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### Electronic Monitoring Bracelets

#### Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER

You were asked on radio yesterday how many ankle bracelets police have issued since you passed urgent legislation in March, and you said, 'Heaps'. Today we learned that police have only issued two electronic bracelets. Why did you mislead Territorians about the number of police-issued ankle bracelets? Why did you not tell the truth when you were asked a very specific question?

#### ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there has been a misunderstanding between police bail and electronic monitoring bracelets used at that stage versus the Community Corrections' bracelets. I spoke to both in that answer. The police bail stage is quite short and the number of bracelets will fluctuate week to week. Police have the powers, the tools and the bracelets. They can make those decisions about using them.

Then there is the first court appearance, a week or two in. From that point the 250 are out there. That is where the confusion from the Leader of the Opposition has come from and how he has read my answer. I spoke about both sets of bracelets in that answer.

The police bail stage is quite short. It is about making sure the power is there for police and ensuring police have the ability to issue in the period before the first court appearance. The ability existed from that first court appearance onward. There were 250 in that period between the first court appearance and post-release. That is the spectrum.

We gave police the tools they needed, in regard to police bail, and this is something the CLP did not do. We have made sure police have the ability to do their work. There are two at the moment in that space. From the first court appearance until post-release it is 250.

### Productivity Commission – Treasurer's Submission

#### Mr HIGGINS to TREASURER

On 13 July you said the Northern Territory made a draft submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into horizontal fiscal equalisation. Your office released a two-page extract of this submission which included plagiarised material from previous Treasury submissions. We doubt there was a draft submission to the inquiry. Why do you not dispel these doubts by tabling that draft submission?

**Mr PAECH:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! The Opposition Leader is pre-empting debate.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Daly, you have an item on General Business day regarding exactly what your question has gone to. I ask you rephrase it such that it does not pre-empt debate.

**Mr HIGGINS:** This question is about tabling the draft submission. The item that is on the agenda for debate is about referral of the reasons behind not preparing the report for the PAC.

**Madam SPEAKER:** If it is just about tabling the submission then that is fine.

**Mr HIGGINS:** That is it.

#### ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I want to be very clear about this. The submission of this incredibly important inquiry into horizontal fiscal equalisation of the GST was made on time to the Productivity Commission. Let us be very clear about that. The submission was made.

What I want to know is, is the Leader of the Opposition standing with us, side by side, to make sure we are lobbying the federal government for our fair share of the GST? The distribution of the GST and this Productivity Commission inquiry is one of the biggest risks the Northern Territory is facing. It is a big risk to the Northern Territory because Western Australia and New South Wales are trying to take the Territory's fair share of the GST ...

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms MANISON:** This is such a bizarre argument, Madam Speaker. There was a submission made, on time, to the Productivity Commission review into HFE. I want to know if the Leader of the Opposition has actually read the submission. Do we have their support to lobby Canberra for every cent we need in the GST and protect the Northern Territory's fair share? You have colleagues in Canberra. That is where we need you doing your fair share of work. This is a very important document into the future of the Northern Territory.

**Mr HIGGINS:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance.

The question was very clear: will you table the draft report to dispel theories that you did not submit a draft report?

**Madam SPEAKER:** No, that is not a point of order. Treasurer, you have the call.

**Ms MANISON:** This is a ridiculous argument because the submission was due on 1 August and was made to the Productivity Commission review. This is the submission here. It was made to the Productivity Commission review into HFE and the distribution of the GST. This is an important document and an important process. This is not the first time we have had to defend our fair share of the GST.

Let me remind you that this is not the first time we have had to defend it. We have New South Wales and Western Australia trying to take more money out of the Northern Territory. This is a big risk. We have already seen \$2bn over the next four years taken out of the Territory coffers.

We have a big risk going forward. We must defend HFE. We must defend our fair share of getting the GST. This is the submission. This is an important document and I am looking forward to our debate on this issue further tonight.

### Police Numbers

**Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER**

During Question Time yesterday, you unequivocally stated:

*There are more police now than when we were elected.*

Police, Fire and Emergency Services' own numbers show that is not accurate. As of 11 June 2017 there were 12 fewer police than at 30 June 2016. I will table that report, Madam Speaker—a copy which clearly shows it from the report. I seek leave to table that report.

Leave granted.

**Mr HIGGINS:** I ask again, Chief Minister, and I will be more explicit: what is the total net number of police you have added since the election? How many police officers have been added, and correspondingly, how many have retired, resigned or otherwise been separated from the force since that time?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I will get that information for the Leader of Opposition. We have put in place a four-year recruitment plan to recruit police as fast as we can. There is no more we can do to recruit police, and there are more police. I will get that information for the Leader of the Opposition about where we stand today. I will get a date, but I need to check the details for the Leader of the Opposition.

We have more police because we know we need more police, and the CLP broke its promise during the last term. To create absolute certainty for the police, police association, the Police Commissioner and the public, we made the four-year recruitment plan in full consultation with the Police Commissioner and the police association. This guarantees we are recruiting police as fast as we can without dropping our standards. You cannot recruit more police in the next four years than what we are already doing. We have done this in full consultation without dropping our standards of whom we allow into the police recruitment course.

You cannot recruit police faster than what we are doing. That is the test I sent to the Police Commissioner and that is what we have done.

The Member for Araluen is interjecting, saying the Police Commissioner can recruit more police than the Police Commissioner says he will recruit. That is an extraordinary comment. It is uninformed, uneducated

and is not the advice from the Police Commissioner, who has said this is the four-year recruitment plan to deliver as many police as possible without dropping standards.

I said to the Police Commissioner, 'I want you to give me absolute certainty here; how many police can you recruit without dropping your standards?' This is the plan he came back with. The only way to do this quicker, to honour the Member for Araluen's suggestion, is to drop standards.

I disagree with the Member for Araluen. I do not believe we should drop our standards when it comes to police recruiting. I 100% reject the suggestion from the Member for Araluen that we should drop police standards. I utterly reject and completely deny it; it is bad policy.

**Mrs Lambley:** Show some leadership, Michael. Tell them to do it.

**Mr PAECH:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. Can the Member for Araluen please refer to the Chief Minister by his title, not his Christian name?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Namatjira. Chief Minister, you have the call.

**Mr GUNNER:** We believe in maintaining our standards for police and recruiting them as fast as we can. That is the plan we got from police, that is the plan we have and we are giving the police the certainty they need.

### **Banned Drinker Register – Annual Review**

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

The Country Liberals have agreed to support the re-introduction of the Banned Drinker Register as part of our commitment to a bipartisan response to reducing alcohol-related harm and crime across the Territory. In June you said:

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

On that basis will you commit to an independent evaluation after one year of the BDR insofar as it impacts on crime, health, domestic violence, antisocial behaviour and any other key indicators, and if not why not?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, alcohol is the single biggest social harm the Northern Territory faces. Whether we represent remote parts of the Northern Territory, Central Australia and up the Stuart Highway to the Top End, alcohol is the issue causing harm to our community. It is the issue that fuels the antisocial behaviour. Alcohol fuels crime, it makes our communities unsafe and Territorians have had enough.

They elected this government with a mandate to bring back the Banned Drinker Register, something the CLP scrapped without consultation with community or key stakeholders like police, who refer to it as one of the best tools they had in tackling alcohol-fuelled violence and crime.

I am very proud to be part of a government that is bringing it back. Not only are we bringing back the Banned Drinker Register but we have an independent inquiry into alcohol policies and legislation. I challenge the opposition and those on the cross benches to accept the recommendations of that report in a bipartisan manner and to not play politics with those recommendations.

In the report there are four experts representing the judiciary, health, Indigenous Territorians and business because we know many Territorians drink responsibly, and they want to access alcohol so they can enjoy it and be responsible. But when we look at the harm it causes our community—the assaults, domestic violence, the emergency department presentations and the carnage on our roads—we need to do something about it.

**Mr HIGGINS:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Relevance. The question was whether they would agree to an independent evaluation and we have not touched any of that in the waffle we have heard.

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

**Ms FYLES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just reminding those opposite because they turned their back on the Territory when they scrapped the BDR and left no measures in place. They admitted it this

morning in this House. We have been up-front with Territorians, and I am finalising what will be an evaluation on the Banned Drinker Register because we will not put a measure in place simply because we want to do it. We want to make sure these measures work for Territorians and our community.

We will be honouring that commitment, assuming the House passes the legislation this week. Before the Banned Drinker Register is reintroduced on 1 September we will have an evaluation plan in place. Unlike those opposite...

**Mrs LAMBLEY:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. The Minister has not answered the question.

**Madam SPEAKER:** No, that is not a point of order. Minister, you have the call.

**Ms FYLES:** We have been very busy since we got to government, but not busy on Cabinet reshuffles like those opposite when they were in government. We have been busy working, delivering for Territorians, and we will deliver the Banned Drinker Register this week. Before it is rolled out Territorians will have a clear plan for evaluation and how the program is working.

We will continue to tackle this issue we, will not play politics with it. We were determined to tackle the issue of alcohol harm to benefit Territorians.

### **NT Police Retirement Age**

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

The NT Police are the only Northern Territory public servants forced to retire by the age of 65. All other Northern Territory public servants have the option of retiring when they want. This law is discriminatory. It is unfair and irrational and needs to be changed.

What is your government's policy on the existing mandatory retirement age of 65 for the Northern Territory police and would your government be prepared to lift the mandatory age of retirement and bring it in line with other Northern Territory public servants?

#### **ANSWER**

I am more than happy to have a conversation with the police association and the Police Commissioner about what their thoughts are regarding police retirement ages. It has not been raised with me by the association yet. That is not to say they will not raise it, but it has not been raised by either the association or the retired police association.

I am happy to take advice on both those things. We value our police; they have significant skills and history and I do not see any reason why we could not find a way to continue using them. We took a policy to the last election about finding a way to flexibly employ senior Territorians in the public service—this is now broader than police. We said there are a lot of senior Territorians who can still contribute. Is there a way for us to create a flexible public service working environment that would embrace them and bring them in? That is one option; the other is to have them continue their current work.

I am more than happy to look at that and will talk with the Minister for Public Employment to see whether this is something that tails into what he is doing or something we do separately. I am happy to raise it with the police association next time I see them. I might even raise it with the retired police association as well, and of course discuss it with the Police Commissioner. From my experience the Police Commissioner would be more than happy to keep working with and using the resources he has, especially those who are experienced.

### **Correctional Industries – Work Programs**

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

Yesterday I asked you if the government will cut any or all of the work programs at the Darwin prison. I tried three times to get an answer but was rewarded with a three-minute pre-recorded message about prison policy that had nothing to do with the question.

In keeping with your Chief Minister's statement on Labor's webpage:

*Michael Gunner and Labor will run an open, accountable and transparent government*

...

*Labor will shake up parliament, making it more accountable for the people.*

In light of that promise, will you please say if your government will cut any or all of the work programs at the prison?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I do not want to be repetitive but I feel that I answered the question yesterday. The budget in May delivered \$1.85m for Work not Play, which are the programs within our correctional facilities providing ...

**Mr Wood:** Are you cutting any programs?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Let the minister speak.

**Ms FYLES:** They are the programs, whether they are Throughcare, education, literacy and numeracy, or work programs. There are different programs that people can participate in in terms of correctional industries; people can participate in laundry, horticulture, the food services including the famous bakeries, metal fabrication, creative arts, cabinet and furniture making and textiles.

There are also programs that prepare prisoners to be work-ready ...

**Mr WOOD:** A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110: relevance. I will not wait until two minutes and 55 seconds. The question was, in light of that promise will you please say if your government will cut any or all of the work programs at the prison? I do not want the budget or a repetition of what was said yesterday; I want an answer.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nelson. The minister has the call and she can answer how she sees fit.

**Ms FYLES:** Madam Speaker, thank you. I do not want to upset the Member for Nelson. I know he is deeply passionate but I feel that no matter what response I provide it will not satisfy him. In terms of our correctional facilities we are trying to have programs that give people the skills to be work-ready and to break the cycle of re-offending.

Member for Nelson, these vary greatly from year to year. When some people are incarcerated, we need to focus on literacy and numeracy through various programs. Other prisoners have that capacity and we need to focus on employment opportunities for them. In my visits to the prison, I have seen prisoners participate in correctional industries, graduate from work-ready programs and graduate from education programs.

In terms of our commitment as a government, we are providing the budget and are working intensely. What is the evidence in giving those people, who are incarcerated, the skills so they can be involved in education and employment when they leave those facilities—as well as providing supports for them so they can break that cycle of reoffending.

I am happy to provide you with a briefing in more detail, but there is \$1.85m in the budget for education programs for correctional industries. It varies from year to year within that figure.

I believe I have answered the question asked yesterday. I have provided the member opposite with information. I am happy to provide a briefing if he has specific questions about budget line items.

This government is committed to reducing the rates of incarceration. In the Northern Territory we have extremely high rates of Indigenous incarceration. We are focused on reducing those rates and providing people with support so they can participate in our community through education and employment and stop reoffending.

### **Millner Data Centre**

#### **Mr WOOD to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING and LOGISTICS referred to MINISTER for CORPORATE and INFORMATION SERVICES**

There has been a project happening for some time at the archives building in Millner called the government data centre project. Has the new data facility in Millner been completed? What was the original budget estimate? How much did it eventually cost? If there were overruns and delays, what were the reasons?

#### **ANSWER**

**Ms MOSS (Corporate and Information Services):** This is a shared project between DIPL and the Department of Corporate and Information Services. It is a really important project for building resilience in our computing system. Over the last 20 years or so it has been centralised in the Chan Building.

The internal works for the data centre in Millner are complete, and the external works are close to being finalised. That work was undertaken with Sunbuild and has come within DIPL's budget of \$2m. Moving the computer systems is a very complex piece of work, and we need to manage the risks of doing that. We have our primary computing systems and our secondary computing systems that need to be moved over a three-year period.

I expect the data centre will become live in the coming month. In terms of moving all the computing systems there, that will take place over a three-year period. It will come in within budget, and the approved project budget for that is \$8.2m.

I am happy to sit down with you and talk you through that if you want to have a further briefing, Member for Nelson. I will continue to provide updates on the complete operation of the data centre in Millner. We have committed to smarter government policy. We are doing a whole-of-government ICT policy. I am very excited about the strategy we will be releasing and some of the other ICT commitments we have, as a government, for open data and data standards.

I am excited to be the minister responsible for this area of policy, and I am pleased with how the project is tracking so far. It is complex. There are a lot of risks involved in managing a project of this size and making sure we continue to run the systems that all agencies of government rely on daily to continue to provide services to Territorians.

The project is continuing, but the construction side, as far as DIPL is concerned, is very near completion.

### **Renal Services for Remote Communities**

#### **Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for HEALTH**

With so many Indigenous people suffering from kidney failure in my electorate and across the NT, more needs to be done to treat people on country. Minister, has the government considered a mobile renal unit with nursing staff assessing patients by air? Bringing people to Darwin is just not the answer.

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I know that he, like many in this Chamber, are passionate about this issue. Sadly, we see Indigenous Territorians suffer from renal disease and kidney failure at rates that are unreasonably high.

We are combatting this in a number of ways. Not only is this government committed to generational change and giving our children and young people the best start in life so they do not face these challenges and health issues in life, it is also committed to a new renal strategy for the Northern Territory.

The weight at which a baby is born will impact on them for the rest of their life. Babies with low birth weight will potentially suffer from early onset diabetes later in life, and there is strong medical evidence that shows lifting the birth weight rate can give our children a far better start in life.

I am proud that in the recent budget we committed \$11.1m for new renal dialysis facilities in Darwin and the bush. I have had the privilege of visiting centres in the Top End and Central Australia. We have committed \$9.7m for the Darwin renal centre, which is located in Coconut Grove/Nightcliff.

The member opposite raised a very important point and it is something my colleagues on this side of the House have lobbied me closely on. The Member for Arafura and other members from bush communities are very passionate about providing care to people who need this ongoing care closer to home, in their communities. That is why this government has allocated money in the budget for two renal-ready rooms for remote communities. These projects will ensure those people who need healthcare can get it close to home.

When you come in to town to access the healthcare you need, you are taken away from your family, friends and supports, compounding issues with housing and transport. The Department of Health has been working on the renal strategy going forward for the Northern Territory and we are committed to this. I look forward to the work being finalised and to working with communities across the Territory in the coming months on the best location for those renal-ready rooms and how to take this forward.

It is about providing care for those who, sadly, need dialysis here and now, but also putting in place long-term plans to provide the best opportunity for people avoiding needing dialysis and care.

I look forward to updating the House on this into the future. We have been doing a lot of work in this area.

### **Police in Alice Springs**

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

Prior to coming to parliament this afternoon I had a briefing with the police association. They informed me that over the last 12 months, 21 full-time positions within the Alice Springs police force have been lost or not recruited to. They informed me that, given the current recruitment process, only seven of the next batch of recruits will come to Alice Springs. This is a crisis for the police in Alice Springs, and I understand the problem is much bigger across the Northern Territory. Your current recruitment process will not fill the deficit we are experiencing now.

Are you aware of the crisis in Alice Springs, and what are you doing about stepping up the police recruitment process?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I am happy to raise the numbers the member just mentioned with the Police Commissioner. Those numbers have not been provided to me in the past by the association or the commissioner, so I am happy to get those numbers tested.

A total of 22 police out of the last recruit squads have gone to Alice Springs. In recent recruit squads police have been sent to Alice Springs. I understand when the next recruit squad comes out they will be based in Darwin, and that allows the commissioner to move police officers within the police force.

No problem has been described to me by the association or others, or that there are sufficient police. I am happy to get that tested and raise it with the commissioner and the association. My understanding is that there are police available to fill as many positions as needed and a recruit squad is about to be completed. That will be based in Darwin, but the recent recruit squads have gone to Alice Springs.

This time around the new police will be tested on patrol in Darwin, but that gives flexibility to how and where you locate the experienced police.

I am happy to take what the Member for Araluen has raised today. They are not numbers that have been raised with me before by either the association or the commissioner. I am happy to take that and be practical about it.

### **Indigenous Artists – Protection**

#### **Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for TOURISM and CULTURE**

The Northern Territory Government is putting an enormous emphasis on developing tourism in its major urban centres in 2017–18. That includes showcasing some of our finest art from North East Arnhem Land. Could you tell me what your department is doing to encourage the federal government to achieve greater protection for our NT artists?



## ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for this very important question. You are quite right; we have made a number of commitments to Territorians, supporting not only our tourism sector through our arts and cultural investments, but also the increasing and exceptionally valuable arts and cultural sector in the Northern Territory.

All of us in this House appreciate the incredible stories we have to tell and the talent that exists across the Territory, particularly in our regional centres, where we see a lot of art centres that are the keeping places for some of the most incredible history and cultural heritage pieces.

I reference the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards which occurred again in the Northern Territory on Friday. The winner of the major award, Frank Young, talked about art centres being where culture remains strong, which is important.

Regarding the federal government, I know one of the representatives working on the Indigenous Art Code was also in Darwin over the weekend. He attended a function here in Parliament House. I offered my support for the important campaign they run to ensure people are educated about ethical purchase of art, not only in the Northern Territory but across the country.

Philip Watkins, the co-chair of the National Indigenous Art Gallery steering committee for the Territory, has been on the board of the Indigenous Art Code. The Northern Territory is very well represented in ensuring our case is put forward about that issue.

In the broader investment in arts and culture across the regions, we have been receiving expressions of interest for the Regional Stimulus Grants program which is about providing grants for our regional art centres, galleries, libraries, keeping places and museums. That is open for applications from your electorate and across the Territory, Member for Nhulunbuy. We are investing in gallery extensions in East Arnhem Land as well.

As we continue to do that, it is important to continue to keep culture strong in the Northern Territory by driving visitation and distributing that visitation across the Territory for people to come and learn our stories. This is the place to come and experience Indigenous art and culture and we want to ensure we continue to showcase that. I am very proud of everyone in driving that commitment to Territorians. There are great benefits in urban, regional and remote areas.

### Chief Minister – Leadership

#### Mr HIGGINS to CHIEF MINISTER

A lack of honesty and integrity is undermining your leadership. Over the past two days you have been exposed as misleading Territorians about police numbers, ankle bracelets and which of your ministers is leaking information against you. Before that there was the plagiarised GST submission. How can Territorians trust you when you are not telling them the truth?

## ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I think I have cleared up some of those issues today. The Leader of the Opposition misheard what I said on the Mix program yesterday about police bracelets versus the 250, which is the Community Corrections' numbers.

The submission to the GST inquiry of the Productivity Commission was done on time. There was a draft submission provided earlier ...

**Mr Higgins:** What about the plagiarised one? We are interested in this plagiarised one.

**Mr GUNNER:** Let us clear up this random, strange accusation. The NT Government—both sides, Labor and CLP—has had to fight attacks on our GST before. We have always successfully defended those attacks. These are good arguments.

The Leader of the Opposition is saying that we should not have done our draft report. A report based on previous work NT governments have done successfully. He is saying, 'Do not use those arguments that previous governments have successfully used before to defend the NT. Stop. Do not do it. Walk away. Find

new arguments. Do not go back to what has worked before'. That is the CLP's GST strategy, 'Do not use arguments that have previously been successful'. It is a very odd defence of the NT; 'Let's retreat. Let's run away. Let's not pull out the toolkit.' That is a very odd decision by the CLP.

The Treasurer has fought for Territorians and provided our submission to the Productivity Commission in defence of the NT. Here it is. Here is the full report. This is the one that was given to the Productivity Commission in defence of the NT. The Leader of the Opposition does not want to defend the NT against the GST raid by our southern mates.

The federal treasurer has made it clear that this is about votes on the east coast, not about what is best for the NT. This is not about what is best for the Northern Territory of Australia. We are defending the NT. The CLP are running away from the fight. Run towards the fight. Embrace the arguments. Defend the Territory. Stand up for Territorians. Join with us. Join the Treasurer. Defend the NT. Sign up to the arguments that have successfully worked in the past for defending the NT.

We are in the trenches. We will fight for Territorians and what is best for them. That is what we will do, and you should join us.

### **Nightcliff Police Station**

#### **Mr HIGGINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL and JUSTICE**

After 12 months of Labor government it is clear that you have broken your promise to build a 24-hour police station in Nightcliff. Your most recent electorate newsletter has dropped any reference to the 24/7 station and instead now references CCTV cameras.

Minister, why have you broken your promise to the people of Nightcliff? Will there be a 24/7 police station in Nightcliff as you promised voters and repeatedly pledged in this place?

#### **ANSWER**

I am excited that my Nightcliff electorate newsletter is so popular it makes it down to the Daly.

The CLP government failed the people in my community. It failed the people of Coconut Grove, Rapid Creek and Nightcliff. It shut our police station. It turned its back on the community and scrapped the BDR. What we saw was unacceptable levels of antisocial behaviour and alcohol fuelled crime.

Since coming to government I have been working to address this issue. Legislation pass in the House this week for the Banned Drinker Register, something my community welcomes. Even those who were not fans the first time around cannot wait for this measure to be back in place. Just yesterday morning I met with the Police Commissioner, who outlined the plans for permanent CCTV in Nightcliff.

What we got from the CLP was a shut police station. We were given a mobile CCTV sometimes and a mobile police station sometimes. We have hard-working police officers trying to do the best job they can. Those opposite failed. They failed to give police resources, and they failed the people of our community.

CCTV was in the budget. I thank the Treasurer and minister for Police for providing that resource. It will not only be for my community but other communities. Under this government the people of Nightcliff will see permanent CCTV.

We will deliver on our election commitment of a 24/7 police station in the Nightcliff community. Many people have been to my beautiful electorate. On the edge of the northern suburbs close to the airport, the hospital and beautiful foreshore areas—police need that police station. We are looking at how we can deliver it and what the best model is. Police are currently operating from what is a fine commercial building, but it is not up to modern policing operational standards. I have toured that facility.

When those opposite had their chance they shut police stations and scrapped measures that protected our community. On this side of the House we are working hard, not only in my electorate but across the Northern Territory, delivering police the numbers and resources they need to do their job. It is certainly an issue I am continuing to work on as a local member, and I am working with the government and the minister for Police to provide the community of Nightcliff and the broader Territory community with the resources they need. That CCTV will go in permanently and we are continuing to work on those other issues.

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**VISITOR**

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Nelson, before you ask your question I want to draw members' attention to the gallery to a little girl who has been watching us.

**Ms Fyles:** Bronte!

**Madam SPEAKER:** Bronte, she has been very well behaved. They are a bit noisy though, are they not? Welcome to Parliament House.

**Mr WOOD:** Madam Speaker, thank you. She has obviously been copying me.

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**Senior, Pensioner and Carer Scheme**

**Mr WOOD to MINISTER for TERRITORY FAMILIES**

Minister, it would be an understatement to say that seniors in the NT are not happy with how your government has handled the so-called review of the pensioner and senior concession schemes. It started off badly with a poorly worded letter sent from your department, and now we have many people signing petitions, ringing my office, attending meetings and reflecting their concerns about what the government is doing or not doing.

Minister, when will seniors be informed about exactly what you have in mind? Will they be able to comment on whatever your government has in mind before you put your imprimatur on it?

**ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, it is an important one. Your observations are right. We are happy to admit that we perhaps started that process not as well as we would have liked, but we are committed to making the concession scheme bigger and better. We have committed more money to the scheme, so there is another couple of million dollars in the budget for this year. We will look at the best way to make sure that money is targeted to the advantage of seniors because we know it is a flawed system.

It has had very serious allegations of fraud proven in court. Also it has been unfairly spread across the whole Territory, people in your own electorate have not had as much access to it as the people of the northern suburbs. We really want to make sure that all Territorians are included in the scheme.

I have been heartened by the response and we are on track to having the biggest response ever to a government survey, which is great. That is an important thing because people are having their say and are engaged in this. It is really important to say we have also made thousands of phone calls to seniors because we genuinely want to hear from people about what they want; we will not sneak up and surprise them. One of the things that struck me through this process—as the Member for Araluen keeps pointing out, as a new person in the Chamber I have noticed in each conversation the trust deficit we have in the Northern Territory, in this place.

We have to engage with and listen to our community and get that faith back. Their assumption has been that we will do the wrong thing because it happened previously where self-funded retirees got completely cut out with very little communication about how that would work. We understand that mistrust in government and we are committed to taking on board all feedback. We will continue to have those conversations with seniors and be clearly communicating the outcomes of that review and our next step.

I am more than happy to continue to work with you all on this issue, it is really important. I have been disappointed with some of the scaremongering that has gone on, but we can say to Territorians that we are committed to supporting senior Territorians.

### **Australian Hotels Association**

#### **Mrs LAMBLEY to CHIEF MINISTER**

Chief Minister, one of your Cabinet ministers came out in the *NT News* yesterday and made a serious allegation of corruption within your government, that you did a deal with the Australian Hotels Association to ban Dan Murphy's from coming to Darwin. It is time for you to come clean and tell Territorians exactly what that deal was and who was involved.

Minister, will you be referring yourself to ICAC like you referred yourself to the Auditor-General when you breached the *Public Information Act* or will an external referral have to be made?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I can guarantee no deal was done. We have provided a copy of our letter to the AHA, so we were very transparent about our policy position and the correspondence.

No deal was done. I reject that accusation. I have spoken with everyone in my Cabinet and no one made that accusation. I can 100% guarantee that no deal was done and I absolutely reject the paraphrased accusation from the Member for Araluen. We have been very transparent about our policy position.

We have created a public donations inquiry. Former Justice Mansfield has the ability, under the terms of reference, to choose whether to look into this or not. He can look into anything over the last 10 years. We are being completely above board and there was no done deal. The letter was made public, as was our policy position.

We are going through a review process now to test it. I reject the accusation of a done deal. Justice Mansfield has the powers, from the inquiry we established, to look at it.

We are happy to be independent and transparent, and for the former justice, to investigate us if he wants to.

### **Jobs – Health Services in Alice Springs**

#### **Mrs LAMBLEY to MINISTER for HEALTH**

Stories are circulating that the government intends to centralise health services across the Northern Territory back to Darwin. With the scrapping of the health services board, people are telling me jobs are about to be lost in the Central Australia Health Service. Could you clarify what your intentions are? Will you bring administration and management positions back to Darwin, away from Alice Springs, and do you intend to cut jobs?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, no. We made changes to the health boards, and that was well documented when they were made. That stemmed from when those health boards were established to support those new health services in the 2011 national partnership reform agreement.

The Northern Territory is a relatively small jurisdiction, but we have a large geographical area. We have approximately 70 health clinics in the Northern Territory over 1.4 million square kilometres. We have five hospitals within that, and as former Health minister, the member opposite knows that. At this point, under the CLP government, there had already been three Health ministers, and it went on to have five.

The boards were dissolved on 30 June. Mr Paul Tyrrell OA, is in place for the Top End Health Service and Patricia Miller for the Central Australia Health Service, as the administrator. We stepped that out. I have corresponded with the federal minister on this issue.

We recently advertised for health advisory committees for Central Australia and the Top End, and those are being finalised. We had a consultation period throughout the show circuit, engaging people in communities so we could have a broad representation. We will also put in place a clinical senate.

To answer the member's question, there are no steps to bring things directly back to the Top End. We have an agenda of giving more community control to health services. We will transition four clinics over four years to be community led. We believe in Territorians being in control over their health and accessing health

services as close as possible to home. That can be difficult at times, but we have excellent clinics, staff and hospitals across the Territory.

I have outlined what we have done and where we are stepping out to, but we do not have any intention—those health services will stay in place. They have been well established to work with the broader department. The boards saved around \$1m per year.

In 2011, when those national partnership reform agreements were put in place in the Northern Territory, it was always noted that we have a unique context and structure in the Territory.

### **Police – Additional Officers**

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

The consent agreement with the police association expired on 30 June and you have not yet agreed to a new pay deal. This comes at a time when assaults on police have become increasingly violent, crime rates are perilously high and the job of being a police officer in the Territory has never been more difficult.

Why should Territorians believe you will satisfy your election commitment of increasing the police force by an additional 120 members when you have failed to provide police with a pay rise or consent agreement terms that sufficiently compensate them for putting their lives on the line each and every day?

#### **ANSWER**

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question because it provides an opportunity to provide a very positive contrast between how we are handling our negotiations with police—as we will with other public servants—and how the CLP handled their negotiations with people. The firefighters is the best example.

What the CLP did during its term was say to people, 'We will not provide back pay. From the moment the contract expires or the EBA expires we will use this as a cudgel over your head to get you to agree to a bad deal'. We have taken that away, we have said we will guarantee—we will back pay to the day of the expiry so that both parties can negotiate in good faith without false pressure, without that cudgel.

This is how you do genuine good faith negotiations. The CLP refused to ever do proper back pay from the date of the expiry of the EBA. They use that to blackmail, bully, bludgeon and bash public servants that sign up to bad deals. We are not doing that.

We are in good faith negotiations with the police, as we are with all people who have EBA's expiring. They know we will back pay to the date of the expiry so that we can negotiate in good faith, get this right and not bully them. We will not borrow those bad tactics from the CLP and why—it should be obvious that the CLP, as a party, simply do not like or respect workers and come from a very bad position when it comes to negotiations with their work force.

We come from a position of respect and understanding and have made it clear to the police that we will negotiate in good faith with them and will back pay to the day of the negotiations. This is about not bullying the police. We will not treat our public servants, our frontline workers, in bad faith like the CLP did.

The best example is the firefighters who held out for three-and-a-half years against the CLP bullying tactics. We negotiated with good faith and we back paid them to the date of the expiry of that agreement. They said no to the CLP bullying tactics. They said no and they stood up against the CLP. They said no to how the CLP treat their workers—and full respect to the firefighters.

What we have said is that no worker should have to fight like the firefighters did. We will say from day one that we will negotiate in good faith, we will get that deal sorted and we will pay it back to the date of the expiry of the EBA. That is how you negotiate in good faith. That is how you look after who works for you. That is how you respect them. We respect the workers and the CLP do not.

## NT News Articles

### Mr HIGGINS to TREASURER

Treasurer, what is your opinion of plagiarism within your office and your department? What action will you be taking about the instances of plagiarism alleged by the *NT News* or will you simply blame the *NT News* for making up stories, like the Chief Minister?

### ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his questions. He is running down the wrong direction and the wrong path here. We are talking about a final submission and the Leader of the Opposition—I will provide you with a copy of that draft, because I am finding it frustrating that you have your energies focused on a completely bizarre argument when I want you focused here.

I want you focused here, Leader of the Opposition, on the actual submission to the Productivity Commission into the issue of HFE and the distribution of the GST. This is where I need your attention. I need you to be working on this one with your mates in Canberra. So, yes, we will provide you a copy of the draft, as bizarre and unusual as that is. It is very natural for agencies to work on draft documentation with putting in final submissions. That is called process.

**Mr Higgins:** When will we get the draft copy? Will we get the draft this afternoon?

**Ms MANISON:** I will be providing that to you, Leader of the Opposition. I will get a copy of that to you and tabled in parliament. Okay?

**Mr Higgins:** Thank you very much.

**Ms MANISON:** I need your focus here, on this final submission—the relevant body of work that I need you advocating and fighting for and doing your bit with your mates in Canberra to protect our fair share of the GST.

Leader of the Opposition, I hope you focus on this body of work, the submission made to the Productivity Commission. This is a very deep and serious issue. When I saw the Prime Minister recently in Western Australia, standing side by side with his colleagues, and heard the narrative at the media conferences and events, I was deeply worried about what this means to the future of the Northern Territory in the distribution of the GST. I am also deeply worried about what other large jurisdictions, such as New South Wales, have to say about the distribution of the GST and the Productivity Commission report.

We need you to be working with us, advocating to your mates in Canberra and to be focused here. I am looking forward to working constructively with you, because we are in for a big fight. We need to do everything we can to protect our fair share of the GST. The relative change has hurt us already so much. This is a risk to the Northern Territory and we must do everything we can to protect our fair share of the GST going forward.

## Public Housing – Leasing from Developers

### Mr WOOD to MINISTER for HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

You recently asked for property developers interested in leasing their properties for six-year periods to submit proposals to supply dwellings as public housing. You said this was part of a plan to reduce the public housing wait list and increase the availability of housing by 200 properties for low income earners, seniors and people living with a disability. You also said, 'We will provide property developers and owners financial security of long-term leases at market rent'. You said this would create jobs and supply more public housing.

What will this mean in terms of cost to the taxpayer? That is, the difference received from public housing tenants and the long-term market lease paid to the developer. What will happen to this program through reduced waiting lists if, after six or nine years, the developers want to sell their properties on the open market?

Why does the government not simply construct its own public housing and recoup the costs through normal public housing rent?

## ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Nelson for his question. It was a good reiteration of a good policy. Essentially, Member for Nelson, I am a new Housing minister with unacceptable wait list times. There are over 3000 people on the waiting list for public housing in the Northern Territory. So, this government has decided—as opposed to the last administration—to look at innovative ways to address this.

We are developing a five-year urban public housing strategy across the board. We know that community housing providers do this better. We are putting in a lot of resources. The Chief Minister brought forward \$10m to look at this specifically not only to address public social housing, but also to create what is needed in an economic stimulus to stimulate construction across the Northern Territory. The previous administration has left us in a very deep hole.

A good example of one of their policies was the Real Housing for Growth policy, which this government is still managing. They set up a policy for key workers. They set up leases for 10 years across the Northern Territory; then they completely wrecked our economy and we saw 9000 people leave the Northern Territory. There are a few legacy items.

It means developers have to look at construction, because we are serious about 200 social head leases. We are talking about the six-year leasing time frame to get that financial certainty and the possibility of other constructions within five years. We are serious about this.

With this policy, we are targeting low-income earners, seniors and people living with disabilities. They are the vulnerable target group and the people who need to be housed. They will be selected off our housing lists. It will have a good economic benefit for the Northern Territory. It will help to reduce the public housing wait lists. In terms of a five-year housing strategy, we are looking at the community housing sector.

We have a target to look at 750 dwellings to move into that sector, including the \$10m to stimulate the new builds and the reconstructions, and we are looking at this social housing leasing system as well. All these are combined to deliver better outcomes ...

**Mr Wood:** Has the cost benefit analysis been done?

**Mr McCARTHY:** I did not pick up on the interjection there.

**Mr Wood:** Has the cost benefit analysis been done compared to ...

**Mr McCARTHY:** Absolutely, Member for Nelson, and I have had the privilege as a minister to travel interstate to research better innovative models. This is what the Territory is doing and this is what Michael Gunner's government is doing. It is about action; it is not about what the previous administration did.

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

## Written Question Responses

### Mr HIGGINS to MADAM SPEAKER

My question is a procedural one and is pursuant to Standing Order 114. During the period 21 June to 27 June this year I submitted Written Questions to all agencies entitled Appropriation Bill. These questions numbered 90 to 111 ask for information relating to budget and expenditure relating to 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 and were in lieu of the opposition's attendance at the Estimates Committee.

Responses from all agencies have been received with the exception of those agencies falling under the responsibility of the Chief Minister in his portfolios of Chief Minister; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister for Northern Australia; Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Trade, Business and Innovation.

Standing Order 114 Replies to Questions reads as follows—I will abbreviate that a bit.

One is that a reply to Written Questions must be delivered to the Clerk and point two is that a minister should respond to all Written Questions within 30 days of receipt. If a minister does not answer the questions within 30 days the member who asked the questions may, at the conclusion of Question Time, ask the Speaker to write to the minister seeking reasons for the delay.

As the Written Questions to the Chief Minister were submitted on 26 June I would like to point out the responses in respect of the department of the Chief Minister, the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, the Police Civil Employment Unit, the Northern Territory Emergency Services and the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Responses are now 20 days over the 30 days provided by Standing Order 114.

The opposition is grateful for all the hard work undertaken by the public service in preparing these answers to Written Questions as evidenced by my letter to them published in the *NT News* on 7 June. Accordingly the opposition was quite prepared to be more than flexible regarding any late responses. However, it is worth noting that other large agencies have met the requirements of Standing Order 114. For instance, responses were received from the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Infrastructure on 26 July.

It is also worth noting that all responses remaining outstanding are those under the responsibility of the Chief Minister. Given the requirements of Standing Order 114, I ask that you write to the Chief Minister seeking reasons for the delay.

**Ms FYLES:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for raising this issue. I would again remind the opposition that perhaps if they had come to estimates—I know they did not agree on the format. But we were quite clear in the election that we wanted to look at making changes to estimates to provide provision to not only questioning how we would spend the government budget, but what we delivered, how we spent that money, and what programs we delivered.

I can advise the member opposite—as I understand the responses are not far away—that it was a great volume of work by our hard-working public servants, who prepare information for the estimates process. When you converse in estimates the chief executive and the minister are there. You are able to provide information because you have them and other resources at hand.

Through the experience of answering Written Questions from my agency, I know there were many questions. It was a huge body of work and every minister would acknowledge their departments. In terms of this request—asking yourself, Madam Speaker, of course you will use your best judgement—I have been advised that those responses, that enormous body of work is not far away, and I acknowledge that it was a great deal of work. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Thank you, Leader of Government Business and Opposition Leader. Yes, under Standing Order 114 I will write to the relevant minister, seeking information because it is outside of the 30 days in receipt of the answers. That will be done today.

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