinion, definitely not mine—and positive impact on the amenity of Katherine, the Katherine Region Action Group felt it would be prudent to supplement TBLs at the point of sale ID system with greater functionality than the current ID system or the Banned Drinker Register system.

Committee members strongly feel the introduction of such a system NT-wide will greatly reduce displacement issues, ensuring an equal playing field for all licensed premises. The Banned Drinker Register will reduce alcohol-related harm. Alcohol abuse impacts upon everyone who calls the NT home. The Banned Drinker Register, in addition to offering the necessary support to those whose drinking causes vicious chronic pain to themselves, their families and their communities, is a holistic approach. I cannot imagine why anyone would not support this. I am at a loss for words every time I think about it.

If Territorians are serious about finding a solution to the alcohol-fuelled violence and abuse that has left an indelible mark on the character of the NT, they need to support the BDR. Give it a chance when it is reintroduced on 1 September this year. Get behind it.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is great to be back in parliament with all my colleagues and hard-working staff. I commend the Attorney-General, the Minister for Health, Michael Gunner and his government for the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill and for reinstating the Banned Drinker Register.

People in my electorate have been subject to incidents of alcohol-related abuse, crime and assaults, many of which I follow up on, meeting with my local families, police and authorities to sort out. The common thread is alcohol and its availability and ease of purchase. From this a number of issues form. These include rubbish, fires, arguments, assaults, indecent behaviour and homeless people. People have become

stuck in Palmerston in a cycle of purchasing grog, drinking more grog and getting into more trouble, and are unable to break this cycle or return home to their community or state.

The BDR is something I strongly believe in. I have worked and studied in the specialist field of Alcohol and Other Drugs for most of my life. My work has included some very important jobs over this time, including running one of the first alcohol Ending Offending programs in the old and new Alice Springs gaols; training magistrates in detailed substance misuse reports; the co-development of the first Banned Drinker Register; the development of the *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act*; working in local, rural and remote areas; supporting frontline services and communities in addressing Alcohol and Other Drug issues ...

Mr HIGGINS: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 9. I bring the state of the House to your attention.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ring the bells for a quorum.

A quorum is present.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): The work I have been doing in Alcohol and Other Drugs for most of my life continues, providing cognitive behavioural therapy programs, providing specialist training and best practice workforce development to a range of practitioners in hospitals and frontline workers—the list goes on.

Over many years, my work has included gaining many qualifications in the alcohol and other drug fields through studying evidence-based interventions in the NT and around the world to determine what works and does not work.

The National Drug Strategy is well-renowned for its key emphasis and best practice in harm minimisation. It comprises the three key strategies of harm, supply and demand reduction. Together, these are very important when addressing any alcohol and other drug issues whether in prevention, early intervention or tertiary settings.

From evidence-based reports in 2009, the cost of alcohol harm to the Northern Territory was \$640m. We are now in 2017 with no significant change to address alcohol-related issues. We have seen issues grow significantly over the past four years with more alcohol outlets than before, more access to alcohol and in some cases, less responsibility at the point of sale, leading the CLP to use NT Police to supervise responsible service of alcohol activities.

During my last few years in the alcohol and other drugs field under the previous government, and prior to becoming a local member, I continued to visit frontline services, including treatment centres and the Coconut Grove sober-up shelter. During these visits I engaged with clients and staff. The staff who work with AOD complex issues do a commendable job. However, what struck me was the number of clients not from Darwin or the NT. Many were from Western Australia or out of town.

Upon these visits I would ask why they came to Darwin. Unfortunately, the response was mostly the same from the clients who stated, 'Because it is easier to get grog here'.

I remember an old colleague of mine who taught me a lot about substance abuse in my early days. That man is Dr Peter d'Abbs, a well-known and respected researcher and specialist in AOD. Peter's approach to AOD interventions like the BDR is, 'Tony, the bottom line is, what works, works. If it is working keep doing it'.

That was the approach I hoped for when the CLP came to government, as it was clear from our frontline workers in police, hospitals and health services that the BDR was having a significant impact. However, the CLP did not keep the BDR. Instead it scrapped the whole system without reason or consultation. Talk about throwing the baby out with the bath water; this is a prime example. Then there was nothing except a period of nothing. There was nothing happening but we were told we would have the best model and the best approach. Time went on and still nothing—no supply control measures or interventions.

Finally, there was to be an announcement. We were all pleased and excited, especially in the front line services, until we found out it was to be mandatory treatment. This was every experienced Alcohol and Other Drugs worker's nightmare and we knew it would not work. The evidence shows it had not worked over many centuries across the world. More so, we knew it was at a high cost to the taxpayer. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say \$8m. Mandatory treatment required highly paid resources and staff and had

little bang for its buck, or as some would say, poor outcomes. I believe this was the findings confirmed through the CLP's own mandatory treatment review completed last year.

The current facts are clear and include the following: we know more grog equals more trouble; access to alcohol in Darwin is at the highest saturation point than ever before; we know the CLP mandatory treatment approach did not work; and the BDR was thrown out by the CLP without any consultation. Thank goodness we know all this, and I am proud to say the Gunner government is bringing back the BDR.

This government is bringing back the BDR to address and support a whole-of-community response to a serious alcohol issue across the NT, an issue the CLP failed to address. This government is reinstating the Banned Drinker Register for all Territorians. We will turn off the tap for the problem drinkers. Why wait until someone is dependent on alcohol to address the issue? Why wait until someone has purchased the alcohol to address the issues caused from consuming it? This government is not waiting any more. We are taking action to cut it off across the NT before it becomes a problem.

As my colleagues reported, it is well known that the vast majority of alcohol-related violence and crime is due to takeaway alcohol. This new legislation will be one of the toughest in the country and is one of the many important components in this government's commitment to tackle alcohol abuse across the NT.

This government and my colleagues here today are serious about tackling alcohol abuse. We are even more serious about tackling alcohol-related violence and crime. I am very pleased to know the new BDR is on track to come into operation by 1 September 2017. Last week I was pleased to discover the BDR system being installed in my local Palmerston Shopping Centre.

The new BDR will have the added benefit of freeing up hospitals, the police and our emergency services, all of which inform me of the benefits experienced when the previous BDR was in place. The BDR reduced alcohol-related admissions into our emergency departments and alcohol-related incidents in our police watch house, allowing these services to concentrate on other serious issues in a better response time.

This is a Territory-wide solution for a Territory-wide issue. I am pleased to say it is a strategy welcomed by dedicated and hard-working frontline services.

We know there are many responsible drinkers in the NT. It is fantastic to know Territorians are committed to helping stop alcohol abuse. For the small inconvenience of showing our identification, Territorians are voicing and acting on their commitment to stop alcohol-related violence and crime.

I thank the NT public and my parliamentary colleagues in this Chamber today. I thank the health services and staff who have been working to get this system in place.

We are taking action and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, I support in principle having a BDR. I wish to draw attention to Clause 42 of the bill which gives me concern. The new offence, as the bill reads, will apply if a person intentionally supplies alcohol to a person they knew or ought to have reasonably known was subject to a prohibition relating to alcohol.

It is the clause 'or ought to have reasonably known' which is most concerning.

In defining what a person who supplies alcohol to another 'ought to have reasonably known', my experience tells me this will be defined by the same standards which apply to all mainstream Australia. Regardless if the person is Yolngu from a remote community and speaks very little English, the same criteria is likely to be applied as to any other member of the public in assessing what they ought to have reasonably known.

Yet as a Yolngu man I am well aware of the language divide many Yolngu experience due to a very limited comprehension of English. Furthermore, with the high rate of English illiteracy amongst our people, they genuinely do not understand how mainstream, non-Indigenous law works.

One can take the attitude that it is the responsibility of every Australian citizen to be familiar with laws that affect them. Even the expectations would not reach people on an everyday basis communicating only in Yolngu Matha, that is, languages of North East Arnhem Land.

Our people are caught up in funeral after funeral with so many of our people dying. Many do not have the chance to apply themselves to learning a new language at an adult age, enabling them to understand the mainstream laws affecting their lives. Rather, most of our people learn by having experience in how a law works and, in time, figure it out by community experience.

For example, whilst a police officer might think person 'A' ought to have responsibly known that person 'B' was subject to prohibition and their name already on the Banned Drinker Register, we would come to a different conclusion of what they 'ought to have reasonably known', if the same question was considered by someone acutely aware of how little English many of our people comprehend.

There is no denying there are many Indigenous people from my electorate caught up drinking in towns and their families worry about them constantly and want them to come home.

Clause 42 suggests to me that we will see large numbers of people found guilty of committing the offence of supplying alcohol to their countrymen and women, unaware that it is prohibited under the law. Even more so, under Yolngu law and culture, we are required to share food, particularly with certain relations. We must share and penalties that apply if you do not. People feel sick with guilt if they do not follow these laws.

It takes time for our people to adjust to new laws. Meanwhile, I have serious concerns about the effect it will have on the welfare of the rest of the person's family. As many of the people from my electorate struggling with alcohol issues are also having problems managing their money, there is a probability they will have trouble paying any fine arising from an offence under Clause 42.

In the case of people from remote Indigenous communities, the family back home may feel pressured to pay their fine as they fear their loved one may otherwise go to gaol. The result being there is even less money for food for the family along with the very high cost of living for people in remote communities. Alternatively, their fine is not paid and a warrant is issued and yet another one of our people ends up in prison for not paying a fine.

Before closing, I also stress an important aspect with regard to alcohol rehabilitation programs. Many people in my electorate from remote Indigenous communities speak of the importance of Yolngu people being able to attend alcohol rehabilitation in North East Arnhem Land so they are close to family and country—programs for Yolngu run by Yolngu with assistance of necessary, qualified staff.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Territory Families): Madam Speaker, I support the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill. It has been great listening to the debate this afternoon. One of the advantages of having such a large team in government is we have people with extensive work histories coming to parliament.

I enjoyed the Member for Brennan's reflection of his time on the front line of drug and alcohol services and the experience that brings to us as a team. We are fortunate to have a team with such depth of knowledge on a range of subjects, because we know this is a very important issue for all Territorians.

This legislation starts where the government has said it will start. Every Territorian has a right to live in a safe home and community. The cost of alcohol misuse in the Northern Territory is far too high. Both non-Indigenous and Indigenous Territorians consume alcohol at just over 1.5 times the national average. Research undertaken by Menzies and the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies in 2009 estimated the social cost of alcohol misuse in the Northern Territory in 2004 and 2005 to be \$4197 per person. This is four times the national average. The cost in 2017 is likely to be much greater.

This calculation includes the cost of domestic and family violence services, sexual violence services, child protection and youth justice. All these issues are within my portfolio as well as the cost of policing, health, corrections and the court systems.

Alcohol misuse in the Northern Territory has a horrendous impact on the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people. It impacts on whether they have a safe and secure home, and on their chances and trajectory in life.

Alcohol is a key risk factor in domestic and family violence and sexual violence. It places children at risk and is a key risk factor in why children enter the child protection system and young people end up in the youth justice system.

I want to focus on the issues surrounding domestic and family violence as well as sexual violence. Whilst recent research shows that gender and disrespectful relationships between men and women is at the core of domestic and family violence, alcohol is a significant risk factor.

Research shows us that where domestic violence is in an existing relationship, alcohol increases the risk of physical harm and homicide within that relationship. Sixty-five percent of all domestic and family violence assaults are alcohol-related in the Northern Territory. On average, two women a week in Australia die from domestic violence.

Alcohol contributes to the level of serious bodily harm and the number of deaths of victims of domestic and family violence. Research and data from police show that harm is significantly increased when both the offender and the victim are intoxicated.

The rates of domestic and family violence are horrifying and impact on every part of this government's work including police, prisons, social services, housing and education. This legislation provides us with an important tool to manage the ongoing impacts on our community.

Alcohol misuse is a significant contributing factor to child abuse and neglect. Children in the child protection and youth justice systems are often from vulnerable families where alcohol and drug misuse as well as domestic and family violence are present. By the time they reach 10 years of age, one in every two Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory has had at least one contact with the child protection system and one in four has been subject to at least one substantiated claim of abuse or neglect.

A number of significant reports have identified alcohol misuse as a critical factor impacting on the safety and wellbeing of children. In 2007 the Little Children are Sacred report stated that:

... alcohol and other drugs are having a massive negative impact on the social fabric of Aboriginal communities and contribute greatly to family and cultural breakdown. This ultimately results in an environment where children are unsafe.

In 2010 the Growing Them Strong report stated that:

... parental substance abuse is associated with children having a greater likelihood of abuse and neglect and poorer trajectories within the child protection system.

Substance misuse consumes money that might otherwise be spent on food and other resources for children and families. It results in less awareness and reduced protection of children by family members. Alcohol misuse has a strong correlation with violence. Drinking while pregnant is associated with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder.

The 2005 Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory select committee on action to prevent Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder noted that while there is no current solid data, there is strong evidence to suggest FASD children are overrepresented in out-of-home care and exposure to alcohol increases the likelihood of entering care.

In 2014, an internal Northern Territory Government study found that 86% of cases with children on protection orders in the Northern Territory involved problematic alcohol misuse by one or more parents or family carers.

A further study by the then Department of Children and Families found that of 230 children under review, 63% of parents were reported concerning alcohol misuse with 50% of children living in families with long-term alcohol abuse problems. It also found that 6% of these children had a confirmed FASD diagnosis and one-fifth identified as prenatally alcohol-exposed.

As the minister for child protection, I have to say with statistics like that, unless we deal proactively with alcohol misuse in our community we will not get the desired outcomes in reforms for our child protection system.

Research and anecdotal information suggests that a significant number of young people in detention have a substantial involvement with alcohol and other drugs either through their own consumption or growing up in a family where alcohol misuse is a problem.

A recently released study by Mission Australia on youth homelessness found over 40% of young people reporting homelessness in the NT stated that domestic and family violence was the primary cause of their homelessness. This is higher than any other jurisdiction in Australia.

Every woman and young person deserves the right to be safe and live in a safe home and family environment. We must take tough action against irresponsible consumption of alcohol to reduce the horrendous levels of violence, injury and death of women and children in domestic and family violence situations in the Northern Territory. We also need tough action to address the horrendous levels of homelessness amongst women and young people and if we want to prevent children going into care and the youth justice system.

The previous Labor government introduced the BDR. It was a tool to prevent people who cause harm to themselves and others through the irresponsible use of alcohol from being able to purchase takeaway alcohol anywhere in the Northern Territory.

When the BDR was removed following the election of the previous CLP government there was a complete vacuum of alcohol policy. At the time I was CEO of Alice Springs Women's Shelter. I echo the Member for Brennan's experience regarding the human cost to this poor decision-making as I reflect on the chaos I personally witnessed on the front line.

This morning the Leader of the Opposition tried to minimise that impact, clutching at different pieces of information. As someone on the front line in Alice Springs at that time, I can tell him the demand for the services of the women's shelter increased exponentially overnight because there was a vacuum of policy. The hospital in Alice Springs was overwhelmed.

The Leader of the Opposition quoted someone from the Darwin hospital. He needs to speak to the emergency department doctors in Alice Springs who tell a very different story. It was a terrible time in the town and one of the most difficult times as CEO. My staff were overwhelmed and traumatised by the level of violence they were seeing and the fact it escalated in ways we could not respond to. I find it very disappointing to hear him not take any responsibility for his role in that decision-making.

The new BDR is an improved version, building on our past learning. We need to learn from past experience and ensure we do not repeat them through pure ideological or political follies, which is what we saw under the previous government. It is about using and building on the evidence and what is right for the Northern Territory.

This new improved version of the BDR takes tougher action against those who abuse alcohol and cuts alcohol supply sooner. I note some of the discussion earlier today regarding secondary supply, particularly in Alice Springs where it is a significant issue. I note the Chief Minister said police are working on this. This gives police more information to better deal with the issue of secondary supply and will capture more problem drinkers.

For example, people will now be placed on the Banned Drinker Register after three alcohol-related protective custody incidents in two years, rather than three times in three months; three alcohol infringement notices in two years, rather than three in 12 months; and any combination of three triggers in a two-year period.

The new BDR creates a number of pathways making it easy to place those who misuse alcohol and cause harm to themselves or others on the BDR. The new bill introduces alcohol bans for those on a Domestic Violence Order where alcohol is a factor. It allows for a Child Protection Order to include an alcohol ban and for the carer or parent to be placed on the BDR. This will be an important tool for frontline Territory Family workers in making decisions about keeping kids within their families safely.

The BDR gives the judiciary the power to place people on alcohol prohibition orders and know this will be enforced at the point of takeaway sales anywhere in the NT, through the BDR. This gives us 24-hour coverage, regardless of what else is happening in town. People cannot use that as an opportunity to buy large amounts of alcohol.

It gives judges more opportunity to place alcohol prohibition orders where the perpetrator in a domestic and family violence situation is known to abuse alcohol. Judges are more likely to place people on the BDR as a condition of bail. This will make women and children safer, reducing levels of antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related crime.

One of the key aspects I like about the new design of the BDR is it makes it easy for family and community members to place themselves voluntarily on the BDR. This will be an important tool for women living in domestic and family violence situations. This was something we regularly discussed with women when developing a safety plan at the women's shelter. We discussed tools they can use to keep themselves safer in a way that the person they are protecting themselves from may not know.

This is an important tool that a number of women took up under the last scheme. It was about them not being humbugged for alcohol. We will make that an easier process for women wanting the additional support to make their house as safe as possible.

The new BDR makes it easy for professionals and authorised people such as police, child protection workers and health workers who are aware of the harm alcohol misuse is causing, to apply to the BDR registrar to make a determination to place a person on the BDR.

The BDR will also allow for an income management order. This condition ensures a certain amount of income will be spent on food, medicine and material goods necessary for basic living requirements, enabling children to be fed and have their basic care and protection needs met.

In 2015–16 approximately 30% of child protection orders were in place due to problematic alcohol abuse. The new BDR ensures women, children and others impacted by the harm arising from alcohol misuse, will be safer. It will create greater protection for children at risk and strengthen families where alcohol misuse is a problem.

It gives us a chance to tackle alcohol through other interventions. Reducing domestic and family violence requires a range of measures which must address the context, causes and contributing factors of violence in a specific situation. Alcohol misuse is often one of these. The family safety framework has been set up in each regional centre to provide a coordinated response across agencies to women at serious risk of death or injury.

The 2016–17 Family Safety Framework review identified alcohol as an overwhelming contribution to the violence present in the referrals to that framework. This framework is for the women most significantly at risk, and alcohol increases the risk to women living within domestic and family violence situations.

The Family Safety Framework provides an opportunity for people from a range of agencies to make a strong plan based on each individual woman's situation. A range of tools are needed to best support each woman and any children she has to be safe in her particular circumstances. This BDR gives that group of professionals another option for making sure each woman is as safe as possible.

We are planning to further expand the Family Safety Framework to some remote communities. I acknowledge the previous CLP government expanded the program to places like Yuendumu. I visited there last Friday and was happy to hear how the process of working with staff is going at the new safe house. This will give those workers another tool so when people from remote communities travel to town they know that person will be protected there because they cannot be forced to travel somewhere in which a family member can get alcohol.

This is a really important state-wide protection system for vulnerable people, particularly those who are transient or highly mobile, as part of the abuse is often moving people around so they do not get access to services.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill builds on to a suite of legislation the Gunner Labor government has enacted since coming to government in August 2016 that will make women and children safer and save lives.

In November 2016 we amended the domestic violence mutual recognition act, ensuring women no longer have to endure the long and traumatic process of reapplying for domestic violence orders each time they cross state boundaries. This is another tool to ensure women are safe no matter where they are. A DVO in one state or territory will be recognised in other jurisdictions. It also means women will not be placed in potentially unsafe situations while waiting for a DVO to be put in place.

In March 2017 we passed the Body-Worn Video and Domestic Violence Evidence Bill, enabling videos captured by police to be used as chief evidence in court in domestic and family violence cases. This will make women safer, giving greater surety and reducing the levels of trauma experienced, by providing an alternative form of evidence in court.

In March 2017 we amended the *Bail Act* to allow the use of electronic monitoring bracelets. These bracelets will enable DVOs and bail conditions for the perpetrators of domestic and family violence to be effectively policed and enforced, increasing the sense of safety for women and potentially saving lives.

We have committed \$3m to the specialised domestic and family violence court in Alice Springs. This will put the court in a good position to manage a range of situations for women and children, giving them better access to the court. The goal of this renovation is to make domestic and family violence cases safer. It will include access to the BDR for women who want to put themselves or the perpetrators on the register. We are taking a holistic view of domestic and family violence matters rather than looking individually at each presentation to the court.

Consultation is currently under way in the Northern Territory to develop a draft family violence and sexual violence reduction framework due to be released in November 2017. I am excited to be leading this and thank the departmental staff for all their work.

Amongst other measures, the prevention framework will incorporate cultural change in relation to alcohol-related harm. We need to address the causes of people drinking and how they misuse alcohol, especially those who are misusing alcohol rather than experiencing a physical addiction to it.

The government has committed to investment earlier in children's lives and to build on prevention and early intervention services that will assist families to address the issues impacting on them, such as alcohol misuse.

We committed \$3m to dual pathways. This is about providing alternative pathways for connecting vulnerable families to local family support services aimed at strengthening families and preventing children going into care. Ensuring there are accessible drug and alcohol services available as part of that package is important. We need to acknowledge there is so much evidence that mandatory treatment does not work. To continue with it is unethical. It is a program that did not work and is not likely to work.

I am pleased to be part of redeveloping access to rehabilitation. This is about intervening before they get to the stage where they are in a high level of distress about their alcohol misuse.

We will develop local referral and care coordination mechanisms aimed at identifying families and children at risk, and will be able to refer parents and carers to the BDR through professionals. That is an important scope of ways in which we can continue to keep kids in their family situation, but making sure they are safe.

Plans are in place to co-locate family support services and provide wrap around intensive support to vulnerable families in universal services such as schools, child and family centres and health clinics.

Again I mention my trip to Yuendumu. It was wonderful to see the children and family centre working well. We have the Territory Families staff working in that building alongside the child and maternal health nurse, the FaFT program, the childcare program, the health clinic and the family safety framework.

This is the way we need to head. We need to resource those services. I acknowledge there has been work by the federal government developing those buildings—beautiful, well-designed buildings—but we need to ensure the services in those buildings are well-funded, running properly and have the tools to make the decisions to have good outcomes for people. This BDR is just another tool.

I want to briefly touch on our government's youth diversion reforms which are focused on ensuring we give police, courts and services the opportunity to divert young people at risk by intervening early, and getting young offenders into youth diversion programs. This includes alcohol and drug programs.

Our youth outreach workforce has been funded across the Northern Territory to work with young people at risk to keep them on track and address the causes of their offending behaviour.

Living in unsafe homes and families where alcohol misuse is a problem is one factor causing offending behaviour across the Northern Territory. The BDR will be a useful tool in addressing harm caused to young people through living with families where alcohol misuse is a significant problem. This is an important tool. It is about families taking responsibility for the situation and ensuring that the person whose misuse is causing problems for their family is targeted with this tool.

Parenting and family support programs along with alcohol and other programs that build self-esteem, change behaviour, provide education and employment pathways are some of the youth diversion programs that may be put in place.

Last week our government put out to tender the bail accountability program for an NGO to provide supported safe accommodation to ensure bail compliance for young people in Darwin and Alice Springs. This is targeted at young people whose home makes it almost impossible for them to meet their bail conditions. It is to provide an option of safe accommodation with the right support to ensure they have a pathway out of trouble, rather than being funnelled into a youth justice system with no options.

I want to thank the Attorney-General for her hard work on this. It is a large piece of work completed in a short period of time that will impact on every one of our portfolios. It will be a particularly useful tool for my portfolio. If we do not deal with drug and alcohol misuse in our community we will not get a different result in our child protection system, youth justice system or domestic violence services. I would like to commend this bill to the House.

Mrs WORDEN (Sanderson): Madam Speaker I support the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill 2017. This is the second most important piece of legislation, behind the changes to the *Medical Terminations Act*, passed through this House this term.

The effect of alcohol on our community is in your face every day. You would have to be living under a rock to not see the damage alcohol is causing across our community, in particular to our most vulnerable community members. We have heard that in all of the speeches made here today.

Late last night I was approached by a very intoxicated male in the car park of a popular suburban supermarket, seeking money possibly under the pretence of hunger. No member of this House can deny the damage and humiliation that alcohol addiction is causing—not to mention how this made me feel. It was confronting and I did not feel safe. Having my dad with me made me feel embarrassed that this is happening in the community I love and speak highly of to him.

Alcohol is destroying one life at a time. We have to take measures to stop easy access and supply of alcohol to people who are the most vulnerable as well as those who choose to continuously drink and cause harm.

Whether you are in your local park, visiting local shops or driving into the city, everywhere you look there are vulnerable Territorians being affected by alcohol at any time of the day, not just those consuming the alcohol, but also their partners, family, work places, users of our roads and the list goes on. The flow-on effect of alcohol across the community is almost immeasurable. We know that by limiting access to alcohol we can start to make inroads to limit its harmful effects, helping Territorians begin a journey of taking responsibility for their own actions and get support to improve their choices and health.

It is not just the cost to human lives, it is the cost to our system of service provision. We just heard that eloquently put by my colleague. It is also the cost to our hospitals, doctors, the courts and in particular we see it every day with the cost to our frontline police, family support services and emergency services.

We need to consider that every trained police officer is an investment by the taxpayer. For them to stand outside a bottle shop—I hear today the Member for Araluen wanting us to continue that practice—or repeatedly pick up intoxicated people and take them to the spin dry or move them out of public spaces is a tragic waste of this important investment.

We need our police free to respond in a timely manner to call outs and investigate matters of non-alcohol related crime, free to enforce the two kilometre drinking laws and help with traffic issues, not repeatedly pick up or move drunks on. I can only imagine what a disheartening job that would be, so this bill is not just about helping people who have difficulty with alcohol, this is also for our frontline workers.

This legislation will start to limit access for people caught in the cycle of dependency or abusing alcohol. It is a circuit breaker that should the previous government have left in place the first time we would all be enjoying the outcomes of that earlier legislation. I am convinced of that. We knew it was working then and we know it will work again.

This bill allows the making of Banned Drinker Orders which escalate in length from three to six and then possibly 12 months, placing people on the BDR. These orders will prohibit the misuse of alcohol by

stopping the purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol during the period of the Banned Drinker Order.

This is a protective measure for the person misusing alcohol and the people they are harming. Reducing supply protects our community. Banned Drinker Orders are for a set period that can be extended or reduced through a process which can include the police and the newly appointed BDR registrar. Individuals are registered on the BDR to prohibit the purchase of takeaway alcohol with the ban enforced from the moment the order is issued, even if that person has not been formally notified.

This bill gives police the power to issue an order when they charge an individual with alcohol related offences including DVO defendants when affected by alcohol at the time of the DVO offence, as we just heard from my colleague.

Alcohol plays a large part in domestic violence cases. I think it was the Treasurer who said earlier, in up to 65% of cases. It is not limited to our most vulnerable. Alcohol-fuelled domestic violence is going on behind closed doors every day and our children are seeing this frequently. This bill also has the added bonus of allowing police to breathalyse persons they suspect of breaching a Banned Drinker Order.

In terms of the sobering-up shelter, our police must be very frustrated when they repeatedly drop off the same offenders for the spin dry for alcohol related reasons or protective custody, which comes under Section 128 of the *Police Administration Act*. This bill now prescribes that when a person is dropped off for a third time within a two year period they can be placed on the register—an end to the cycle, no pun intended.

I congratulate the government on the new sobering-up service here in Darwin, but also raise an issue we need to start looking at; that is, to fund sobering-up shelters for 24 hours a day. I know this is a resourcing issue that takes considerable budget that we do not currently have, but it is something that needs to be looked at in the long term. We all know that people with alcohol issues do not wait until 4 pm to begin exhibiting harmful behaviours. The alcohol review is considering submissions on this issue. Police need a service they can drop people off at whenever they need to.

Early intervention is always the best way to tackle these issues. The bill provides much earlier triggers when behaviours begin to escalate. People who need help will get it through a system that records offences. When they present a repeated pattern, it halts access to takeaway alcohol. Takeaway is the predominant choice of alcohol access for Territorians. As much as 70% of supply comes through our takeaway outlets.

This bill is the start of prohibitions relating to alcohol, with the register forming an identification system for problem drinkers. Under section 31A of the *Liquor Act*, Banned Drinker Orders will prohibit the purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol and will prevent the purchase of takeaway alcohol by persons subjected to those prohibitions by simply showing appropriate photo identification. No identification, no alcohol. It is that simple. Yesterday we announced the free identification system to support this approach.

I have been asked a number of times, 'Why only takeaway alcohol?' I have asked this same question myself. We all know we can see intoxicated persons at our local pubs and clubs and even at some of our major sports and music events. Takeaway forms the predominant source of alcohol purchases for Territorians, but what about pubs and clubs? Once the BDR is in place on 1 September, this, along with our prolific number of takeaway licences, is our next challenge.

On taking office 12 months ago, I made a choice to no longer drink alcohol. I have survived a wedding, parties and countless functions, including Ladies Day at the races, without alcohol.

I have found Territorians, in general, have an almost emotional attachment to alcohol. Even for those who do not drink a lot, it is like we cannot do without it. It is our right to have it. Alcohol is in our faces and on our televisions on a daily basis. What we often forget is that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand.

When I tell people I no longer drink, they often mock, fake outrage and find it strange. Have I really gone that weird? And they do not hesitate to tell me so. They try to find ways to make me drink with statements like, 'Just one will not hurt'. It is like I am a loose end and no one quite knows how to treat me. How can I possibly have fun without alcohol? This attitude is a crying shame.

I was recently told by an intelligent young woman that in order to avoid this type of response, she started telling people she has an illness that prevents her from drinking alcohol rather than confess that she has chosen not to drink. When did it become so uncool not to drink?

We have become a society where to drink alcohol is the norm. Our kids do not look forward to travelling overseas or an adventure when they turn 18, or going to university or having the right to participate in democracy and vote. They look forward to legitimately being able to drink, and that is a crying shame.

Once the BDR is in place, this is where our real challenge lies. I challenge each of you, as community leaders, to have a critical look on your social media, or that of others, and see how many times you are pictured with a glass of alcohol in your hand. How many times have you or your friends posted about needing a drink on Friday or taken a family barbecue photograph where drinking has been a central part of celebrating? I think you will be surprised at what you will discover with new eyes.

Since I made the choice, I feel healthier. I have not had any mornings where I wake up feeling hungover and regretting things I might have done, and I have not felt a big hole in my wallet.

I have joined the mob at Hello Sunday Morning and will continue to advocate that our young people say no to drinking alcohol. Saying no to alcohol can affect you in positive ways that you do not anticipate. It takes bravery, but the value of the decision will empower you with a new way of thinking and new skills to enjoy yourself without alcohol. It is possible to discover life without the shade. As I told our Chief Minister, if I ever make a mistake he will know with confidence I did it soberly.

Another way we find ourselves with decisions regarding alcohol is when we attend a formal event—I know my colleagues will all understand—such as balls, fundraisers and big dinners. The ticket price almost always includes alcohol, and when you request a discount for not drinking, which I have done for the last 12 months—I am yet to find a venue offering such a discount.

In order to attend I am either forced to subsidise the drinking habits of the person next to me or make a donation to the venue. I challenge venues to start thinking about the way they encourage an overindulgence of alcohol. I see many people, young and old, heading into alcohol just to get their money's worth. This contributes to how young people shape their views toward alcohol and what they see as the norm.

We may have a right to drink but it is our responsibility to model good behaviour to our kids. Along with the Member for Brennan, I have recently taken up the fight to have no alcohol available or advertised during junior or under 18 training games at our sporting venues. I am grateful for the productive discussions we have had with the minister for sport and the Attorney-General. I am truly grateful for their genuine interest. It is one step at a time.

I am sure you can tell I have thought about this issue a great deal over the past 12 months. Our attitude, as individuals and a broader community, toward alcohol has to change. I acknowledge most people do the right thing most of the time. This is a community issue and through a change of attitude we can save lives one at a time. We can influence how our children view alcohol by making good decisions now. It is not too late.

I will briefly speak about income management measures in the bill and secondary supply. These are two of the best aspects of this bill. They provide disincentives for those addicted or those knowingly providing alcohol to problem drinkers. Whilst I acknowledge the good words you mentioned earlier, giving me a new perspective about secondary supply, this bill goes further than the measures previously put in place, which is a great thing. This bill provides for income management orders to be put in place by the BDR under the *Commonwealth Security (Administration) Act*.

This should put the money potentially wasted on alcohol back into families. However, we also know this system of income management can be fraught with exploitation. We hear stories in which alcohol dependent people go to extraordinary lengths to obtain cash to purchase alcohol. There are stories of people negotiating a cab fare to a particular place and when halfway there, asking the cab to stop in order to get a refund of half the money in cash. It does not take Einstein to see that alcohol dependent people are using the taxi system to purchase alcohol on their BasicsCard.

The strong penalties for supplying alcohol to those on the register are very important. Secondary supply is a new offence in which anyone caught intentionally supplying alcohol to a person on a prohibition order will be charged with an offence and will have a police issued Banned Drinker Order placed on them. The bill

states that, if they could have reasonably known the person was on the BDR and are found guilty by the courts, they face fines of up to 20 penalty units, which is \$3000. They can then be placed on the BDR for up to 12 months.

I would like this to be taken one step further to ban the sale of alcohol to any taxi driver while on duty or in a taxi vehicle. This is a further conversation and it makes sense. I can discuss this with the alcohol review. I acknowledge that process.

I urge those doing the wrong thing by supplying people with an alcohol dependency to think about it. The introduction of the BDR will make them responsible for their decision-making.

Some people will think the BDR relates only to our most vulnerable people, perhaps our itinerant or homeless population, but they will quickly find this is not the case. This bill targets anyone with an alcohol problem, including those found guilty of drink-driving or a mix of drink-driving and being taken into protective custody, along with those found guilty of secondary supply. This bill will start to take on problem drinkers across the Territory in all walks of life. It will start to tackle some of our attitudes towards alcohol.

This bill lays a strong foundation for change, but this is the thin edge of the wedge and there is much more to be done. The further challenge is in the practicality of its application in the world of compliance. This is an area we are possibly failing in. You only have to go out at night to see people drunk around pubs and clubs, stumbling down the street. There is lots of pushback regarding why it is so difficult to check the responsible sale of alcohol.

We already have powers in place to check RSA compliance and need to use them more frequently and with more force. That is my opinion, but I have seen enough to know that RSA compliance is not being effectively managed in many venues across the Territory. The alcohol review is looking into compliance. I acknowledge and am grateful for that. I look forward to hearing what it has to say about the ways we can improve compliance across the Territory.

Last week, during a mobile office at one of my local shopping centres, I was asked to buy alcohol twice by highly intoxicated people. It was clear they were used to accessing alcohol there. Where there is smoke, there is usually fire. Alcohol dependent people do not hang around for long if they cannot access alcohol. These types of corner stores need stronger compliance checking. Each of you has possibly seen groups hanging around local shops in your electorates, day in and day out. Yes the BDR will help, but if there is no compliance to back it up, store owners will keep selling alcohol to intoxicated people and simply not scan ID. Compliance is a massive part of the puzzle and we must up our game.

A further question we must ask ourselves is whether there are too many outlets. I feel the answer has to be yes. We have heard statistics of possibly one outlet for every 350 adults. If that is true, we clearly have an issue with outlet numbers. How can we possibly apply a compliance regime that regulates such a high number of liquor outlets across the Territory? I support the reduction of these numbers to enable greater visibility and regulation of supply, particularly as it relates to vulnerable people.

I have had my rant for the day. I am grateful for this bill and the opportunity to talk about the harm alcohol is causing across our community and the fact the BDR is a great start. But it is not the panacea. I am really hopeful for additional measures as we move forward. The alcohol review has heard a lot of what I have touched on today and I have great faith that, through that process, we will get further change in coming years.

I am interested in the clauses that create opportunity for self-application so an individual can refer themselves to be placed voluntarily on the BDR. I do not expect a big uptake, but it is a good thing to have for a person who has made the decision to address their alcohol issues. As a supportive measure to make that life change, it is a great provision.

Alcohol misuse is our greatest social challenge. The bill provides mechanisms to cut off supply of alcohol to problem drinkers, provide clinical assessment and offer support for individuals to undertake rehabilitation. In a nutshell, it takes steps to address dependency and the harm people are causing to themselves, their families and communities. I look forward to 1 September when those who have court orders or infringements relating to alcohol in place will automatically go on the register—possibly as many as 1000 people immediately having their supply cut off.

Scanning ID at takeaway outlets is a small price to pay for the safety of families, increased community safety and, most importantly, to help those who cannot help the addiction. The first time around there were

a number of complaints of it being an infringement on our rights to have to show ID when we purchase alcohol. Now we all agree it is the lesser of two evils, a minor inconvenience for a greater social outcome.

Well done to the Attorney-General and her wonderful staff for the development of these appropriate measures. This is an election commitment being delivered. The government was elected on the back of making a difference in the alcohol space. We came forward with this as part of a strong reform agenda and a year on we are definitely delivering. Territorians appreciate your work in this area and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GUNNER (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister for Health for bringing this bill to the House. I particularly thank her staff and the department for the considerable work that has gone into this bill, in partnership with many others throughout the community and the NGO sector. It is incredible to have it done and ready by 1 September. That is not an easy feat. A lot of work has happened to get us here.

Introduction of the debate on this bill is a pivotal moment for our government. It delivers on a key election commitment to reduce the supply of alcohol in our community and keep people safe. It delivers on our commitment to prevent the misuse of alcohol, to protect people, particularly children—who we have placed at the heart of our government—from alcohol-related harm. It delivers on our commitment to be tough but fair on alcohol misuse. As a responsible government, we simply have to.

Alcohol-related harm costs Territory taxpayers \$642m a year, which is \$4200 for every adult. This is almost four times the national average. That statistic is now a few years old and it would have gone up by now. It is the gauge we use for the financial impact on our community. Alcohol is a factor in much of the Territory's crime and antisocial behaviour and domestic violence incidents reported to police.

Every single day four Territory kids witness or are subjected to domestic violence. The police respond to 61 domestic violence incidents a day. This is a mind-blowing number and we have to do everything we can to provide help in this space. The Banned Drinker Register is a very important tool in doing that. It is not a silver bullet or once-off measure; it is a tool that is supposed to be part of a full kit.

This legislation today does two important things. It repeals two pieces of legislation we opposed in opposition, the *Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Act* and Alcohol Protection Orders. The ill-thought-out scheme implemented by the former government was horrendously expensive—in the order of \$23m each year for almost no individual health or community safety gains. Mandatory treatment for addictions, including alcohol, does not work. One of the key differentiating features of the Banned Drinker Register compared to the former government's scheme is that it creates opportunities through court diversion and rehabilitation to help people change their behaviours.

The rehabilitation pathways are extensive, providing opportunities from advice and counselling to day programs, detoxification and essential treatment. We have made extensive use of the existing infrastructure at the Stringybark Centre to maximise treatment pathways for problem drinkers. There will be a 32 to 40-bed sobering-up shelter provided by Mission Australia on the same site as the 12 to 14 bed withdrawal assessment facility operated by the Department of Health, as well as a 40-bed residential rehabilitation facility provided by Mission Australia. This is to provide significant critical mass for wraparound services to ensure we are providing care to those with alcohol-related health issues to make that difference in what we believe is a sensible and practical way and supports the Banned Drinker Register.

The Banned Drinker Register is much more than a point of sale intervention and just having a presence at the counter. This is a whole system about talking to those who have health issues with alcohol. The sobering-up shelter is being relocated from Coconut Grove to provide an improved pathway to treatment. This is well received by police, particularly those based in Palmerston where it can be quite time intensive to use the Coconut Grove facility. The new facility is going to be much more helpful for them and will reduce pressure on Palmerston.

There is always the issue with the Coconut Grove site regarding waking in the morning and what the individual walks out to. What services are there to assist? There will be more services at the location and they will be set up properly. It is not just about reducing pressure on police—which is very important—it is also about ensuring we have the right services for the person receiving care at that facility.

As a government we decided not to create a SMART Court this time. Instead, the role of the BDR will make clinical decisions in the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal and review decisions made under the act. This was based on the experience of practitioners and others involved with the system and

how we could make the system better. That was their advice, which we have taken on board for the BDR Mark II; we are very happy to take on that advice from the experts.

Furthermore, court conditions relating to alcohol and Child Protection Orders places someone on the Banned Drinker Register. Self-referral can also occur without assessment by a clinician. People had varied reasons for wanting to be on the Banned Drinker Register. I have feedback from people in my electorate and around the Territory who want to self-nominate for the Banned Drinker Register to avoid the humbug. It is very useful for them. Saying, 'I cannot buy the alcohol, it is not something I am allowed to do', takes the pressure off, making it much easier for them.

A concern with Alcohol Protection Orders was that you could nominate to be on one, but then became subject to potential criminal charges. The individual needs self-referral to happen in a way that works for them. Some people nominate themselves onto the list because of a health issue they want to deal with and this is a way of putting up a barrier. We do not want someone who is self-nominated to be subject to criminal charges.

Without getting into the Royal Commission and Aboriginal deaths in custody and other issues that make this a bad policy area, you want to make sure people nominate for the right reasons and are not punished as a result of nominating.

It is important to comment on the changes to the police force and the operation of the Banned Drinker Register. Police may issue a Banned Drinker Order where a person is charged with an alcohol-related offence; named as a defendant in a police DVO; was affected by alcohol at the time the DVO conduct occurred; has been taken into alcohol-related protective custody for the third time in two years; has received a third alcohol-related infringement notice in two years; and where the person has a combination of three alcohol-related protective custody or alcohol-related infringement notices in two years.

These provisions are tougher than when they were first introduced in 2011. It was previously three protective custodies in a three-month period. It is believed this will lead to more people being captured than before and provide a more robust Banned Drinker Register. The act provides the protective custody of a person defined as alcohol-related protective custody under the *Police Administration Act*. The Act also allows police to issue alcohol-related infringement notices for offences related to the *Liquor Act* and *Traffic Act*, including the immediate suspension of driving under the *Traffic Act* for high-range drink-driving.

Police will have the capacity to extend the individual's time on the Banned Drinker Order if they believe an adult has contravened their police-issued order. If the Banned Drinker Order is breached, police or the registrar can extend the order by three or six months, or reset the order for a further 12 months.

Clause 43 allows police to require a breath test if the person is in a public place and the police officer believes, on reasonable grounds, a person may be contravening a Banned Drinker Order.

The issue of secondary supply arose with the implementation of the BDR in 2011. As a government, we were keen to close the loop this time around. It is very important to establish, up front that we are aware secondary supply may be an issue and we are tackling it. I do not believe concerns regarding secondary supply mean you do not deal with primary supply. It is important to deal with primary supply issues and follow up on dealing with secondary supply. We have been very clear on that in the last term of the Labor government as well as this one.

We have taken a tough stance. Secondary supply of alcohol to a person on the BDR will be an offence. Police, local businesses and the community have strongly supported this action. A supplier can be charged with alcohol-related offences resulting in an automatic BDO for three months. If the court finds a person guilty, the person will be prohibited from purchasing alcohol for 12 months. There is also a penalty of up to \$3000 for the offence.

There is a protection from secondary supply for someone suffering from domestic violence, to protect them from further harm. Our approach is tough but fair. Combined with the serious offence of selling alcohol to a prohibited person, the offence of secondary supply will be a significant deterrent to supplying alcohol to banned individuals.

We genuinely believe the introduction of the BDR will reduce the supply of alcohol to those suffering health harm or causing harm and will reduce violence and harm in the community. Initial results from 2011–12 show that more than 2500 people who drank at harmful levels were banned from purchasing and consuming alcohol. More than 16 000 sales to problem drinkers were declined in the first year of operation.

The last time the Banned Drinker Register was introduced police described it as: 'one of the most powerful tools if not the most powerful tool available to police to actually deal with the source problem of antisocial behaviour and the violence that was occurring in the community. I think these early indicators prove that the initiative is working. From a policing point of view we see some tremendous results from this initiative'.

That was from the former Assistant Police Commissioner.

We are hoping it will be broadly supported and utilised by police and the community. I have had excellent feedback both in opposition and over the last year from police, welcoming the introduction of the Banned Drinker Register. It is a Territory-wide solution, not a patchwork approach where some communities get a solution and others do not. We need a Territory-wide solution and this is what we are embracing with the Banned Drinker Register.

As soon as the BDR takes effect, we expect approximately 1000 people on existing Alcohol Protection Orders to be placed on the register, so we have a head start this time.

I guarantee that Temporary Beat Locations will not be scrapped. The Member for Araluen raised this in Question Time and the Members for Katherine, Brainting and others talked about it. The Member for Stuart and I discussed how we can make this work in front of bottle shops. We are aware of the pressure on police. In the absence of a Banned Drinker Register, and the way Alcohol Protection Orders were drafted by the CLP, there were concerns in the community, particularly in Alice Springs, that an element of racial profiling existed as to how those TBLs were operating.

The BDR applies to all Territorians, and requires all Territorians to comply. It takes away the risk of that perception that we have to be aware of. This was real for many people who felt they were being identified, isolated and picked on, out the front of the bottle shop.

Alcohol is a problem that affects all of us. It is an 'everybody issue' and that is how we have to deal with it.

The Police Commissioner has confirmed on many occasions that Temporary Beat Locations will not be scrapped. The Banned Drinker Register is another tool supporting police to fight anti-social behaviour and crime. It is a complementary tool that supports police in doing their jobs.

We had police in the front of bottle shops when the last BDR was in place towards the end of the Henderson government. Police are looking forward to how they will work the Banned Drinker Register this time around. The BDR will allow for police resources, including Temporary Beat Locations, to be employed more effectively to fight crime and make our community safer.

We have said police are best placed to make operational decisions about where their resources are placed. That happens under current arrangements where there is no Banned Drinker Register. I have always worried that when police have to report, there is nothing behind them. Police must have that support mechanism. They must know that if they respond to something or have to organise training or go to court, whatever it is that puts pressure on them and their roster, there is a measure in place. The Banned Drinker Register does that.

Police are best placed to make policing decisions. Police in Alice Springs should make decisions about what police in Alice Springs do, not politicians in Darwin. Police are members of the community. They make decisions in the best interests of the community.

There are also improvements to this version of the Banned Drinker Register which many of the businesses in my electorate of Fannie Bay will support. The forms of identification have been expanded. All Australian and most international driver's licences will be accepted, as will evidence of age cards, Passports, Ochre Cards and Australia Post Keypass cards.

To make things easier for everyone, there will be a six month fee waiver for NT Birth Certificates and evidence of age cards. Australia Post will reduce the cost of Keypass cards. In addition, an app is being developed to support our drive through bottle shops and reduce wait times.

The BDR equipment has been rolled out and tests are occurring in six regional areas from this week, to ensure, as much as possible, that we get it right by 1 September.

I take this opportunity to highlight that the comprehensive review of alcohol policy and legislation is likely to lead to changes that will complement the introduction of the Banned Drinker Register and support community policing. The review panel, chaired by the former Chief Justice Riley, has conducted numerous

consultations and received more than 120 submissions from Territorians who want to see alcohol policy and legislation make sense in the Northern Territory.

We have to reduce the harm that people are doing to themselves and to others. We have to move to a more responsible way of enjoying alcohol.

I look forward to the outcomes of this review and it complementing the number of measures already taken by our government. These include halting any new takeaway liquor licences, strengthening legislation to ensure Sunday trade remains limited, limiting floor space for takeaway alcohol stores and introducing new guidelines for liquor licensing to allow for public hearings.

The opposition and Independents often talk about evidence now that they are no longer in government. We are not afraid of evaluating whether our policies work or not. There will be an evaluation of the Banned Drinker Register. We want to make evidence-based decisions and know how we can continually improve things. We are not afraid of evidence or data. The Minister for Health will soon release the details about the evaluation and how we will roll it out.

Without a doubt, there will be an independent evaluation measuring whether the outcomes we are seeking from the Banned Drinker Register occur. I have said to the media, NTCOSS and in speeches that we want to support something that works, makes a genuine difference and prevents harm people are doing to themselves or others. We want to know how the Banned Drinker Register is working so we can adjust, change or adapt it, whatever it takes, to ensure we are properly intervening in this space. I would like to know, as much as anyone, whether we have the levers right in alcohol policy. That is one reason I am welcoming the review being done by former Chief Justice Trevor Riley. We have to get this right.

This bill is just one piece in the puzzle, one tool in the kit. There is a lot we have to do in this space. I genuinely believe the BDR will make a difference, but it cannot act in isolation. We cannot operate independently of other measures. We need a series of things to make an impact on people so they can have healthy lives, kids can grow up strong and there is a reduction in family violence and the harm people cause to themselves and others.

This is my ninth year in this Chamber and we have been involved in many debates in that time. Alcohol is probably the number one issue we have debated, year in and year out. This is just one more piece to the puzzle. I am expecting many debates on alcohol this term. It is something we have to keep addressing and working on. It is the number one item that underpins most of the issues in the Territory at that acute end.

In my opinion the most important thing is investing in kids early, which will address many issues. But when you look at the acute end and what underpins many of the impacts on the hospital's ED and police, alcohol is there for much of it.

As the Chief Minister and a Territorian who has witnessed the harmful effects of alcohol in my life—as we all have, that is not unique to me—I am looking forward to the day when alcohol policy legislation and regulation support public health, community safety our businesses and looks after those individuals. It is our biggest social challenge. There are many Territorians who enjoy a drink. As a community, we have to find a way to maturely, safely and sensibly deal with it, whether it is how we consume alcohol in public or operate a motor vehicle. We still have drink-driving challenges and many more when it comes to alcohol.

All of us in this Chamber have to take it seriously, which is what we are doing. I commend the minister and her department for the significant amount of work they have done to have this ready by 1 September. It is an incredible effort. This is one of the things we will be doing in this space to make our community safer and healthier. This is our opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of many Territorians in a positive and non-discriminatory way. That is very important. Everyone has to show their ID. As a government, we are making the tough decisions necessary to ensure the health and safety of people is being addressed when it comes to the over-consumption of alcohol.

I thank everyone who contributed to the debate and the minister for bringing it forward. It is important we recognise that this is not the end point. There is an ongoing body of work that needs to happen with implementation, roll out, evaluation, constantly working with the sector, adjusting it and ensuring we are working to the best interests of Territorians.

I commend this bill to the House.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to talk about this piece of legislation. The Northern Territory Government is committed to building a safer community for everyone. A community with a vibrant nightlife, free of violence by tackling alcohol-fuelled violence. One of the first acts of the previous Country Liberal Party following their election to government in August of 2012 was reforming the Territory's alcohol regulations, abolishing the Banned Drinker Register and the Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment Court, known as the SMART Courts, on the basis they believed they did not work.

They introduced alcohol mandatory treatment programs. Whilst I disagree with that decision, I acknowledge people may have subscribed to that position for a variety of reasons. One of the only reasons I could believe is through AMT there was ability to pick up secondary conditions people may have that were not presented to medical facilities. That is probably the only thing I believe you could get out of the alcohol mandatory treatment programs.

Alcohol-fuelled violence continues to be a problem that claims lives and destroys families. It discourages Territorians to socialise in our great pubs, restaurants and establishments across the Northern Territory. It also puts enormous stress on our police resources and emergency services as, day in and day out, they have to deal with the result of the effects of alcohol.

At the last election we made it very clear we had listened to the community's call for action and had begun to look at comprehensive reform to change the lives of many Territorians. We understood that the human and economic costs associated with alcohol-fuelled violence and the misuse of alcohol was a cost we could not continue to absorb. That is why, when elected, we went straight to work to ensure the required reform necessary to address this complex problem was something that could happen, would happen and is happening.

When we speak about the effects of alcohol and what it does to people, not only in the Northern Territory but right across the nation, we need to understand the social determinants of the harmful use of alcohol. The experience of racism, poverty, social and financial exclusion, unemployment and low levels of literacy and numeracy are just some of the factors. In parts of the Northern Territory grief, loss and trauma are high contributing factors and result in people turning to alcohol to help alleviate those mechanisms.

I believe that part of alcohol reform is looking at a therapeutic model which goes far beyond the day-to-day consumption of alcohol in the Northern Territory. We need to look at addressing some of the deep issues around trauma, grief and the effects that the experience of racism—day in and day out—has on people. We also need to look at the impacts alcohol has on children, partners, family members and the community, as well as the future impacts and multidimensional disadvantages that alcohol plays for the future of our young children. It is something we need to be mindful of when we are talking about how we can do more work in that space.

Unlike the previous CLP government, our government understands the majority of Territorians support a whole sweep of innovative measures to look at alternative ways to curb this issue. I am pleased to stand here today in support of this bill. The government is looking at a comprehensive, multifaceted approach aimed at changing the culture around drinking, promoting responsible drinking, helping those who are in need, those who need to turn off the tap and ensuring a safer environment for everyone.

In keeping with our election commitments we are introducing the Banned Drinker Register. On this side of the Chamber, we understand the enormous benefits the BDR has to offer every day Territorians. The BDR is an identification system which will operate in outlets across the Northern Territory where every day Territorians purchase alcohol. It identifies people who have been placed on the register, who have been banned from purchasing, drinking or even being around alcohol.

An additional measure I am in support of is the voluntary component, which allows every day Territorians to opt into the register, allowing them so much relief from external family pressures. I speak from a personal view of having family and friends who are very much looking forward to this avenue of being able to voluntarily put themselves on the register to reduce the risk of elder abuse, family domestic violence or the pressures of being humbugged to buy alcohol for someone on the register.

I welcome the opportunity for Territorians to be able to voluntarily go on to the Banned Drinker Register to reduce any level of domestic violence in the Northern Territory, it is a measure worth taking up and exploring. The voluntary component also reduces the risk of elder abuse. It allows vulnerable Territorians to tell family members they are on the register and are not able to purchase alcohol.

I was very heartened when our Attorney-General publicly announced that the government will waive the fee for two key forms of identification, birth certificates and evidence of age cards, from August 21 to ensure Territorians are prepared for the BDR.

This is a great announcement for Territorians, particularly those living in regional and remote parts of the Northern Territory, like the good people of Namatjira. Obtaining identification in the bush can be a process that is often daunting and unfair. People in the bush sometimes do not have the funds to get into our urban centres, let alone pay fees in excess of \$20 to obtain this information.

I acknowledge the hard work of the team at Tangentyere Council who every day ensure that town campers have access to the appropriate identification services through the Tangentyere identification cards, which can be obtained through a simple visit to Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs.

Under the reintroduction of the BDR, forms of identification such as Australian drivers' licences, passports, 18 plus cards and Ochre Cards will be accepted. The Banned Drinker Register is just one of many new measures being introduced to curb the issues of alcohol addiction and substance abuse. The register is part of a suite of therapeutic measures which will allow our vulnerable people suffering with alcoholism to obtain the support services they require to assist with their drinking problems and overcome the challenges that lie ahead for them.

As a member of this Assembly representing a hybrid electorate, from the hard-working people of the rural areas of Alice Springs to vibrant, remote communities and the passionate town campers—the BDR is a tool that does not discriminate. Rather, it is a tool that was described by Northern Territory police as the best tool they had for tackling alcohol-related crime, violence and antisocial behaviour.

As a born and bred Territorian I have experienced firsthand the effects of alcohol; the effects of loved ones being subjected to domestic family violence fuelled by alcohol; the effects of loved ones being taken from us by violence or as a result of motor vehicle accidents. I have seen the effects it has on our frontline services such as our medical staff, our great doctors and nurses of the Alice Springs Hospital; the ambos and paramedics of the St John fleet; the hard-working people of the women's shelters and organisations like CAAPU, DASA and the Central Australia Aboriginal Congress—all of these people work to address the behaviours relating to alcohol.

I pick up on the comments made by the Minister for Territory Families about what occurred when the BDR was removed in Central Australia, the effects it placed on frontline services such as the doctors and nurses at Alice Springs emergency department and our social workers, who have to pick up the pieces when people are in crisis because of alcohol-fuelled violence.

This government recognises the importance of supporting nighttime economies. That includes, but does not solely revolve around alcohol. Therefore, as part of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill, we have taken into account a range of measures which will look at combatting the effects of alcohol in a holistic and whole-of-community approach.

It is critical that the Australian Government is encouraged to work with the Northern Territory Government. The reality is, that even with the best intentions in the world, the Northern Territory Government needs the Commonwealth to work with us to overcome issues of alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and domestic violence. Whilst policies like the prescribed areas legislation stay in place federally, remote communities are unable to make their own decisions on whether they want wet canteens. While they are in possession of alcohol, it is a criminal offence if you are in an Aboriginal community.

We need the Commonwealth Government to work with us, and I encourage this. The stronger futures provision must be lifted from town camps as a first step. An appropriate and sustainable harm minimisation strategy needs to be developed and supported as a priority.

I represent an electorate made up of remote communities and town camps. As many of you know, many Aboriginal people in the Territory are residents of alcohol-protected areas. It is an offence to possess, consume or supply alcohol in a prescribed area. Individuals in possession of less than 1300 millilitres of pure alcohol can receive a fine equivalent to 100 penalty points which equates to \$15 500 or six months' imprisonment.

Penalties are sometimes considered too harsh. Imprisonment will not address the problem of alcohol dependence. Holistic programs and therapeutic interventions are the way forward, so that we can address

the problems of alcohol. A focus on harm reduction and promoting health is what we need—targeted interventions for high risk individuals and practices and an evidence-based approach.

In August 2007, Aboriginal community living areas were designated as Aboriginal prescribed areas as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. This measure effectively criminalised the possession, use and supply of alcohol in Aboriginal communities.

The people I represent in my electorate of Namatjira, Alice Springs town campers, live within walking distance of licenced premises but cannot legally consume alcohol in their own homes. These are people who have university degrees, go to work every day and have fought for this country in wars; and yet under this racist policy, this prohibition, they are unable to have the right to consume a drink.

People living on the other side of the road are able to go home and consume a drink. I do not think that is fair. Criminalising the use and possession of alcohol in community living areas is criminal and racist. We have bigger issues in town camps, such as looking at the secondary supply and how we can overcome the challenges associated with that. We know there is an emphasis on hiking up prices, which people pay.

I acknowledge the BDR is an important tool needed to combat alcohol-fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour. As members in this Chamber have put on the record today, it is only one measure of the Northern Territory Government's response to overcoming problems in alcohol areas.

The approach needed for change must include the provision of culturally appropriate rehabilitation services. When we talk about the need to overcome substance abuse, we know that including local people and communities is the best way forward. I look forward to being part of a team that will work with local communities to ensure decision-making and empowering people is something that continues to happen.

We also need to work with key stakeholders in this space. There was widespread support for the previous Banned Drinker Register before the Country Liberal Party came into government. According to ACIL Allen Consulting when key stakeholders—including Aboriginal residents, licensees and service providers—were asked their opinion on the abolishment of the BDR, they were forthcoming in saying it had been the best tool and provided an opportunity for relief for many Territorians.

Many people do not take that component into account. Yes, the BDR works with problem drinkers, but it also works to ensure community. If we can have people voluntarily go onto the Banned Drinker Register to reduce the level of domestic family violence on their communities, we must do that.

I want to talk about prohibition versus regulation. We know that abstinence from alcohol may work for some, but it does not work for everyone. We need to understand regulation and the best way forward to support people in reducing effects with a suite of measures. The Banned Drinker Register is just one of those.

I reaffirm my commitment to those living in town camps and remote Aboriginal communities that I will continue to be a strong voice in encouraging the Australian federal government to discuss alcohol reform and the current prohibition on our communities. This issue continues to fuel racial divides when, on one side of the road you can buy alcohol, and on the other side you cannot. Because you are a town camper and an Aboriginal person, the federal government does not believe you are able to handle alcohol. I believe that is racist and will continue to call that out.

I will continue to work with the Attorney-General on ensuring we have a range of therapeutic alcohol reforms that are not race-based and do not discriminate when you walk into a bottle shop and are asked for ID.

I will continue to support mechanisms like the Banned Drinker Register which does not discriminate.

Mr VOWLES (Primary Industry and Resources): Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to contribute to this debate on the Banned Drinker Register and the reinstatement that will occur on 1 September. As someone who was in opposition for four years, as were a number of my colleagues, I saw the impact the scrapping of the BDR had, four days or a week after the former government came to power. However, I like looking forward and do not like looking back.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the Minister for Health on her work and that of the machine behind us; the public service and our staff. An enormous amount of work, research, advice and

policy has been done. Bringing something like this to the people of the Northern Territory is a big undertaking and I thank everyone involved in this.

We have heard today the Member for—Gerry Wood ...

Mr Wood: Nelson.

Mr VOWLES: Sorry, Gerry, you have been here so long, I have forgotten you were here. Sorry about that.

The Member for Nelson has been here a long time—since 2001, I believe—and makes a lot of sense most of the time. He raised something with me about the BDR. Regardless of whether it was 14 months or nine months, it was not long enough to get real figures or the long-term information needed to know if it was working. Of course, the Labor government introduced it. At the time the Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Delia Lawrie the Attorney-General and minister for alcohol, introduced the Banned Drinker Register, with a clear view and policy direction of the long-term effects of alcohol on the Territory, not only physically and mentally but economically.

There were a few figures thrown around which I will talk about later. The former Member for Karama, the former Chief Minister and the Member for Barkly were part of the government that introduced the Banned Drinker Register. There was a lot of discussion. I remember being around the halls of parliament then and hearing the discussions and being involved in meetings on how important it would be in the long term for the Territory. For so long, many people talked with no outcomes and we are still seeing the same issues we have been dealing with for many years.

My mum is an Aboriginal health practitioner and has trained Aboriginal health practitioners. She said to me, 'You have to do something. We were discussing this 20 or 30 years ago and we keep patching up.'—she was based at Bagot Community—I can talk about it. I know it. Daily, almost 24 hours of fixing up the same people every time because of alcohol-related issues and the associated injuries.' That and everything else, the antisocial behaviour, domestic violence, assaults, drink driving and consequently our gaols are full.

At a briefing yesterday I learned that 84% of those incarcerated in our prison—over 1200 Indigenous males—and quite disturbingly, a similar 83% of female incarcerated Territorians are of Aboriginal or Indigenous descent. This is terrifying. This is why we were consistent under the former leader Delia Lawrie, followed by Michael Gunner, that our clear commitment throughout our term in opposition was that, if re-elected into government, we would reinstate the Banned Drinker Register as quickly as possible and we are at that point. I am very proud of the work everyone has done.

Having said that, when we were booted out in 2012 the Banned Drinker Register was immediately scrapped by the now Member for Blain. While I respect the will of Territorians who voted in the CLP under the different platforms they had, I still do not agree with it at all. This is where we have an opportunity as a new government under Michael Gunner and the rest of the Cabinet and Caucus to implement the Banned Drinker Register on 1 September. We need to get some real data about whether it does work, if it will work and what we need to fine tune and change.

One thing is for certain, we are having a crack at this. We seriously want to change people's lives and address the situation that there are a lot of people who have a problem with alcohol; it is a disease. Everybody says that if you want to change something you have to be subjected to change, you have to want to change. Until you have that moment you are not going to change. We will bring back the Banned Drinker Register and monitor our approach to reduce supply and minimise harm.

I am very proud of the work that has been done. As a minister who has been in a year and been involved in other areas of legislation and change, I fully respect the work that gets done here. I once again applaud the Minister for Health.

When we look at harm minimisation, reducing supply and all those other things, it is about making sure—as we are doing with the youth justice system—we have a holistic approach and have the support mechanisms behind it. We are not just saying we will stop the grog. You are banned and if you have others grab it for you; they get banned as well.

There is a process I will mention later that you go through. It is something is being developed by consultation with experts; people in our departments and around the country who know what they are talking about and support this approach to our BDR policy.

As a born and raised Territorian and as someone who has gone through a Cabinet budget process and had to make tough decisions for the future of the Territory, it shocks me every time I hear the fact that alcohol-related crime, assaults and associated issues cost us over \$640m a year. It is mind boggling. It is ridiculous that we are dealing with that much money every year.

We tend to get our figures and say we will invest so many millions, and everybody says, 'That is great', and then you say it is over five or 10 years. But over \$640m a year on alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour is a bloody disgrace. It is time we did something. We are having a red-hot go bringing this back and if it needs to be changed we will change it. We will do what we have to do.

With the money we are spending—that is our duty of care to Territorians. We govern and represent the Territory and if people have a problem we need to be there to assist them. That is part of being a good corporate citizen and a good person. We want to help those most vulnerable. Many people do not acknowledge that they have a problem.

Sadly, there would not be anyone in or outside this Chamber who has not had a bad experience dealing with drunks and antisocial behaviour in our community. As the government of the Northern Territory we need to make sure we are doing something.

As the Member for Johnston—Millner, Moil, Jingili and parts of Alawa—not a week goes by when I do not receive a complaint, if not several, regarding antisocial behaviour and people being drunk around shops in the electorate. People have experienced foul language around their children. I have heard that people are scared of those drinking, regardless of their colour. They are scared by seeing behaviour like swearing and running amok.

Trying to explain to a young child, week after week, that this is not normal behaviour and that someone has an alcohol problem—children are smart. They will ask why we are not doing something about it.

I was based at the Rapid Creek shops, or the Rapid Creek Business Village as it is now known. For those who are not local, Rapid Creek shops are actually in Millner. If I ask you that question, you know I am trying to check if you are a local. There has been a lot of great work there over the last few years. I was based there for most of my first term, for three-and-a-half years.

The former member, Chris Burns, and Matty Bonson, who was the Member for Millner at the time worked there also. It is an old-style community hub. There are various shops, and some are really nice, such as a coffee shop, yiros shop, massage place and the Japanese restaurant—my favourite restaurant in the world—to which I had the pleasure of taking the Caucus members to as a welcome to the Johnston electorate. The electorate is named after Eric Johnston. I could digress for the next 15 minutes talking about the great Eric Johnston and the 4982 constituents in the electorate.

Once the CLP was elected and the BDR scrapped, I noticed a significant change. In the first three to six months the situation became out of control in that area. My office is open, so I see and hear a lot of people walking through. There were line-ups to the takeaway outlet and drunk people fighting outside my office. I am easygoing and would say things like, 'Come on, you cannot play up out here. You cannot use that language. Just calm down a bit', and receive responses like, 'Oh, sorry, uncle'.

I was trying to get some respect based on the fact that I would not ring the police every time there was shouting. Just because you do not understand the language you are hearing, as with any other culture, it does not necessarily mean they are arguing. They could be just having conversation. But, sadly, in Indigenous languages—and I am not saying all drunks on our streets are Indigenous—there are no traditional words for the swear words they use, which makes it obvious when they are swearing.

Expanding on that point about saying, 'Just calm down. Do not use that language around people. There are families around here', it got to the point in which most mornings I would give some water and maybe food to those people and have some respectful conversations. By three o'clock, they were different people and I found it upsetting to witness firsthand. Earlier in the day they were engaged and we had conversations about helping out with housing or electricity bills or calling taxis. A few hours later with a belly full of grog, they would become rude, inconsiderate and obnoxious people not in control of their actions or what they were saying.

This highlighted for me that if I have an opportunity I need to do something. I am proud we will fill this commitment. It is a long-term opportunity for us, and by 'us' I mean any government—ours or the next one—to churn out this data and see if we are improving people's lives. I am not trying to Kumbaya this at

all. If it does not work, we need to find something that will work. This is our job as legislators and elected members. We need to keep finding solutions. The moment we give up, we should hand our jobs in.

We have a real opportunity to make a difference. I have three boys ages 22, 18 and one is turning 16 very soon. My family and I have had to work hard to find positives—and almost forgiveness—for people's behaviour in the community. They have a problem and we need to address it. That is why I am in parliament. That is why some others are in parliament. Put your hand up because that is how you make a difference. If you cannot make a difference yourself, get involved in an industry that does. Whatever you do, do not sit on your hands or keep your mouth shut. Try to do something.

At one stage we had twice-daily police presence at Rapid Creek Business Village and this made a difference. I remember I meeting with police about this issue and they said, 'It is a war. This is a war we are facing. We bring a police presence here and they move to Nightcliff. We go to Nightcliff and they move to Fannie Bay. We go to Fannie Bay and they move to Stuart Park'. Police have to continually deal with problem drinkers moving around. The Banned Drinker Register will effectively stop this. Problem drinkers will be registered and have less access to alcohol.

I have experienced some hairy moments where I was trying to be nice to people and they were taking swings at me. I would be trying to order a taxi for them and ask them to stop swearing. I have had people pass out drunk in front of my electorate office. Sadly, most of us have had to deal with situations like this. We know these are good people who have a problem and we need to address that problem.

I try to find positives in life, including in this situation we are facing. I remember when the Member for Araluen was Minister for Health, she was providing an update on mandatory treatment that was anecdotal evidence. I remember sitting in opposition and being intrigued because there were stories about some people's lives changing. I never said a bad thing about it, because if we can start with one then we can start the journey for others to begin dealing with their issues.

Another side of this problem is the rubbish. The other week I went along to Rapid Creek, Nightcliff and Johnston as part of the Darwin Harbour clean up. A positive was the Larrakia Rangers efforts that day. They were heavily involved in coordinating some of that rubbish. It was no shock to anybody that the rubbish consisted of broken beer, wine and spirit bottles as well as casks. It was good to see so many people involved in cleaning up their environment.

The last government pulled funding out of youth programs, then said there is a huge problem and they would come back and fix it. It is classic politics. They pull out \$4m of funding in Alice Springs and all of a sudden there is a crisis. Then they come in, as a saviour, and throw in a million or two and say we found a solution. No, we are still dealing with that.

It is the same with alcohol. Once they scrapped the BDR, we saw an increase. While doorknocking in my electorate we saw the parks filling up with drunks again. You could go to Mool shops now and there will be people congregating and drinking. This is what has happened. Three to six months after the BDR was scrapped, I really noticed the uptake of drinking in the park. It was not only the larger parks, but the smaller parks or ones with a designated laneway or shortcut to the bottle shop.

Then we saw the Alcohol Protection Orders brought in by the former government, which I never supported. In opposition it was an important time for us, giving us time to think about and work on the policies we thought were most important not only to our core values as Labor members, but as policies to influence the Territory and make some change.

The standout policy for myself and my colleagues—I am sure they have their own opinions—was the Banned Drinker Register. We were always consistent about the Banned Drinker Register. I take my hat off to my brother-in-law and a few friends who are in the police force. I bow to them because what they deal with on a daily basis is extraordinary. My mother is an Aboriginal health practitioner at Bagot and a few other places, fixing up the same people every day, every night. She is called out at night. She did a stint at Wadeye as well and it was 24-hours a day. The police having to pick up the same people every day, two or three times a day, is a massive task for them.

Unlimited access to alcohol for people with a problem and who do not know what they are doing is a serious concern we have to address. Governments make tough decisions and bring in policies and have a red-hot go at it. If something is not working, we must look at it.

The underlying issues with alcohol and people with alcohol problems and how that affects the community are drink-driving, getting locked up, beating up partners, beating up others and going to gaol. All these issues can be addressed by looking at harm minimisation and access to alcohol.

The self-referral trigger in the BDR also helps those who are ready. It will be an outstanding achievement for someone to acknowledge they have an issue and self-refer. This will be great for them and will have ongoing repercussions as others will learn they may go onto it as well.

The clinical assessment, therapeutic support—you cannot just address one issue about alcohol. You must have a holistic approach and support base for the supply of alcohol and harm minimisation. As a government, that is a clear plan for addressing all of this. It relates to everything else. We are talking about alcohol issues, with people going home to 10 or 15 people to a house.

The safest place for some of our teenagers is not at home because mum, dad, cousins and uncles are home on the grog, causing havoc and running amok. It always starts off with a bit of fun and frivolity, but people with a problem drink to excess. That is why it is called a problem. When you say, 'Kids have to get home. Please pick them up and take them home', it is not the safest place for them. Why would you put them there? We are working on those other issues.

I see it as this holistic youth problem and family alcohol problem. As I have said before in this parliament, it is intergenerational trauma from seeing alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

Counselling and support, interventions, motivation interviewing—I love that—medically supervised withdrawal from alcohol and detoxification, intensive alcohol and other drugs treatment in a community setting with structured 30-day programs, group therapy, residential alcohol and other drugs treatment, mutual aid programs and the evidence-based therapeutic treatment based on professional advice and expertise—I am not an expert and I am not sure who would be in this Chamber. This is why we rely on the advice of experts and consult with everyone we can about how to address this problem.

This is not a new problem for the Territory and not a new policy. We had this policy in place prior to 2012. We were trying to do the right thing then and will continue to try to do the right thing now. We have an incredible responsibility to the Northern Territory community. I, like everyone, have a responsibility to my family as well to ensure we are doing something and protecting those affected when we address this issue.

For those who have succumbed to the acute alcohol abuse and need protection this is what we are trying to do and what we want to do. We want to make a change and a difference for people who have an issue with alcohol any way we can. We do have a plan.

I thank Territorians for electing and allowing us to bring the BDR back. It has been a huge commitment by the Gunner government and something I am very proud to be a part of. Like everybody else, I will be waiting and hoping that we make a difference to the people we are trying to reach.

With that, I thank you for your indulgence in listening to me about something I am very passionate about.

Mr COLLINS (Fong Lim): The Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill provides for the return of the Banned Drinker Register, a key election commitment to Territorians to assist in the reduction of alcohol-related harm and to make our community safer. I may not speak for long this afternoon; I have a function to attend. It should not be seen as a reflection of my commitment to this issue. The government's bill and the mechanics of how it works have been dealt with in great detail by the Attorney-General, the Minister for Health. Each of the ministers have done a terrific job in further detailing the deeply adverse effects of alcohol abuse and misuse in their respective portfolio areas.

Likewise, my colleagues have given detailed accounts, in particular the Member for Brennan who spoke firsthand as a practitioner in the area. I was particularly interested in your comments, thank you. I do not wish to simply restate previous comments; however, I feel it is necessary to register my complete support for the bill. While most people drink responsibly the unfortunate fact is that misuse of alcohol remains the greatest scourge on our community. Just to be clear, I am not a wowser. To the contrary I really do enjoy a drink. I do, however, believe in government regulating to reduce the impact of alcohol misuse and abuse on the lives of Territorians and those in our communities.

I have never believed in prohibition in any form but well directed, unbiased, non-discriminatory regulation can be effective, and this bill is one of those effective pieces of regulation. The simple fact is, alcohol misuse accounts for a significant proportion of the work of our police, health services and courts. Alcohol

misuse impacts on school attendance, domestic violence, child protection issues, incarceration rates and the road toll. It affects all of us.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill will not only bring back the Banned Drinker Register, it is our government meeting our commitment to the people of the Territory to commence the process of addressing alcohol-related harm within our communities.

In the lead up to last year's election we said we would be tough on alcohol-related harm and its impact on our community and the antisocial behaviour, violence and trauma that our frontline emergency services workers deal with every day. We have to encourage responsible drinking and evidence-based measures to support harm minimisation. Showing photo identification when purchasing takeaway alcohol is not a hardship, especially after hearing from police, frontline health workers, paramedics and businesses about how effective it was in 2011-12.

The cost of alcohol harm in the Northern Territory has been reported as \$640m a year. That was in 2009. I wish I had more up-to-date figures because I have no doubt the figure would have risen significantly since. That is a staggering amount of money in a jurisdiction like the Northern Territory. We cannot afford to let this level of financial harm continue, let alone the real and devastating human cost.

It has been said that the Territory has the highest proportion of deaths attributable to alcohol in Australia. For non-Aboriginals we double the national rate. Mind-bogglingly, for Aboriginal Territorians it is nine to 10 times higher. There is no world where this is acceptable, and as a government we must do everything we can to begin to address this.

In 2015-16, alcohol abuse was associated with well over 50% of all assaults, and up to 65% of domestic and family violence incidents. The Northern Territory Police respond to an average of 22 500 domestic and family violence incidents every year. These are statistics we simply cannot ignore.

The Member for Nelson said the previous version of the BDR was not in place long enough for either side to say whether it was working or not. This government firmly believes the original Banned Drinker Register was working.

I was in the Territory for the last four or five months of the original BDR, but the police officers I have met, in my role as assistant minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, tell me consistently that they believe the BDR was working and effective.

When I first arrived in the Territory I was taken aback at being asked to provide my driver's licence when purchasing takeaway alcohol. Given my advanced age I was initially and momentarily thinking I must look better than I thought. It is possible I had already had a beer or two and that may explain some of the confusion. It became apparent fairly quickly that it was not just me being asked to show ID; it was everybody.

In spite of my personal disappointment of not looking as young as I secretly hoped, I immediately saw the benefit of the scheme. I had no idea of its history or how long it had been operating. I had no idea who was responsible for implementing it and no preconceived ideas based on my political affiliations with regard to the BDR. It just seemed like a reasonable and sensible idea.

When the former Labor government was defeated in August 2012, I was stunned when the first order of business of the incoming CLP government was the dismantling of the BDR. Surely it had issues more important than dismantling the BDR. Apparently not.

I have heard some criticisms of the BDR, but no one on this side of the Chamber believes its reintroduction is the silver bullet cure for alcohol-related problems in the Territory. I look forward to receiving the report of the alcohol review panel, chaired by someone I have enormous respect for, former Chief Justice Trevor Riley. I look forward to considering the recommendations of the review panel and thereafter working on the implementation of further reforms and tools in the difficult and unending work of reducing the effect of alcohol misuse in the community.

I cannot adequately express the depth of my support for the government's efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm to the community through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill and the BDR it institutes. The BDR will benefit the health and wellbeing of Territorians and will make our community safer.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PAPER TABLED
Travel Reports — Members for Katherine, Blain and Karama

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the travel reports from the Members for Katherine, Blain and Karama.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms MOSS (Environment and Natural Resources): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I want to adjourn this evening in recognition of World Ranger Day, which was on 31 July. It is an incredibly important day about recognising and remembering those lost in the line of duty as rangers. It is, sadly, a reality across the globe that many of our rangers undertake duties that are risky in many ways. They are in enforcement and compliance roles with measures to protect our environment and natural wildlife. They often do so in the face of issues such as poaching, and it can be an incredibly dangerous role across the world.

I take this opportunity to recognise the incredible work our rangers do in the Northern Territory. This morning I came from the Australian ranger conference being held in Katherine. It was a fantastic opportunity to thank them personally. Rangers come from right across northern Australia and South Australia to share their great projects and models with each other.

We have around 46 ranger groups in the Northern Territory and 1000 rangers employed on a full-time, part-time or casual basis. They undertake work in weed management, feral animal management, fire management and so much more on our land and sea. It is meaningful employment that has benefits for all of us into the future.

On World Ranger Day I announced the opening of our capital grants program, which is \$4.1m over two years, and the Land Management and Conservation Fund of \$2m per annum. I thank the Indigenous Land Management Advisory Group for its advice on the development of this program. I expect that Parks and Wildlife will have a discussion paper ready to release. We can then start consultation on enforcement and recognition of our rangers in our parks and wildlife act. I am looking forward to that as well.

We continue to deliver on our commitments to Territorians regarding jobs, community and protecting our environment. I was very lucky to meet with Sean from The Thin Green Line today, an organisation raising awareness of the rangers who put their lives on the line. Whether they work for government, non-government organisations, Aboriginal land councils or organisations, all of our rangers contribute enormously in the Northern Territory and beyond. I thank them, on behalf of government, for the important work they do for the benefit of us all.

Mr HIGGINS (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I pay tribute to the friend of a great many people right across the Northern Territory. I am referring to the fantastic Kath Meyering. I knew Kath for about 10 years, and for those who have not had the privilege, she was tremendous fun, enormously loyal and everyone found her great to be around.

It is, quite frankly, unbelievable to imagine that Kath lived in the Northern Territory for almost eight decades since moving here with her family in 1938. That is a very clear statement about how much she loved the Territory. It was her home and the home of her husband, Ralph, and the boys. All those who knew Kath were better for the experience. Her stories about early Territory life and her experiences during and after the war are the stuff of legend.

She was 12 when she and her family were evacuated from Darwin on board the *Zealandia*, a pre-emptive move in advance of the Japanese bombings from 1942 onwards. How did 12-year-old Kath feel when she learned Darwin was under threat from the Japanese? 'I was shaking like a jelly on a plate,' she said in a famous interview on ABC radio a few years back.

She enjoyed the ride to Sydney on board the *Zealandia*. At one end of the boat were malaria-stricken soldiers on their way to repat, and at the other end there were Japanese Australians headed for internment. She slept on one of the many hammocks spread across the deck and, like any 12-year-old, loved the

experience. The downside was leaving her family's three pet dogs. People with dogs will know how hard that is.

They disembarked in Sydney. For a brief time they moved to Bourke to stay with her stepfather's family, and then they went to Perth on board a troop train. Her stepbrother, a product of the war years, was named Winston Michael Montgomery. Kath was about 17 when she and her family returned to Darwin around 1946. These were tough years, and it was a common struggle for all who lived here. The comradery and sense of community helped compensate for the lack of service and almost Third World conditions.

Her mum started a pie wagon and a tearoom in which Kath served. The diners included Americans who were in Darwin trying to retrieve bodies lost around the Top End during the war. Kath recalled that in 1947 she never sat down at a dance, with about 21 males to every female in the town. Kath had positive recollections about the Greek and Italian migrants who settled here post-war, swimming at Lameroo Beach and the good times waiting tables at the legendary Hotel Darwin.

'It was a great town, a laid-back town, but I always had the feeling it would grow and one day be the northern port,' she said.

The place stagnated until Canberra ceded control to self-government in 1978. Her mother had a strong sense of social justice and a willingness to take on unusual challenges. This flowed through to Kath. One of her mum's biggest successes was forming the Housewives' Association to get food and powdered milk off of the wharves. She was also instrumental in setting up the Housing Commission to improve housing stock post-war. Kath helped with the rebuild and to spread Darwin's base. She gained a truck driver's licence when she was 28 and began moving gravel across the Territory.

Kath met Ralph while he was plumbing at her mother's teahouse. Ralph has a fantastic war history of his own, and I shared that earlier this year.

Kath's brother taught her how to drive a truck, in particular showing her the fine art of double clutching, which she said tipped her driving test over the line. She always had an affinity for machinery and was involved in building Parap Road and other necessary Darwin infrastructure. Flat tyres or getting bogged were no stranger to her. She spent several Wet Season nights stuck between Ngukurr and Numbulwar after her vehicle became bogged.

'It was very pleasant out there,' she recalled.

Kath was 46 when she got her pilot licence and, as with everything else she did, her enthusiasm was boundless. She clocked up countless flying hours in single engine aircrafts and later ultralights. With Ralph, she was responsible for developing the airstrip at Noonamah. Those who have done any flying will know it is referred to as MKT.

In typical earthly fashion, when asked why she had smashed the glass ceiling by learning how to fly when she was nudging 50 years old, she said, 'Because I could. The boys were grown up, and if anything happened to me they would not get a cruel stepmother'.

She loved flying and only hung up her wings when she was 69. She also played a pivotal role in establishing the Country Liberal Party, but it was noticeable at yesterday's service that a wide cross-section of Territorians were there to say goodbye.

Kath, you were a fantastic Territorian and a true trailblazer, when sometimes that term can be overused. Rhonda and I will both miss you. My thoughts are with your family and friends, who are mourning your loss.

Ms WAKEFIELD (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, One Million Stars to End Violence is a national project to raise awareness of domestic and family violence. It is a global weaving project.

In response to the rape and murder of a young woman in her Queensland community, the founder, Marianne Pau, felt moved to do something positive. She started a project encouraging people to be the light and kindness they want to see in the world. It has been an amazing journey. She put a call out on Facebook saying, 'I want to weave a million stars to stop domestic and family violence, and do a display in Brisbane in 2018'.

She chose a star because she felt it was a symbol of light, hope, courage and solidarity. This was a couple of years ago when I was the CEO of Alice Springs Women's Shelter. I was enthusiastic about the project

and committed the shelter to weaving 10 000 stars. I then promptly resigned and left that task to Di Gippy, the following CEO.

I am proud to say the Alice Springs community weaved 13 300 stars to stop domestic and family violence as a contribution to this project, which did achieve a million stars. There will be an exhibition in Brisbane in 2018. I cannot wait to see it.

The project was a real community event. Relationships Australia contributed 1800 stars and the Territory Families staff in Alice Springs contributed 1500.

Earlier today in my debate about the BDR, I mentioned the impact of domestic and family violence on staff. One of the lovely things about this project is that it is about people, generally women, sitting together weaving, doing art and talking. It has been a lovely event that shows Alice Springs is a great community that cares about others.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Kate McIntyre. She is the mother of Oliver, a friend of my son. Oliver and Jimmy are close mates. Kate has reached an amazing achievement to represent Australia in Canada next week at the International Triathlon Union World Championships in the 35 to 39-year-old age group. This is a remarkable achievement by any standards, but it is even more remarkable when Kate tells you she has never played the sport before in her life. She only took up the sport two years ago, so there is hope for all of us. She had never competed in any sport but occasionally went to the gym.

She moved to Alice Springs with her husband, who is a policeman, and a small baby. She came to Alice Springs not knowing anyone and for a period of time struggled to find her place in the town. Kate went to a 'try it out' day at the Alice Springs Triathlon Club and loved it. She became addicted, saying, 'I found my people. I never guessed my people were triathletes, but it turns out they are. I love the community I have found in Alice Springs'.

It is an inspiration to watch another person, who has desperately wanted to be a mother and fought for that privilege, achieve so much. She is an amazing mum. Her son is very proud of her.

In my maiden speech the thing I said about Alice Springs is that you never knew you needed it until you found it. This is a great story about finding your place in Alice Springs.

Ms NELSON (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to express my profound disappointment with the federal government's failure to introduce legislation that allows for same-sex couples to marry.

It is so disappointing that I feel compelled to do this. So many things have happened in the Katherine electorate since the last sittings. I would prefer to talk about the Katherine electorate and the wonderful things we are doing there, but I must put on record my utter disappointment in the federal government's decision to go ahead with the postal survey. I will not even give it dignity by calling it a plebiscite.

In 2013 New Zealand became the 13th country to legalise same-sex marriage, and since then nine other countries have done the same. For those people who oppose same-sex marriage and use religion as a basis of their counter-argument, it must be mentioned that a great number of these countries which have passed the same-sex marriage legislation have cultures that are deeply entrenched in Catholicism. Seventy two percent of the Australian population is pro same-sex marriage. This figure has been sourced through Crosby Textor Research Strategies, which is the result of the same-sex marriage research of 2014.

Like so many of us in this Chamber, I have friends and family who are members of the LGBTI community. It saddens me profoundly to acknowledge that our wonderful country is currently being governed by people who abuse their power by denying the right of the pursuit of happiness for so many.

Australians want the opportunity to succeed and to not have to worry about discrimination and inhibiting predispositions. This is why we formed Labor unions. Over the years the Australian Services Union, my union, has taken a strong stand in favour of same-sex marriage because the ASU sees this as a simple matter of equality under the law. Full equality before the law is a pillar of Australian society. It is a value that is reflected in the majority community support for same-sex marriage to be incorporated into our laws.

Recent wins for marriage equality in Ireland and the United States, countries with very active and staunch conservative voices, shows that the tide has turned in other countries similar to ours. If an Australian same-sex couple wishes to marry because that is the way they choose to celebrate their love and commitment to each other, they should be allowed to do so, just as heterosexual couples are allowed.

Whether individuals think that same-sex marriage is a good or bad thing, the question that really needs to be asked is, 'What is so wrong about marriage equality?' Democracy will eventually resolve this issue because politicians cannot continue to reject the will of the community, which is solidly grounded on the principles of equality and inclusion. Those principles are near and dear to my heart. They form and guide every decision I make in life.

This discrimination needs to end sooner rather than later because it is not just about a principle; it is about real people being recognised as equal and not suffering discrimination at the hands of their government just because of who they love.

What is marriage? This question has become a semantic focal point nationwide. How should we define it? Why does a definition even matter? What makes a family? Can same-sex couples be considered a legitimate relationship? If so, how? If not, why not?

We are at a turning point for a single word that has an important meaning to both sides of this debate. Traditional values regard the relationship between a man and a woman as the key aspect of marriage. How antiquated! Why should we continue using an outdated definition that, in combination with political support, leads to absolute blatant discrimination?

This is truly an equality issue. The quest for marriage equality was never intended by supporters to tear down the definition of marriage or devalue the concept of a formal union between partners. The argument for marriage equality has been consistent throughout the years because the warrants behind the argument stand true that same-sex partners are discriminated against for insufficient reasons.

Married heterosexual couples are given several unique benefits by the government, but same-sex couples can never get in the status quo. These benefits include adoption, taxes, medical leave, property ownership et cetera. Same-sex couples are systemically oppressed due to the preconceived notion that a relationship between a man and a woman is superior to a relationship between two men or two women. This was highlighted several times during the Q&A show last night with Senator Eric Abetz.

Another contradiction that baffles me is from those who say they have no issue with same-sex couples, but in the same breath will vote to deny them marriage rights. It is akin to saying they support citizen popular vote but are willing to deny black people or women the right to vote. It is clear, absolute hypocrisy. I support the definition of marriage being amended to allow same-sex couples to marry because everyone in our community deserves autonomy, respect and dignity.

Those of us who support changing the definition of marriage do so because we believe the same opportunities should belong to every couple, regardless of their gender makeup. With those very brief words, I stand here today to put on public record that I will be voting yes for marriage equality because my LGBTI friends and family members have the right to marry.

Mr PAECH (Namatjira): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, on 1 August the team at R U OK? launched the Conversation Convoy. Leaving the spiritual heart of the country, they set out on a journey to cover 14 000km, visiting 20 communities in regional, remote and metropolitan locations, before finishing in Cairns on R U OK? Day on 14 September.

The Conversation Convoy will build on the question 'Are you okay?' by reinforcing four steps to a conversation empowering Australians to ask, listen, encourage action and check in. Thank you to the Audi Foundation. The four yellow SUVs each represent one of the four conversation steps. They will roll into each location to be part of a major series of community-based events. The activities will help people of any age learn the steps in a fun and interactive way.

Conversation Convoy launched in the early hours on 1 August. It is safe to say the brisk Centralian morning did not keep the local community of Yulara away. They had gathered at the local community oval to help launch this wonderful campaign. The Conversation Convoy was also joined by many wonderful ambassadors, including the one and only, Steven Oliver, a good friend of mine, as well as Ben Lee, Kahn Porter, Commando Steve, Daniel Conn, Travis Collins and Jodhi Meares.

I must not forget about Jake Gablonski and Taliah Payne, known to many as T-Pain. Their vibrant, youthful energy contributes to the wonderful campaign of Conversation Convoy.

The Conversation Convoy initiative comes off the back of a recent national omnibus survey conducted by Colmar Burnton. The survey revealed one in three people do not feel comfortable asking the question, 'are

you okay?’ The leading reasons include: ‘I do not know what to say’; ‘I do not want to make it worse’; ‘I am worried they might get angry’; ‘I am not an expert’; and, ‘It is none of my business’. From this, Conversation Convoy was born and the process was developed to ensure that people were empowered to ask the hard question, ‘Are you okay?’

While most Territorians and broader Australians know what R U OK? is about, Conversation Convoy goes further to ensure that if someone says, ‘No, I am not okay’, people know what to do next. The event is a fantastic way to understand and learn more about asking the hard questions, and importantly, where to from here. The Conversation Convoy will head to most regional places and major cities across the country with a focus on the regional towns. It will be assisted by rural and remote mental health services.

The Conversation Convoy would not have been the same without Barry Conrad. Man oh man, can this guy sing, act and dance! He certainly got the audience moving and excited to be part of this special moment at Uluru on that cold morning. As a bush member of this Legislative Assembly, I understand that many people are often isolated from loved ones for various reasons such as work commitments, weather conditions or simply the geographic distances between communities. That is why I support and encourage people to learn as much as they can about the R U OK? team and its valuable work.

At most of the events the suicide prevention organisation will gift a conversation corner, a bench seat, as a legacy item to encourage further conversations within the community. The Conversation Convoy finishes on R U OK? Day, 14 September, in Cairns with R U OK? Rocks Cairns. This is a concert featuring some great Aussie talent and the ambassadors, Ben Lee and Travis Collins, to celebrate the end of the journey.

R U OK? Day is a national day of action dedicated to reminding everyone that we have what it takes to ask the hard questions, the skills to ask, ‘Are you okay?’, and to support those who are struggling with life. Taking part is very simple and learning the four steps can help change a life. This is a day about inspiring people to start these conversations. I ask everyone in the Chamber to jump on board and get your local schools, workplaces and communities to download the R U OK? Kits. They are available on the website with more details.

Events like this would not be possible without great support, love and energy from the R U OK? team. I wish them all the very best with their future convoys, campaigns and events. They are truly inspiring rock stars who make sure social and emotional wellbeing is at the forefront of our minds. I encourage members of the Chamber to pick up the phone on 14 September to check in with people and ask the questions, ‘Are you okay?’ and ‘How are you going?’. Those simple questions can and will change lives.

It would not be possible to have events like this without the support of people in the Mutitjulu community, like Craig Woods, Dorothea Randall and Sid Moore, who are instrumental in caring for community and asking those questions of people in remote Indigenous communities. I congratulate them on their work and efforts in the local community to continue to build capacity and bring people along the journey with them. I also congratulate them on being very firm with their desires and aspirations for their local community. As their local member, I commit to being a strong voice for them and advocating for their needs and desires in the Northern Territory Government.

I thank Jake Gablonski from Katherine, who is a hard-working constituent. He was wonderful, and it was refreshing to see a young Indigenous man standing up and participating in such an important campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about two meaningful initiatives that have happened in the R U OK? space.

Mr SIEVERS (Brennan): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, it is with great love from around the NT and Australia that I speak about a very special Northern Territory young man tonight, Vale Thomas Francis Snell, or some may know him as T for Thomas.

Thomas was born on 28 October 2003 and, sadly, he passed away on 22 July 2017. Thomas is the beloved son of Phillip and Amanda; brother and best mate to Patrick; precious grandson of Alan, Diane, Alexis and Garry; cherished nephew of Adam, Melissa, Naomi, Nathan and Yvette; adored cousin of Jade, Angus, Jake, Jessica, Bailey, Cheya, Marley and Bella; and a good mate to numerous friends, school mates and sports mates in the rural community and beyond. We are deeply saddened to announce his passing last month.

Thomas was recently selected in the NT Rugby Union Under 14s representative team. He was to tour Queensland and play in the Queensland Junior Rugby Union State Championships. While on tour, Thomas became extremely ill and had to be put on life support at the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital in Brisbane.

Unfortunately, he succumbed to sepsis. His heart fought for three long weeks, but his lungs and other organs could not recover from the damage.

Thomas was a remarkably talented young man. He was outstanding in all sports, but he excelled at rugby, cricket and AFL. He was a very loyal young man and was popular with everyone who knew him. He was simply a quiet young gentleman with a heart of gold. It is times like this when a lot of people ask why something like this has to happen to such a great young man. But it is then that we should remember the wonderful attributes he had. We shall always remember Thomas as a kind, caring, gentle person who would help anyone.

Thomas' mum, Amanda, is asking for everyone to be vigilant for signs of sepsis. She plans to start a foundation in Thomas' name to help promote awareness of sepsis and the danger it poses. The family have extended their special thanks to the staff and doctors at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital for the immeasurable care given.

The T for Thomas campaign was started to try to lift Thomas' spirits during his fight. It was a simple idea that had a massive effect on the sporting community across the Territory and around other parts of Australia and the world. The campaign had people from all walks of life send photos and videos of themselves making a T for Thomas with their arms.

During the campaign there was a massive emphasis on donating blood and helping to support the Red Cross. Thomas required numerous blood transfusions to stabilise him during his three-week illness. We ask that people please continue to donate blood to help other critically ill people and help save lives of Australians. You can donate blood or book a donation at <https://www.donateblood.com.au/make-appointment>.

I also thank Robbie Taylor for putting this statement together. We were very blessed to be touched by Thomas and his family. He will be forever in our hearts. Vale T for Thomas, may you rest in peace.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I inform the House of my recent travels since the last sittings in June. I ran out of time in my last adjournment, so I will pick up where I left off. I acknowledge the wonderful Barunga Festival over the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Following that I was fortunate to travel to Jabiru to attend the full council meeting of the West Arnhem Regional Council, with councillors from different parts of the boundary. I travelled with CEO John Berto from the Jawoyn Association to the Banatjarl site, where they are looking at putting a proposal to the Minister for Territory Families about youth justice and diversionary programs. They believe they have a place where they can provide safe and adequate services to assist government and non-government services with young people.

The Katherine Beat Festival was held in late June. It was organised by the NT Music School and the theme was Magical Journey. It was a wonderful night in Katherine at the Lindsay Street complex and I was able to watch the Bulman students perform. They travelled the 200 kilometres with their principal, Anna Potts, and their assistant teachers, Yasmin, Leticia and Lisa. The students had been practising for many weeks for the concert. It was wonderful to see them on stage performing with other students from the Katherine region, as well as some Timber Creek students who travelled especially to perform at the festival. It is a wonderful initiative and I look forward to attending next year. I encourage more remote schools to get involved, especially in my electorate.

After that I attended the Estimates Committee for three days to pass our budget. I have not been part of estimates before, so it was a very interesting experience and learning curve for me. I was proud to be part of the government team that participated in the committee.

I travelled to Jabiru since I was in the House, where I attended the Kakadu Tourism Board meeting. I thank the board members for their wonderful hospitality and for giving me an excellent insight into tourism and the challenges and successes in the Jabiru and Kakadu region.

On 1 July, I attended the National NAIDOC Ball, which was held in Cairns. I attended with the Member for Namatjira, the Member for Karama and her partner, as well as my partner, Corey Charleson. It is a wonderful event for celebrating and acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their achievements. It was wonderful to be part of the celebration and to represent the Northern Territory Government. We also had our federal Member for Lingjari in attendance. It was a wonderful turn out from our NT crew.

Upon returning to Darwin on Monday 3 July, I attended the Indigenous Networking Reception at Parliament House. I thank the Chief Minister and the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources for co-hosting and welcoming people to the event.

The next big part of my travel was the show circuit. For the whole of July, I was chasing the show from the central desert right up through to the Top End. It was my first time attending the Alice Springs Show and I thank my colleagues in Alice for making me feel welcome. It was very cold for me, but I had the right gear. It was good to be part of the Alice Springs Show for two days, and during this time I was kindly hosted by the Member for Namatjira. I thank him for hosting me in his electorate.

We attended the women's march against family and domestic violence, which is organised by the Tangentyere Council Women's Family Safety Group. It was a wonderful event with participants and attendees from all across the country, including the Senator for the Northern Territory, Malarndirri McCarthy, and federal Member for Lindsay, Ms Emma Husar. There were a lot of people supporting this community event organised by the town camp women of Alice Springs. It was wonderful to meet some of those women and see the hard work they are doing to make their town camps and communities safe.

I was also fortunate to visit, for the first time, Santa Teresa with the Member for Namatjira, alongside Senator McCarthy and the federal Member for Lindsay, Emma Husar. It is a wonderful small community and we have some family connections in Gapuwiyak. This is fantastic as it shows those family lines going right through the Northern Territory. It was great to meet those people and have that connection, and to let them know I was travelling to Gapuwiyak not long after.

After the Alice Springs Show, and that wonderful week in Alice Springs, we headed up the track with some other colleagues to Tennant Creek to attend the Tennant Creek Show. It was my first time at the Tennant Creek Show. It was a lovely day and that afternoon I returned home to Katherine, ready for the next day which was the Walking with Spirits Festival, organised by Djilpin Arts at the Beswick waterfall. The electorate of Arnhem saw many locals and visitors to the Beswick Falls to attend the festival. I also had some family perform on stage, who travelled all the way from Numbulwar for the festival.

The next day I started the Jatbula trail in Nitmiluk National Park with 16 other women. It is a four-day-long hike. I was fortunate to have been invited by my electorate office assistant, Ms Helen Lee, from Barunga, and some of her long-time friends and colleagues, Ms Lisa Mumbin, the CEO of Jawoyn Association and a wonderful woman; and Ms Jane Runyu, the first Jawoyn person to be a CEO of Nitmiluk Tours. It was wonderful to be in the company of those strong women and I thank them very much for inviting me along the Trailblazers Women's Walk.

Unfortunately, we did not finish the four-day hike. We had some walkers with injuries and we thought it was not safe to continue. The plan is to go back next year and do it again starting from the point where we left off. I will have to inform the House next year if we have completed the walk. It was a wonderful challenge. The body was sore but the muscles were happy that it was because of the extreme exercise.

After that I managed to straggle on to the Katherine Show and spent two days there. It was wonderful to see the constituents and colleagues travelling from different parts of the Territory to be at the Katherine Show.

The next day I travelled to Gapuwiyak with Mr Jonathan Ah Kit from the Office of the Chief Minister. Thank you, Jonathan, for accompanying me, being my second driver, and for helping me change the tyre at 8 pm in the middle of the road in pitch black.

Gapuwiyak is a wonderful community. I thank them for their wonderful hospitality and welcoming me even though they were experiencing two funerals at the same time, which is a first ever in that community. To the MEP, Buffalo Boys, Bush Myalks, the art centre, the aged care, the council office, the ALPA store, the school, the police, the government engagement coordinator and the Indigenous engagement officer, thank you for welcoming me and meeting with me in Gapuwiyak despite the sadness of the double funeral.

On the way back to Katherine, I stopped at Bulman and Weemol. Thank you to the rangers and community residents for talking to me, as well as Bulman School, the clinic and the council. It was great to see Binjari enterprise starting the Room to Breathe works. When I go through Weemol and Bulman again I will see the finished works, which will be fantastic.

There was the Darwin Show for two days after that, as well as the Palmerston Caucus. Thank you to my colleagues, the Members for Brennan and Drysdale, for hosting our Caucus in and around Palmerston.

That was followed by a wonderful week in Numbulwar, travelling to spend a day trip with the Education minister at Ngukurr. It was wonderful, and I thank the minister for her time, especially for going to the clinic with me to pay respects to a body that was coming in ready for a funeral the next day. Thank you, minister, for your respect in the community of Ngukurr. It was very well noted.

On the way back from Numbulwar, I had a wonderful visit in Urapunga, a lovely, gorgeous little community. There was no rest for the wicked. I was at the Katherine races on Saturday with Ngukurr and Bulman teachers, so there was a lot of talk and conversation at the Katherine races.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.