

Madam Speaker Purick took the Chair at 2 pm.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 35 – Assent to Proposed Laws

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message No 35 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to bills passed at the May sittings of the Assembly. The message is dated 16 June 2016.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER
Red Nose Day

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, red noses have been placed on all members' desks to support awareness of Red Nose Day on Friday, 24 June. Red Nose Day is a major fundraiser for SIDS and Kids. Funds raised through Red Nose Day activities help provide vital services and programs to the Australian and Territory community. SIDS and Kids is dedicated to saving the lives of babies and children during pregnancy, birth, infancy and childhood, and supporting bereaved families.

PETITION
Petition No 64 – Berry Springs Aquifer

Mr HIGGINS (Daly): Madam Speaker, I present a petition from 108 petitioners praying for reticulated water for Darwin River, Southport and Berry Springs. This petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders.

Madam Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, we the undersigned respectfully showeth that the Berry Springs aquifer is currently being used beyond its capacity and faces further threat from growing pressures of proposed development in the rural area, resulting in the need for a plan to ensure greater protection of the aquifer to enable continued use for both current and future purposes, as well as for the benefit of all Territorians who frequent the Berry Springs nature reserve.

We petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Northern Territory government develop a feasible strategy for a more sustainable water supply to accommodate current residential, commercial enterprises and future development without placing added pressure on the Berry Springs aquifer that services the catchment area containing Darwin River, Southport and Berry Springs.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

Petition: Reticulated water required for Darwin River, Southport and Berry Springs activity centre.

We the undersigned through our local member, Mr Gary Higgins, petition the Northern Territory government for a more sustainable reticulated water supply to accommodate current residential, commercial enterprises and future development without placing added pressure on the Berry Springs aquifer that services Darwin River, Southport and Berry Springs.

APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL
(Serial 170)

Continued from 24 May 2016.

Consideration in Detail

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I believe that the chair of the committee is normally the person who kicks this debate off. I note that the chair of the committee is not here at the moment.

Ms FYLES: Speaking to the point of order; the chair of the committee has been quite unwell this morning. The committee has worked through that and we appreciate the efforts of the government, opposition and Independent members. The deputy chair will stand and speak. I apologise.

Mr ELFERINK: Madam Speaker, I was not aware of that. I was going to move that the deputy chair be allowed to speak on behalf of the committee in the absence of the member for Araluen, so we can start the debate.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Port Darwin. Honourable members, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly on 26 May 2016, the Assembly has before it the question that the expenditure proposed in the Appropriation (2016-2017) Bill stand as part of the bill and reports to the Estimates Committee and the Government Owned Corporations Scrutiny Committee be noted.

The following time limits apply to debate on the committee reports: ministers, the Leader of the Opposition and shadow ministers have 20 minutes; any other members have 10 minutes; and the maximum period for the consideration shall be five hours. If the debate is not concluded after five hours, I will put the question without debate that the remainder of the bill stands as part of the bill.

I now call on the Deputy Chair of the Estimates Committee.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, I speak on behalf of the chair. I am pleased to table the report of the Estimates Committee on its consideration of the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the schedule to the Appropriation Bill 2016-17 and the report of the Government Owned Corporations Scrutiny Committee on the activities, performance, practices and financial management of the Power and Water Corporation, Jacana Energy and Territory Generation.

I will speak briefly to these reports as chair of the committee and then speak to the detail of the Appropriation Bill 2016-17 as the member for Nelson. The committee's reports outline the key areas of interest or concern in the questions asked at the hearings.

The questions on notice will be tabled in the Assembly on 8 July. Answers to questions on notice must be with the committee secretariat by 7 July. I note that these deadlines are those set by the Assembly. The answers will be uploaded to the database on the Assembly's website as they are received. There were 112 questions taken on notice this year, a decrease of six questions on last year. Today, at the close of hearings, 27% of questions had been answered.

This is the Legislative Assembly's 15th year of Estimates Committee hearings. The estimates hearings provide a valuable opportunity for members to ask ministers questions relating to agencies being funded under the budget.

Overall the hearings worked quite effectively and provided the opposition and other members an opportunity to question any areas of government they prioritised. However, there were a number of agencies and outputs that the committee did not have time to examine.

There was more time available to question outputs for the ministers who agreed to the committee's request to table answers to questions provided in advance. It was disappointing to see some ministers refuse the committee's request and consume the hearing time by providing detailed figures orally rather than by tabling.

Another issue with the hearings was the lateness, with some hearings commencing at 8.30 am and concluding at 11.30 pm. This caused significant waste, with many agency staff needing to be ready to respond to questions. It was not an effective way of operating. The quality of questioning must be reduced when members are required to question one minister in detail until 11.30 pm one night and then another minister at 8.30 am the next day. This problem could be

solved by spreading the hearings across more days over the two weeks. I recommend that the Assembly agree to do this in future years.

I thank all members who participated in the 2016 estimates process for their constructive approach, and agency staff for the significant work they put into the operation.

That concludes the statement of the Chair of the Estimates Committee. I will now contribute as the member for Nelson.

Mr ELFERINK: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move that the clock be reset for the member for Nelson.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, 10 minutes for the member for Nelson.

Mr WOOD: Madam Speaker, I would like to raise some issues. I thank everybody who participated in the Estimates Committee. It is a valuable part of our government processes. It gives the opposition and Independents a chance to question government and its departments on matters that we are not normally able to address in Question Time.

I note, as the member for Araluen said, there has been a bit of time wasting. The chair asked most ministers to give a five-minute summary of their portfolio; some of the summaries went up to 25 minutes.

As the member for Araluen noticed, some of the written questions from the opposition were not delivered before the estimates, but at the estimates. I have said before, it is best to have written questions which have been responded to before estimates. From those answers the member could select the matters to question the minister about. That way would save time.

I think we have to make some changes. The chair asked people to speak about the ministers' opening statements. If the minister's opening statement goes for 25 minutes you have nearly covered everything so you never get to the outputs. There need to be some internal changes to ensure that if there is something in the minister's opening statement that is not covered in the outputs it can be debated. If the rest of the statement is covered in the outputs we can go through the process in an orderly way. It would allow other members of the committee to ask their questions at an earlier stage. Yesterday we had four-and-a half hours on health and we did not get to the outputs.

Ms Fyles: Education.

Mr WOOD: Yes, but it was a long period of time. Sorry, member for Nightcliff; it was probably your portfolio. I think we also have to make changes internally because missed some portfolios, and some portfolios we only gave five or 10 minutes. It is a bit disappointing, especially for the staff who prepared answers.

One solution to that, which I have raised before, is that next year you put some of those agencies up the top. For example, we did not have much chance to talk about infrastructure, a very important part of the estimates and a portfolio that has one of the highest budgets in government. I would prefer infrastructure and transport were at the top of the table next year. I am not saying education is not important; of course it is, but it would come third, and that way you would have a chance to ensure agencies are questioned at least once every two years, which is perhaps better than not all.

We used to do this with the port. The port used to be down the bottom of the list, and occasionally we brought it up to the top of the list to make sure the report could be questioned.

From our point of view we need to be aware of those outputs before we start questioning. We perhaps have to be a little tighter in the number of questions we have simply because, as a PAC, we have to work as a team. The PAC at present is two government, two Independent and two opposition members. In days gone by the balance might have swayed a bit more towards the opposition. Not that I mind the opposition members asking questions; they have a few more people upstairs to prepare the questions. Some of us go silly reading annual reports and take our questions from there.

There were some notable discussions, as people would have heard today, about the Power and Water separation, a really important part of our discussions. There were also discussions about the future of solar power in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, and the cost of electricity in relation to whether you could move forward with more solar power and what that means in real terms. They are the good things that highlight to me why the PAC is important.

The Treasurer has a wide variety of things he can discuss; being the Treasurer he could discuss the entire budget if he wished to. He also discussed matters close to our hearts, such as Lands and Planning; many issues were discussed in relation to Lands and Planning.

The minister dealt with many issues in relation to his Mines and Energy portfolio, which is very topical at the moment with hydraulic fracturing being an issue that many people are interested in,

and contamination of mines. They are the types of things you have the opportunity to talk about in a bit more detail in the Estimates Committee than you would normally.

Some of the statutory authority people attended, such as the Auditor-General and the Electoral Commissioner, which was good timing with the Northern Territory election being not so far away.

We had the Ombudsman as well and then the Department of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister has a lot of portfolios under his name. I do not always agree with the Chief Minister, but I will give him his due as he covered his portfolios very well. He knew his areas; some ministers tend to rely a lot on their advisers. The Chief Minister had a good handle on pretty much all the areas that come under his department.

There were some pretty big issues in relation to the future of tourism and some of the major economic developments in the Northern Territory. I was interested in – I think it came under the Chief Minister's department – the First Circles program. I believe it is an important idea and concept that the government introduced, which has now turned into reality.

I saw something similar in Canada, but it was more for elders than young people. I think it is a good move by the government, bringing those young people into the democratic process and include them, rather than them being on the outside looking in.

We spoke to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner about the Community Visitor Program. Children and Families was a very important part of our discussions, an area which the Attorney-General covers, and we also spoke to the Children's Commissioner.

Health was a big issue and, naturally, there are a range of issues within it. One of the topics discussed as an issue relating to the Community Visitor Program was the alcohol mandatory treatment program, which has received some criticism. I support it and think it has to be done for the right reasons. It needs some fixing, but I do not think it should be scrapped. We also discussed the Palmerston hospital and mental health.

Primary industry is one of my favourite areas, and sometimes it does not have enough chances for discussion in parliament. There were issues like the banana freckle program, which some people did not support, but in the end it was a successful program. Hopefully it will produce freckle-free bananas in the Northern Territory and our banana industry might get up and going again. Primary industries are an important part of our economy.

We discussed issues about Land Resource Management such as water licences, hunting crocodiles, weed control and all those sorts of things. The environment was part of some of those discussions.

We covered a wide range of areas; we have at least 12 pages of matters we discussed to give some people an idea of what was done at the Estimates Committee. I am sure this document could be available if people wanted to know about it, but it gives you an indication of the importance of the PAC. I thank all the staff who helped out because they do a terrific amount of work. While we knock off at 11.30 pm, they are probably still going at 12.30 am. Thank you very much.

Ms FYLES: Madam Speaker, the estimates hearings showed that this chaotic, dysfunctional government, which stumbled from scandal to scandal and staggered from budget to budget, is continuing on its dysfunctional way.

This estimates hearing we asked numerous questions, but the government showed that it is falling apart at the seams under the groaning weight of incompetence and the inability to govern for Territorians.

Territorians want a government that leads by example and looks after the Territory's interests, not its own. We are seeing the population falling and jobs disappearing, and this CLP government does not have a plan to fix it.

The estimates hearings were an important opportunity for the opposition and Independent members to question the government about its plans, but time and time again government ministers were unable to answer questions. That was highlighted by the Minister for Women's Policy, who was unable to answer questions and asked the chair if the committee could move on. She was unwilling to provide information and did not know the most basic information and that is absolutely disappointing.

The opposition had many questions to ask and put a lot of time and effort into preparing those questions – and a lot of engagement with the community and stakeholders who wanted to hear the responses – but we saw ministers reading from statements, not willing to table documents or provide information. There were a couple of exceptions; I believe the Attorney-General and minister Chandler both provided tabled responses to written questions, but every other minister chose to waste time and scrutiny, and read those responses.

The Chief Minister maintains that important projects like Statehood and Indigenous economic development are on track, despite advice

presented at the hearings which showed exactly the opposite. The government says one thing, but we saw that the Territory government is off track, particularly with its economic agenda.

There were many questions asked about interesting portfolio areas, but a no-show by the minister for Sport left the opposition unable to ask questions about this important issue across the Territory, which highlights how dysfunctional this CLP government is.

During the estimates hearings, we saw confirmation that the Palmerston hospital is years behind and more than \$50m over budget. We also saw that there has not been enough money put aside for its operations.

We saw confirmation that when the Chief Minister sold the port, without consulting Territorians or talking to the community ...

Mr Styles: It is not sold.

Ms FYLES: I will pick up on the interjections from those opposite. It is sold. The Treasurer admitted on Channel Nine News that the port is sold; he called it the port lease sale. The port is gone from Territorians' hands for our lifetime and our children's lifetime. You sold it. You did not consult Territorians and you sit here and laugh. You do not understand.

This government is out of touch with the community. Within the confirmation that the Giles government sold the port against our wishes, we saw that they paid over \$27m in consultancy fees. We still do not know the real income provided to the Territory. They were unable to answer questions. We saw consultancy fees, but we did not receive answers to questions regarding the income that would have been received if the port was still in the Territory's hands.

The Minister for Housing confirmed that the government has they have not put a single dollar into remote housing over the last two years and could not answer anything else, including important questions about combating domestic violence. She could not even answer Dorothy Dixier questions from her own colleagues. If that does not show the inability of this government to govern, I do not know what does.

We asked questions, which could not be answered, about the domestic violence unit and its relocation from a frontline agency into a policy office. I call on the minister to explain that process because, as I understand it, a document was signed on Wednesday for 49 Department of Children and Families staff members to move across. Questions regarding that time line are interesting.

We had a lot of unanswered questions due to ministers refusing to table documents and talking slowly. There are also a number of written questions still outstanding. In the lead-up to the estimates process, written questions were unanswered. The response was, 'Ask them at estimates', but we did not have the full opportunity.

This morning we had the scrutiny of the separation of Power and Water. My colleague, the member for Wanguri, will speak in further detail about the separation of Power and Water and the disaster it has been from start to finish, and it is still ongoing.

The estimate hearings confirmed what Territorians already know; this scandal-plagued CLP government is rapidly disintegrating under the weight of its own arrogance and incompetence, and Territorians are paying the price. People are leaving the Territory; jobs are disappearing and the CLP does not have a plan to fix it. We saw that in documents from within the Chief Minister's department.

The estimates process took many long hours and we thank the committee staff for their efforts. I thank my colleagues on the committee, who provided opportunities for the opposition and the Independent members to ask questions. I acknowledge the two government members who joined us, especially this morning with the chair of the committee becoming unwell.

In regard to my electorate, there were questions asked regarding housing in the Darwin area. It has blown out to 97 months that people can be on a public housing waiting list; we saw an interesting attempt at explaining the blowout of those figures. We thank the committee members who stood on the committee, the staff members who provided the opportunity and the public servants who gave up their time and provided detailed responses.

From the outset, the opposition has indicated support for the budget. We want to continue to support public service employees in the hard work they do. But, Madam Speaker, Territorians simply cannot afford four more years of Chief Minister Adam Giles and the CLP.

Mr GILES: Madam Speaker, I think it is imperative that I stand up and speak after that tirade, rant or whatever you might like to call it. The estimates process is a good process, an opportunity for people to ask questions. I thank the member for Nelson for his commentary. I sought to answer every question and I think there were only a few taken on notice.

I also thank all of those public service employees who went to extreme lengths to provide

information and briefs for the ministers to provide answers. It is a long, arduous process and takes a lot of time. I know many people think estimates is too laborious when it comes to processes and it takes up much of our time when we could be doing other things, but it is the process we have.

It would be remiss of me not to point out a couple of failures in the process. It is fundamentally about the opposition and Independents having an opportunity to question government on expenditure in the past 12 months and in the future, as well as policy concepts or ideas. I note that the Leader of the Opposition, the man who forgot the Business portfolio when he assigned shadow portfolios, refused to even turn up to ask questions about the Business portfolio in estimates.

That is the second time he has forgotten about business in the Northern Territory – a business sector that provides so much employment from the non-government sector, 95% of which is within small businesses in the Territory. He did not ask one question about business – not one question about vocational education and training from the shadow minister for Business. That shows how committed he is to business in the Northern Territory.

More surprising still, given the importance of law and order in the Northern Territory, he only spent a mere 45 minutes asking questions about police. He did not ask one question on crime. That shows you, again, that not only does he not care about business, but he does not care about the police. The Leader of the Opposition did not ask a question ...

Ms Fyles: There were questions asked; you just were not listening.

Mr GILES: Member for Nightcliff, I gave you the gratitude of being quiet during your tirade.

The Leader of the Opposition did not ask a question on tourism, one of our major industries in the Northern Territory, now turning around after 15 years of decline under Labor. He did not ask a single question.

Ms Walker: I am the shadow for Tourism; I asked the tourism questions.

Mr GILES: I thought the Leader of the Opposition would see the economy as so important that he would ask a question about it, member for Nhulunbuy. He did not ask a question about the economy – not one economic question from the Leader of the Opposition, the would-be Treasurer.

Ms Fyles: What were you saying at Barunga about your colleagues?

Mr GILES: They do not like the message. They cannot hold their lip; they have to keep butting in.

He likes to parade in front of his media mates, but he will not even ask a question when it comes to real answers. I heard about the member for Nightcliff talking about a leaked document. 'Oh, you have a leaked internal management document out of the Department of the Chief Minister.'

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! It was not a leaked document; it was uploaded to an Intranet.

Madam SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Mr GILES: A document that was leaked by staff members from the Leader of the Opposition's office and which contained commercially sensitive information was paraded around to the media. We are currently in a probity process for several projects in the Territory and you leaked internal information to the media. It is outrageous.

You can have your little rant about the port, but you said, 'We did not get a chance to ask about how much profit the port made'. I am the port minister and you never asked the question. If you had asked I would have said that the port was lumbered with \$40m worth of debt and since it was built has only turned a profit once, which was the year that we leased it out, so do not make those statements in this Chamber because they are completely incorrect.

If you want to talk about 99 years of the port lease, and a sale, and throw mud, as you like to do, look at the rail easement, a 99-year lease of the Northern Territory railway under Labor. I think you have to be fair and reasonable.

It would be remiss of me not to mention a couple of things. One is an important reminder to Territorians of our fantastic initiative known as the tradie voucher – a \$2000 initiative – an opportunity for every home owner-occupier in the Territory, some 10 000 of them, to renovate or refurbish up to a \$20 000 maximum. I cannot tell you the most up-to-date figure, but about 1000 tradies have registered. Territorians everywhere want to do it.

This initiative is designed to help people improve their homes, support the tradies and to be an economic generator and earner for the Northern Territory. Not that the wannabe Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition, would know anything about that. He did not ask one economic question in estimates.

It is important to note that Labor's policy is to get rid of this hugely successful initiative. Labor's

policy is to win government and slash it. All of those 10 000 homeowners in the Northern Territory will not have it. Make no mistake, Labor has completely committed to cutting this initiative.

I think the most important thing to come out of the estimates process came out today. It was interesting to see the member for Nightcliff parade her anger across the Chamber over what the government is doing, but she did not once talk about the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply. She did not once talk about what Labor would do if it had a budget, or try to sell any of its initiatives, but I will help Labor sell one of its initiatives.

It has an initiative that has been paraded and heralded by the Leader of the Opposition, the wannabe Treasurer, to have 50% renewable energy in the Northern Territory. I understand that this morning in estimates the statutory authority, Territory Generation, was asked questions about the initiative. Territory Generation provided responses regarding what it would cost if you were to have 50% generation by renewables in Alice Springs.

If you were to have 50% renewables, you have to keep in mind that you would need to keep a spinning reserve. That means you need gas or diesel generation to kick in if solar is not working; so you need generators there anyway and an available maximum capacity of 75%. Not 100%, but 75%. To work out 50% renewables, you have to calculate it on the basis that 75% renewables is the base reserve capacity.

If you have solar power, you need a backup of some type in case of cloud cover. You can have spinning reserves, which means your backup is always turning, so it is burning the gas or diesel all the time. Or you can work on a model of battery backup. Based on the 75% modelling – a paper was tabled, which I will seek to table in the House later – they have determined that you need battery backup, which is not available on a broad scale for at least another 10 years, but if we were to have it right now in Alice Springs, based on the cloud cover assessments made, we would need to have battery backup to cover seven days.

With the large-scale photovoltaic solar power system, the cost of seven days' worth of battery backup would cost between \$1.5bn and \$2bn. That is on top of having your generation sitting there to cover for the 75%. It would meet 70% of total demand of solar, keeping in mind the 75% backup, and would need 148 ha to run the solar panels; that is for seven-day storage, which is \$1.5bn to \$2bn. Territory Generation's advice was that wholesale electricity would rise by 345%.

Let me clarify what wholesale electricity is. If you are a business, you pay for the cost of electricity,

which is called wholesale electricity. If you are a householder, unit holder or a mum or dad, you have subsidised electricity, which is residential electricity. Wholesale electricity to businesses, which already pay more, would rise by 345%, and mums' and dads' would rise by more than 400%. That is a 400% price rise in electricity at a time when I have been working to drive down the cost of fuel, housing and electricity.

I point out that these are not government figures; these are figures by Territory Generation. We said, 'Go and get them independently audited', so it went to international engineering firm Aurecon, which assessed it and said the figures are 100% correct. These figures are based on Alice Springs, a 400% increase under Labor's electricity policy.

If it were to run in Darwin, with the Wet Season being six months of the year, you would have to calculate at least 21 to 28 days', and beyond, storage capacity to cover for not having solar. Early indications from anecdotal evidence – not real evidence backed up by science, but anecdotal evidence – suggest a 1000% increase for electricity. Our scientific evidence on Alice Springs is 400%; you can lock that evidence away. Anecdotally for Darwin, on 21 to 28 days' back-up storage, as a minimum you are looking at a 1000% increase.

Some would ask what a 400% increase is if you based the numbers on Alice Springs, which gets the least cloud cover in the Northern Territory. I live in Alice Springs and my bill is \$1000 every three months, when I am there more than in Darwin, which means I am paying \$4000 a year in electricity. Under Labor's policy I will be paying \$16 000 a year in electricity. I ask the member for Brennan, how much he pays in three months?

Mr Chandler: \$2500.

Mr GILES: He is paying \$2500 a quarter for electricity; that is \$10 000 a year. Under Labor's policy that will be \$40 000 for electricity. They are real numbers.

I am not surprised the member for Nightcliff did not talk about Labor's alternate economic or budget policy. They would be embarrassed because they have been shown to have un-costed policies in their budget, and it will hit Territorians where it hurts – in their back pockets, their wallets and their purses. While we are driving down the cost of living, Labor is driving the prices of electricity up, a 400% increase.

I have seen a lot of irresponsible things in my time, but for Labor to drive a 400% increase in electricity prices is beyond belief. As I said, these are not made-up figures; these were independently detailed by Territory Generation,

the electricity generating company in the Northern Territory. It went to international experts to have them assessed by a third party. This is what has come back: a 345% increase if you are wholesale customer, a business pays more; or 400% if you are a residential customer. Labor members should hang their heads in shame.

Labor likes to run lines out and mislead the media, which then prints them, but let me make something clear about electricity prices to provide a point of clarification. Yes, the Country Liberals increased electricity prices by 25% between 2012 and today, being the end of June, so roughly four years. That includes a price increase of 20%, a price increase of 5% on top of that, and then no further CPI changes; we knocked them back. In the period between 2008 and 2012, when Labor was last in government, it increased power prices by 31%.

Labor members say we increased it, but they need to realise they increased it more than we did. I am not saying that increases are not necessary. The cost of production, the price of fuel, the cost of goods and services – everything goes up over time and is normally measured by CPI. We need to be fair and reasonable in debate. Labor increased it by 31%, and the Country Liberals by 25%. That is what happened.

Labor now has a policy to increase it by 400%, and more in the Top End. I cannot wait until the figures on the Top End are assessed because it will be a lot of fun when you tell people you are putting the price up by 1000%.

Madam Speaker, I commend the estimates process; I think it has been good, but the derogatory comments against the member for Stuart are nasty. They are always racially motivated against the member for Stuart, but it is nothing new, we have heard it a thousand times ...

Ms FYLES: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31: offensive. They were not ...

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, if you could withdraw that comment, please, in regard to racism.

Mr GILES: Madam Speaker, I will withdraw any comment, but the attacks on the member for Stuart are just like every other day. The fact is she is Aboriginal, Warlpiri, and she suffers a high level of attack in this Chamber. I am pointing out facts.

You have my full confidence, member for Stuart. You are a fantastic member of our team and a great minister in the Northern Territory.

The fact remains our budget is the best budget we have delivered in four years. It presents a forward-looking approach to economic advancement of the Territory. We have the lowest unemployment rate, the highest growth rate, the highest labour force participation rates and a negative CPI. No one ever has that combination and we have it here in the Northern Territory. We have a plan for the future and it is not about 400% power increases.

Ms MANISON: Madam Speaker, I need to respond to that. I sat through estimates for a long time last week and for a substantial amount of time today. I sat in the government owned corporations section of the Estimates Committee, being the shadow for Essential Services. What we just saw from the Chief Minister, and the media he is trying to roll out today, is a classic distraction tactic from the failures of this government.

Today in the hearing a fairly tough document was tabled about the strategic direction of the Power and Water Corporation Board for 2016-2020. We also heard that, on top of the community service obligations the government pays to Power and Water Corporation, the government had to throw an extra \$40m cash into the Power and Water Corporation at the end of last year. We saw a damning assessment in the board of directors' report into the direction of Power and Water in the future. These are problems that have arisen since structural separation.

The structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation occurred on 1 July 2014. Since then the Power and Water Corporation has been unable to provide full, audited financial statements or an annual report. Its finances at the moment are a mess. We had an extraordinary situation with the first lot of financial statements put forward; the Auditor-General of the Northern Territory had to do a basis of a disclaimer of opinion to say that she would not pass the figures.

We heard today that the Power and Water Corporation has had to put in more financial statements for auditing. Hopefully they come through soon, audited from the Auditor-General, and we can see an annual report because this government said financial transparency was part of the structural separation agenda for Power and Water Corporation.

If you cannot produce financial statements or an annual report for 2014-15, when we are coming into the annual reporting time for the 2015-16 financial year, then there is a huge problem and the Power and Water Corporation Board acknowledged that today.

The rant we just saw from the Chief Minister, and the strategy and the tack he has taken today by taking some figures completely out of context and scaremongering in the community, was rubbish. He is trying to push a distraction from the shocking day they are having, because we have seen the failures that have followed parts of the structural separation agenda. The government was warned well in advance that it was not prepared for the structural separation process.

I will read from the Board's Strategic Directions 2016-2020, in which the board recognises the current shortfalls within the corporation and the risks going forward:

The board acknowledges that the corporation's current risk rating profile would normally be unacceptable in a well-run corporation ...

Following that, on page 22, section 4.4.4, 'Wider consequences of a poorly performing Power and Water', it goes on to say:

Failure to act and remediate Power and Water's finances brings with it the substantial risk that one or more of the following consequences result:

- *electricity and water prices are higher than necessary*
- *Power and Water's impact on the budget (and taxpayers) is higher than necessary and continues to increase, through lack of dividends revenue to the budget, high and increasing community service obligation subsidies and the need for additional equity injections by Northern Territory Government.*

As we saw at the end of last year, an extra \$40m was injected into the Power and Water Corporation by the Northern Territory government shareholding minister, the Treasurer. And, lastly:

- *the Northern Territory Government's credit rating is negatively impacted by the corporation's poor finances, Power and Water's over-reliance on borrowing causes Territory public debt levels to increase. Power and Water currently accounts for in excess of 20% of the Northern Territory non-financial public sector's total debt of just over \$5 billion. As long as Power and Water's finances remain sub-investment grade, this is likely to reduce the Northern Territory Government's credit rating.*

Together, these provide a clear rationale for change.

That was part of the board of directors' report, which was tabled today in the GOC Scrutiny Committee, concerning the financial performance of the Power and Water Corporation. The fact that there is no financial transparency makes it very hard for a board to focus on ensuring we have reliable water and sewerage services, electricity supply from our critically important electricity networks and Indigenous Essential Services in our remote communities. It makes it very difficult for them to move forward when the organisation they are working within does not have financial transparency.

Also, since structural separation, an extra 150 people now work within the three government owned corporations. Within Power and Water there has been an expansion of staff. Within Jacana, there are now almost 60 staff members. Territory Generation started with about 150 staff members and now has 200. To put it in context, the Power and Water retail section, now sitting within the Power and Water Corporation, had 75 staff on 1 July 2014. That number is now about 69, yet Jacana Energy has nearly 60 additional staff. I was worried about job losses at the time, but it turns out there are a lot more jobs after structural separation.

Today we saw the Chief Minister give an absolute spray. He has taken a document tabled by Territory Generation in the Government Owned Corporations Scrutiny Committee and is ramming it out, trying to deflect and detract from a tough story. There was really interesting discussion regarding the document Territory Generation tabled. Territory Generation worked a lot on the issue. It clearly produced this document for government consideration when it went to invest in future generation supply in Alice Springs. We know Ron Goodin Power Station is ageing. We discussed today that some of its generators are up to 50 years old.

It is very important, essential, to have a secure power supply in Alice Springs. Territory Generation produced a body of work to look at the best options going forward and costed some options for if they put solar in. Based on today's technology, prices and storage capacity, and what you could gain with solar energy, the cost did not stack up.

The government very sensibly looked at the options, at what is economically viable and sensible for taxpayers, and decided to do it at Owen Springs.

That is not to say that a government should not aspire to increase renewable technology in the Northern Territory. It should be aspiring to ensure we have more renewables in the Territory. People want to move to renewable energy. One industry

that is growing rapidly and attracting investment across the world is battery and storage technology. Solar energy is evolving; big companies are looking forward to the future and making investments in battery and storage technology.

The Chief Minister should have listened to the government owned corporation outputs with Territory Generation. He would have heard about the work that Territory Generation aspires to do in Tennant Creek. It wants to make it a solar hub and look at solar power trials to bring that technology forward. It sees solar as a part of its future and understands that Territorians want more renewable energy.

There is a huge body of work being carried out jointly between the Territory government, the Commonwealth government and ARENA to look at how we can invest in renewable technology. It is ridiculous and untrue for him to say this will mean a cost increase to Territorians, and to send that message intending to scare them.

As I said to the media, a responsible government will not do things that cause their power bills to go through the roof. We saw how this government put power, water and sewerage bills through the roof. He is trying to take it out of context and has no appreciation for the emerging technology and the future decisions governments will make.

I do not see the problem with aspiring to have more renewable technology and solar energy use in the Territory. What does the CLP and this government have against that? You should be striving towards it. Today was scaremongering, at best, to deflect from the government owned corporation outputs in the Estimates Committee. That is all it was about.

Regarding the estimates process, I thank all of the public servants and staff within the Legislative Assembly for their tireless work and efforts. I also thank the ministers for their work in preparation; their staffers, who work very hard; the Leader of the Opposition's office; and the Independents. Estimates is an important process. Some ministers open the door to their departments and are happy to shine a light in so we can have a good look, forensically. The member for Port Darwin, bless him, is one of them; he tables all his answers up front.

Member for Brennan, I asked you for answers up front. You did not necessarily give them, but what you do deliver in estimates is good, constructive debate and conversation. I am eternally grateful for that, and your willingness to sit down and talk about issues you are very passionate about. You ensure we have good, factual debate, which I welcome. Some ministers do not like going there and some are much better than others.

That is the way it goes, but it is an important process for government because once a year, as opposition, we are able to see how government is spending its money. How is it rolling out its policy and is it effective? Are we achieving what we want to see achieved? There are some hard conversations and decisions that come out of the estimates process, but it is about ensuring we try to deliver the very best outcome possible for Territorians.

It is time-consuming and can be a very tough process, but it is important we cast scrutiny on the expenditure of government money to see its impacts, how it is going, and looking at the performance of government and its agencies.

I appreciate that it can be very tiring, can go very late and for very long. Some of the departments do a lot of preparation only to not be called up to sit at the table. I understand the frustration when that happens. Nonetheless, even if they do not have the opportunity to sit with their minister through the questioning, they still had an opportunity to brief their minister, bringing them up to date and ensuring the CEO is across what is happening, line item by line item within the agency. It is an important process if we want to see scrutiny.

I thank my colleagues on the Public Accounts Committee. It is a very long process, but it is important and we all take it very seriously.

It was very interesting to sit down with the Minister for Parks and Wildlife, unfortunately very briefly because time did not allow for it. Hearing about the priorities for the year, I was a bit disappointed that I still could not find out how the decision to move forward with the skywalk at Nitmiluk Gorge came to be. I could not find out where that idea came from because it did not seem to be from the expressions of interest process.

I hope there is very clear communication and consultation with traditional owners and the board of management of the park to ensure it is an inclusive process and views are taken on board. The same has to be said for Watarrka, where they are looking to do the second one. It is very important that traditional owners are brought along for that journey.

Education is a very important and very big portfolio. It impacts us all because we all have schools in our electorate, and we all value the importance of education. It was a very long conversation with the Education minister. We looked at some historical data from the last four years. There was much debate around expenditure under this government and staffing figures. I still say the government has cut money out of education quite significantly. We saw some

huge cuts in 2014-15, when the money dipped drastically and staff numbers were cut quite drastically, but we can see that the government is trying to step out of that. There has been an increase of teachers, but there are still about 240 school-based staff members in the Department of Education.

We had an important discussion around school attendance and if we are seeing the results we want for the investment made, which was about \$8m, but we are not seeing movement in attendance. We all agree that we have to get kids to school every day if we want them to make it through their education so they can find jobs and have a better life as an adult in the Territory.

We raised questions about the middle schools and the current work happening in Alice Springs and Palmerston to look at merging Centralian Middle School with Centralian Senior College, and Rosebery Middle School with Palmerston Senior College. To be clear, it is important that people are well consulted in the process so they can feed in to it. The government does not appear to have made a decision on whether or not that is the pathway, but it is very important that discussions happen early so people have all the facts to make up their own mind about what the best move is. For example, alarmingly, Rosebery teacher numbers went down; I wonder if that is part of why the government is looking into that.

The Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training completions are very important and we want them to increase. When they increase it should be celebrated, and the government does, but as we drilled into the data we saw that increases are being driven by the non-government sector. It was good to see some success stories with Indigenous students finishing Year 12. Casuarina Senior College's number of completions was particularly impressive, which was great. It is also nice to see places like Gunbalanya supporting people to finish school.

We discussed NAPLAN data, and the number of students reaching national minimum standards. It is still very clear that we cannot be content with the attendance results, the NAPLAN results or the number of students finishing Year 12. We need to keep working to improve this.

Debating NAPLAN, we saw that the results are fairly lumpy, which is frustrating. One year you will see spikes of improvement and the next year it goes down. There were a couple of categories, particularly in some Year 3 areas, where you could see a small but steady increase trend.

I hope that whoever is in government after August 2016 has a very strong policy of investment into early childhood development. It is crucial we work

with families on having kids school-ready and achieving from day one, Term 1, Year 1 so we can set that trajectory for the rest of their education. It is very important.

It was good to hear about where the new primary schools are planned, particularly in my electorate. We want to know when Muirhead is planning to come on line. We debated with the Minister for Lands and Planning and Treasurer about the pronunciation of Zuccoli. I am of the view that if the family wants it to be pronounced a specific way then you have to stick with it.

It has been a very busy, tiring and productive session of the Estimates Committee, for some outputs, ministers and portfolios more than others which is always the way. Nonetheless, it is a very important process. I stress again that what we saw from the Chief Minister today was completely out of context. He wants to push his story and deflect away from a very tough conversation this morning about what has happened post-structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation.

Mr ELFERINK: Madam Speaker, I will pick up where the member left off. Perhaps because I am the dinosaur of this House and I am soon to become extinct – there will be more than enough mammals out there to be happy about that.

I recall all the comments by the member for Wanguri in relation to Power and Water. One of the reasons the Treasurer wanted structural separation was so we could look inside. I remind the member for Wanguri of that because I am a dinosaur. I have been around since the cretaceous period or thereabouts. I remember when Frank McGuinness – God rest his soul – as the Auditor-General would, year-in and year-out, give qualified audit opinions in relation to the Power and Water Corporation. Labor was in government at the time and he had a major problem with the way that it values its assets; it caused no end of grief.

Another important thing worth pointing out is there is a difference between aspiration and making a policy position. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition make a policy position, saying, 'We will be 50% renewable by 2030'. That is not an aspiration; it is a statement of a policy position, which means you have to start positioning yourself now. That is what is driving the Chief Minister's comments. The Chief Minister is putting out a costing of how much it would cost to bring us into that position, and it is somewhere between \$1.5bn and \$2bn.

On top of that, the policy position – which I think has now shifted on the part of the members of the opposition – of shutting down the Royal Darwin Hospital in the future is another \$2bn exercise.

However, I understand that the Labor Party has now wisely stepped away from that as it realises the impact.

I take the estimates process very seriously.

Ms Fyles: You do.

Mr ELFERINK: Thank you. I know the departments do. I always am a bit grumpy at the departments for the amount of work they put in. The cost value of putting the estimates folders together, and of all the research, is somewhere around \$1.2m or \$1.3m, so it is not a cheap exercise. There is a valuable reason the departments go through the process; it is an opportunity to do what they call a stocktake. I do not think that is unreasonable. It is a process that they go through, in spite of my clear instructions to the contrary. I think they like to go through it because it is a useful management tool. I suspect that whether or not you instruct them to do it, they will anyhow, regardless of who forms government in the future.

I take the estimates process so seriously that I even go through a rehearsal with my staff, and that rehearsal process is very important. This time, when we went through the rehearsal process, it took five hours and that is with staff members who actually know ...

Ms Manison: But what do you pick up as well? It is really good to do it.

Mr ELFERINK: That is right, you do pick things up. I am always surprised at how often I know stuff about my department, in terms of what I pick up when I read all the briefing notes and go through those processes. Territorians deserve a minister who can present themselves in an efficient fashion in the estimates process and who can at least do a halfway reasonable job of convincing people that they have taken the time to find out about their portfolios.

I say to all members of this House, should you aspire to become a minister, and not all members of this House do, remember, it will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a difference, much more than being merely a member of this House.

In my portfolio area, I think I command, through my various ministries, about a third of the government's budget as well as close to half the staff. I have relished this precious and rare opportunity every single day that I have held it. I am very proud of some of the things I have done. I was hoping to be asked more pointed questions to use as a platform for showcasing some of the things I have been permitted to do by my Cabinet colleagues, and by the parliament, who have often supported the things I have aspired to achieve, as

a collective. I am grateful to the parliament for that from time to time.

I suspect I will never in my life be able to subordinate myself to the idea of Labor philosophy, but I do not determine who forms government in the Northern Territory; that is a matter for the people. If the people at any point choose to have a Labor government I will not agree with them personally, but that is the nature of the democratic process. I say to any person who aspires to become a minister of the Crown, or, for that matter, Chief Minister, they should use that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They should focus on the line I keep using, which is stuck on every door in my office, 'The true welfare of the people of the Northern Territory'.

Every time I have screwed up in this job it has been because I have allowed myself to be distracted by something happening in this room – my own short temper, my own irascibility. I often lament that I allow myself to be distracted. The true welfare of the people of the Northern Territory is more a noble ideal than something that can be necessarily achieved, but we try to stay in that space.

Having made those observations, there are certain areas where I wanted to cop questions. One of them was the Palmerston hospital. As the Health minister, I am sad that the focus on the Palmerston hospital was limited. If memory serves me, I copped more questions in relation to money for the fire system in the Nhulunbuy hospital than I did on the Palmerston Regional Hospital.

In a desperate attempt to get some information onto the record I tabled a map comparing what the former government was going to build as the Palmerston Regional Hospital to what we are currently building. If you talk in terms of size, they were going to provide a postage stamp and we have delivered a tablecloth. The room for expansion at the Palmerston Regional Hospital, which we have already begun using, the member for Nightcliff dismissively calls a blowout.

I am not sure if choosing to put more into the hospital is necessarily a blowout. It means we are choosing to put more into it, including the many worthwhile and useful things we have added which are better provided in a timely fashion, rather than retrofit them by other means.

A classic example is the marina at the waterfront, which has a lock to allow sailing boats into the marina, which was promised by the former government. Of course, they never got around to it and now the marina, supposed to be for sailing boats, never has and probably never will see a sailing boat. That is the problem with retrofitting.

When another notion, for example, a core clinical system, an important computer system, is agreed to by Cabinet, the budget changes. It changes because you will to save. A stitch in time saves nine.

Having made those observations, I came prepared to receive lots of questions about the Palmerston hospital. I was frustrated by receiving next to no questions. In fact, I cannot even recall if I got one question.

I will take this opportunity to table, for the edification of members, photographs of the Palmerston Regional Hospital as the construction continues. I table a photograph of the reinforcing mesh for the second floor, and continued foundation works for the second floor after the concrete pour. I suspect the photographs are eight or nine hours apart. There is more reinforcing from the day before. The columns which are in holes, all 209 of which, have been subsequently buried, but as part of the ...

Mr Tollner: Every one of them was a political stunt.

Mr ELFERINK: Every one of them.

Mr Tollner: There were 209 political stunts.

Mr ELFERINK: Yes, and we buried them all. I am also pleased to report to the House that as far as I am aware Lendlease has not had a single employee fall into a hole.

Mr Styles: Because there are no holes.

Mr ELFERINK: There are no holes, except for the one that has been exhumed and now forms the stairwell, as promised; the original one that somebody had so much fun with.

Other photographs show the extent of the works. You cannot fail to be impressed with these photographs. I therefore table them for members to look at and admire. I am proud that when the Chief Minister asked me to become the Health minister one of the things he said was, 'Get the thing built'.

The Chief Minister is not a man of many words behind the scenes, so when he said, 'Get the thing built', I took it literally. I am glad to report that under the former plan to build the hospital we would not yet have removed a single cypripedium, pushed over any trees or dug any holes at this point. In fact, we would not have seen the beginning of construction, all things being equal – and there is no guarantee that they would be equal – until much later on this year. We are now about a third of the way through. Lendlease has the job of building the hospital; while it is built we

are merely a client of Lendlease and it will be handed over in due course. I am proud of what we have with the hospital.

I would have liked some more questions about the Supreme Court in Alice Springs, another building I am particularly proud of, and the fact that in the past four years we have restructured pretty much the whole criminal justice system of the Northern Territory, leaving the Supreme Court largely untouched in relation to its jurisdictional domain.

We now have children's cells, which are far more appropriate than the ones I found a few years ago in each of the court houses. In fact, we now have the children's court in Darwin, not the dungeons where children were exposed to adult offenders, which I inherited a few years ago. The Don Dale centre was run down, ghastly and unfit for purpose when I took office. We found a cost-effective way to establish the new Don Dale centre in the old Berrimah gaol. Yesterday, of the 41 inmates across the Northern Territory they had 26, I think, in Don Dale. It occupies a space originally constructed to take hundreds. We have 26 kids in there at the moment. In my opinion that is 26 kids too many, but they have to be contained. When the court orders that they are to be detained and contained, we do so.

Another thing I would like to place on the record, in regard to something reported incorrectly – actually, it was not reported incorrectly. I am referring to an article from the *NT News* by Maria Billias which I think appeared in last Saturday's paper. The content of what Maria had written was, essentially, correct. I take no umbrage to that, but I think the subbie who set the headline was a bit liberal with the truth. There were not 20 000 cases of neglect in the Northern Territory as the headline suggested. The headline was simply wrong. Obviously the sub-editor did not pick out of the Billias article that there were 20 000 notifications. Actual established and substantiated cases of neglect were substantially smaller than that last year.

Notifications lead to investigations, which lead to substantiations. Our substantiation rate was much lower than what was reported in the *NT News*, and I wanted to place that on the record. It is not necessarily criticising anybody other than the fact the sub-editor, I think, had it wrong.

This is my second-last sitting day. This is the last budget I will be involved in putting together before I put myself out to pasture and have a normal life. I thank the Treasurer for working as closely as he has with me on a number of issues. I know we have not always seen eye to eye on where government should spend its money. We will not mention the core clinical systems at all, but the Treasurer has always worked with the best

interests of the people of the Northern Territory at heart. Whilst he can be a character from time to time, over the years I have come to learn of the intelligence he brings to the job. I have enjoyed working with him and, in spite of our differences from time to time, I think the Treasurer does a mighty job and he has every reason to be proud.

I thank honourable members for the process and for the tenor and mood of the estimates process. It was less combative this time and, I think, as a result we covered more ground. It was more worthwhile in that sense.

I still think this is a fine budget. I support the Appropriation Bill. I would want to; I had a hand in putting it together. I encourage all members to support the Treasurer's bill as well.

Mr TOLLNER: Madam Speaker, I thank all the people who have spoken about the Appropriation Bill and all the people who were involved in the estimates process. It has been an interesting process; it is every year.

Member for Wanguri, the Attorney-General just pulled you up and said the numbers do not add up in relation to solar. The point was made very well by the Attorney-General that today the Opposition Leader made commitments to put in place 50% renewable energy by 2030. That is on today's record. You cannot run and hide and say, 'We know that in the future, because all of this research is happening and production is starting to fire up, that somewhere down the track renewable energy in Alice Springs will become commercially viable'. These things are unknown. Until they are known, why would you make a commitment to drive up people's power prices? It makes no sense whatsoever.

I heard the member for Nightcliff bang on about the power price increases under the CLP. The Chief Minister made the point that there were greater electricity price increases under the previous Labor government than under this government. On a cumulative basis, prices rose 31% under the previous government. The then Treasurer, Delia Lawrie, increased tariffs by 18% in 2009-10, 5% in 2010-11 and 2.8% in 2011-12 and 2012-13. If you add all that up it comes to a cumulative 31% power price increase over that term.

This Country Liberals government has increased power prices, without a doubt. When we came into government it was no secret that Power and Water was on its knees. We had to increase power prices, but since the significant utilities market reform, structural separation and the introduction of the Australian Energy Regulator legislation, we have seen consistent power price decreases. The last one, on 1 January this year,

was a 5% power price reduction. If you add up all of our cumulative tariffs it sits at around 25% over the term. We have increased power prices, but nowhere near the extent of the Labor government.

The Chief Minister is right; if Labor sticks to its commitment – and there is no guarantee it will – to introduce 50% renewable energy by 2030, power prices will continually increase at a much greater rate. We heard from Territory Generation today about its experience in Alice Springs. Some 77 MW of solar power would cost between \$1.5bn and \$2bn to install, with storage capacity, and would increase tariffs by 400% for residential customers. That seems to be the line Labor wants to take.

For us in the Northern Territory it has always been my view that we could quadruple greenhouse gas emissions and it would make no noticeable impact on our greenhouse gas emissions. Everybody in the House understands that the vast majority of the Territory's greenhouse gas emissions come from bushfires.

Mr Elferink: Which are soaked up the next year by the same crop of spear grass.

Mr TOLLNER: Absolutely. We have 240 000 people on 1 300 000 km². Irrespective of the amount of fuel we burn, we are not big emitters in the Northern Territory in comparison to other parts of the country. Our issue is less about greenhouse gas emissions and more about the cost of electricity. It is fine in Darwin; we are in the middle of the cost curve when you look around the country. We are certainly not the lowest priced jurisdiction, but we are nowhere near the highest priced either. We are the middle of the road, probably closer to the bottom than we are to the top. The point is that power generation is not highly costly here, but outside of Darwin, in some remote areas, the cost of generation is through the roof. The government is committed to introducing renewable technologies where they demonstrate price reductions.

Obviously when you are carting thousands of litres of diesel into extraordinarily remote locations, operating in very small communities with small generators, the cost of production is incredibly high. There is an opportunity to put in place renewable energies, providing it is done in a sophisticated way that can ensure the power supply is reliable. It could have the obvious benefit of reducing power costs in those remote communities. We look at things on a case-by-case basis to ensure we are not adding to our costs but, rather, we are reducing them. We are dead keen to use renewable technologies where it can be demonstrated that those technologies actually reduce cost. As I say, that is the issue here in the Northern Territory.

The other point the member for Wanguri talked about was the Power and Water Corporation Board's strategy. The background of this was almost controversial, some people were saying, 'What is PWC doing putting out a board strategy? Don't we get a statement of corporate intent every year from them, so we actually know what they are doing?'

These days, I think it is incumbent on all boards to have a strategy and understand the risks and strengths of their business. All those things need to be fed into and understood by the board. The idea that the board put together its strategy is absolutely worthwhile. It does not go as far as trying to interpret government policy or future direction, but it looks at the strategic direction of the Power and Water Corporation and how it can best manage that as a commercial entity.

It was interesting to hear the member for Wanguri say, 'There is no accountability from PWC because they still are struggling to have their finances audited'. She said, 'There is no accountability', and the like. The news, for the member for Wanguri, is that there never was any accountability. As the member for Port Darwin said, the great reason for structural separation, aside from the benefits that you see emanating from competitive pressures in a marketplace – the great benefit of the structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation is that you can see some accountability in the organisation.

As a horizontally and vertically integrated organisation, that is, a monopoly, it could move money within the organisation to its hearts content. It was virtually impossible, as was highlighted by Moody's, to understand exactly where its costs were, where its revenue was coming from, its operating expenses and all that. It was very difficult for the Utilities Commission to understand that as well, when it had to make its network price determinations. Separating out the different business lines gives all of us a greater understanding of where money is going.

In response to the point made by the member for Wanguri about increased staff numbers, there are two issues. One is we always knew there would be an increase in staff to handle the structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation. It is not an easy job.

Secondly, for the opposition a couple of years ago this was all about sacking people and privatising the Power and Water Corporation. It has now become obvious to the member for Wanguri that is not the direction the government is taking. We are trying to increase the accountability and transparency of the various organisations. We are also trying to establish a marketplace to create competitive tensions that, through market

dynamics, force utility businesses to be competitive and efficient. There is a greater likelihood of that occurring in a marketplace than there is with a remote shareholding minister trying to drive it up.

In relation to the renewable policies of the opposition, they might want to have a look at the South Australian experience. I am a member of the COAG Energy Council and go regularly to its meetings. At the last meeting, the South Australian government tabled a paper on its experience with renewable energies and the impact on its network. It requires considerably more money to maintain renewable technologies on a utility scale; enormous amounts of money. The experience of South Australia is very simple; they have the most unreliable electricity supply in the nation because they over invested in renewable technologies.

In relation to the estimates process, I was disappointed there was not more focus on the economy, where our economy is heading and where government finances are heading. There seems to be a blinkered focus on population from the Leader of the Opposition. In the Treasury estimates process I thought there would be questions about the structural separation of the Power and Water Corporation, perhaps in relation to power pricing and future directions of the utility market. There was nothing at all on where we expect to see the economy grow and nothing that interrogated the budget in relation to government finances. It was rather disappointing.

Again, in the Lands department estimates, the member for Nelson occupied an enormous amount of time with his pet subject – the Litchfield Subregional Area Plan. He likes to focus on it constantly, almost demanding that we ignore it. No matter what is said to the member for Nelson, he either does not get it or refuses to admit that he does. He has been a thorn under the saddle. He is stopping sustainable and sensible development within the rural area. He has people in the rural area worked up into a lather about something that is not offensive.

I have to put on the record my disgust at the disgraceful and vile behaviour of the member for Karama, and her treatment of the Planning Commission and Mr Gary Nairn. I found it disgraceful. I do not think anyone who operates a statutory authority should be treated in such a manner. I think the member for Karama should make a private apology, at the very minimum, but I suggest it is probably much more sensible that she makes a public apology. Her language and demeanour to Gary Nairn was, as I said, disgraceful and vile.

Finally, I have to make note of my friend the Attorney-General's contribution. I had no idea there were 209 holes dug and filled in.

Mr Elferink: There were 210 actually. The 209 were subsequent to the first.

Mr TOLLNER: So, 209 subsequent to the first one, which was written up by our mate, the chief political correspondent for the *NT News*, Christopher Walsh, who said this was a great publicity stunt and nothing more. Well, there were another 209 great publicity stunts he could have reported on. He has not bothered, but I suppose there is smear and bile that he can throw around in other areas. I note he wrote, very recently, an article on the member for Arnhem. I am led to believe the article was not factual. Similarly, he has had a field day with the member for Blain.

By the time this term is up I think he will have managed to smear every member of the government. Good on him; if he thinks that sells papers, great. It is not up to me to comment on the editorial policy of the newspaper, but I think it is time we had some serious reporting in relation to the parliamentary process. Rather than trying to make up stories to smear and besmirch people's character in the House.

Finally, I thank everyone involved in this budget, especially my ministerial colleagues. It is an enormous job putting together a budget. I think we did four or five days of budget Cabinet and, outside of that, several weeks of individual discussions with ministers, departmental heads and other key staff members. It is an absolute pleasure to work with the ministerial team I am part of. I know they are often not happy at being told no. Such is the passion of the people on our team; they really stand up for their portfolios and fight hard for their issues.

It is not easy for me to say no and be the mongrel in the room, but someone has to do it. I suppose if you are the Treasurer that is the mantle you take on. Irrespective of this, the team has worked very well together. They have put together a fantastic budget. The Chief Minister has been a great lead in the process and I commend it to the House.

Remainder of the bill take as a whole and agreed to.

Mr TOLLNER (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

TABLED PAPERS

Travel Reports – Members for Barkly and Arafura

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have two travel reports to table. One from the member for Barkly dated 16 June 2016, and one from the member for Arafura dated 2 June 2016.

Auditor-General's June 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Auditor-General's June 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly. The report will be sent electronically by the Table Office to all members' e-mail addresses.

MOTION

Note Paper – Auditor-General's 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly takes note of the report.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

Public Accounts Committee Report – Public Private Partnership Arrangements for the Darwin Correctional Precinct – consideration adjourned.

Public Accounts Committee Report into Structural Separation of Power and Water Corporation – consideration adjourned.

Northern Territory's Energy Future Committee Key Challenges and Opportunities Issues Paper – consideration adjourned.

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's August 2015 Report to the Legislative Assembly – consideration adjourned.

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory's February 2016 Report to the Legislative Assembly – consideration adjourned.

Standing Orders Committee Report to the Assembly March 2016 – Motion to Adopt Recommendations – consideration adjourned.

Committee of Members' Interests Report to the Assembly March 2016 – Motion to Adopt Recommendations – consideration adjourned.

Public Accounts Committee Report on Repairs and Maintenance of Housing on Town Camps – consideration adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ELFERINK (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ms FYLES (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, as this 12th Assembly draws to a close, I note that we have one extra sitting day on Monday. It is already on the *Hansard* record how that came about, but I will take some time to reflect.

First, I would like to acknowledge the Larrakia people for allowing us to gather on their land for the past nearly four years.

I take this opportunity to reflect on the privilege I have had to represent my community. Nightcliff, Rapid Creek and Coconut Grove are very special places in Darwin, the Top End, and the Northern Territory. It is a place I am very proud to call home, and is where I am raising my children. We have a beautiful community in Nightcliff, the electorate's name, not forgetting Coconut Grove and Rapid Creek. The last nearly four years has been an interesting time. When I was elected Terry Mills was the Chief Minister, with 16 seats. Since then we have seen chaos and dysfunction from this government, which has resulted in a number of members walking away from the government and a number of – there is no other way to put it – scandals. It has been a very interesting first term for a new member of parliament.

I believe I have represented the community strongly on several issues. The community of Nightcliff has seen the closure of its police station, which the CLP government had committed to making 24/7 and instead did the exact opposite. We saw a very interesting proposal for a Nightcliff island; the government granted a lease for 98 ha of our harbour without consulting the community.

There has been a huge increase in power and water bills, with Territorians struggling to pay these bills and afford the cost of living. The government arrogantly sold TIO and the port without consulting the community. The Banned Drinker Register was scrapped, and we have seen unprecedented levels of alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour across our community. These are all issues this government failed Territorians on, and they have directly affected me as the elected representative of my community.

As a shadow minister I have held a number of portfolios, all which I have thoroughly enjoyed. I will take this opportunity to thank the ministers and departmental staff who have provided numerous briefings on legislation and issues over the past nearly four years.

There is more to do. It is disappointing that this government has not driven Statehood ahead. It was disappointing to see cuts to teachers and our schools across the community, something I hold dear to my heart.

We have not seen an open and accountable government. We have seen midnight coups and more than a dozen Cabinet reshuffles. We have seen two and a half Chief Ministers from this government, which has not reflected well on the Northern Territory. I do not need to recount those specific examples or incidents tonight, but it has been disappointing. We have seen dysfunction and, relating to a number of issues, including planning, a lack of integrity.

I would like to talk more about my community. It has been an absolute privilege to represent the people of Nightcliff. It is a beautiful community. We have the coastline and the foreshore area, which has been a fabulous spot for my mobile office. Over the past couple of years, the members for Casuarina and Fannie Bay and I have engaged in a picture-thon of who has the best mobile office spot and I will claim it is me.

We have a wonderful community. We have a number of schools and childcare centres. We are home to the Greek Orthodox School and we have a number of seniors in our community. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to attend and put on events in my community. School assemblies are one of my favourite things each week. It does not matter which school, it is always a pleasure to stand together with the schools and acknowledge the hard work of our students, teachers and parents.

I formally acknowledge the support of the school principals David Cannon at the Essington School, Sarah May at Nightcliff Middle School, Graham Chadwick at Nightcliff Primary School and Anthony Hockey at St Pauls School and all of their staff.

I thank the community for their support over the past four years. I very much feel that in this role you are the leader in your community. I feel privileged to have represented the people of Nightcliff, Coconut Grove and Rapid Creek in this House, but I also feel they have respected and supported me in the community and I thank everyone for that.

I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues in the Chamber, Madam Speaker, the Clerks and the assistants for their guidance, especially since I took on the role as opposition Whip.

On a personal note, the past four years has been a challenge. As many of us in the House have faced, it is definitely a challenge to juggle the

work/life balance. Without the support of my parents I do not think I could have done it. I remember being in a situation at estimates last year where it was late at night and a number of committee members had left. We thought it was fine, that we would make it through the last hour-and-a-half or so. Then I received a phone call from the babysitter saying one of my children was not happy. I talked to the member for Drysdale. I was in a situation where if I had left the committee would have shutdown. Thankfully, my parents raced over and calmed things down. I was able to continue in my role, but it highlights the balance that we all face – the balance between being family people, husbands and wives, partners and parents. It is difficult, and a juggle at times. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities I have had over the last four years.

On another personal note, many people know that our youngest son, Henry, was diagnosed with an extremely rare spinal cord tumour. Henry, our little baby, who was heard crying and screaming behind the glass in the visitors' gallery one evening, is now a thriving four-year-old and, in his words, is a big boy who goes to preschool.

I thank everyone who supported us, particularly the staff at RDH, Territory Medical and everyone else who has provided support. I also acknowledge the support of my parliamentary colleagues, especially regarding some of the challenges I faced – I appreciated it – and my colleagues on this side who helped me at various times.

I hope to stand and speak again in this Chamber, as the re-elected member for Nightcliff. It would be a privilege if my community placed their trust in me for another four years. I know there are members in the Chamber who are retiring and will not be with us in the next Assembly. I wish them all the best.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity tonight to indulge in those few words. I will be back on Monday, but as today was intended to be the last day of parliament, I thought I would acknowledge all those who have supported me and our community over the past four years. I look forward to many more opportunities.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I rise in adjournment this evening for the last time as the member for Drysdale. I am in a very interesting, exciting and disappointing position. People understand that the NT Electoral Commission did its mandatory redistribution of boundaries and, as a result, the seat of Drysdale was split in half. These things happen and we understand that. Unfortunately, for me, it means I say goodbye to everyone in Gray and Driver, with whom I have built a strong relationship over the

last four years and have enjoyed serving tremendously.

Hopefully, if I am fortunate enough to earn the support of the people in Spillett – with the remaining suburbs being Johnston, Zuccoli, The Narrows, Berrimah, Pinelands, Winnellie, Marlow Lagoon and everywhere else it seems. Spillett is a large, all-encompassing electorate. It is exciting because I have been out meeting the people of Spillett and I am on a new journey.

It has been really sad and disappointing, because four years is a long time to be working in a community, especially a community you grew up in – I am a Gray girl from way back. I have developed strong relationships with Gray and Driver Primary Schools, and they are just a treasure to visit. I am still involved in the schools. I probably will not be able to help myself if I am fortunate enough to be elected in August, and will have to pop in and say hello.

They are all memories and relationships that I will certainly cherish – my involvement in community groups in Gray and Driver, like the Gray Community Garden and all the activities that go on at the Gray Hall. I will not disappear; I will be readjusting where I spend my time to cater for all the new people in the electorate, should I earn their support.

To be a member of parliament is an absolute privilege, and it is an honour to serve Territorians. There is no other way to describe it. It is not a job. It is not a vocation. I do not know what word is best used to describe being a member of parliament because it is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is all encompassing. There is no such thing as popping up to Coles and grabbing some ham quickly in the deli section. It really does take over, but in the most wonderful way. I certainly would not change any aspect of it for the world and I very much hope that my journey of service can continue.

Obviously, I am now seeking the support of the people of Spillett. I hope to serve you as diligently and caringly as I have served the people of Drysdale. It really is an honour to do this job, to be a member of parliament, and I do not take a day of it for granted.

To everyone in Gray and Driver, all the best for the future. I know I will bump into you around Palmerston. It is not like I am moving to an electorate on the other side of the moon, but it feels like it because we were Drysdale people and now we are not. I hope you find strength in Ben Hosking, the Country Liberal candidate, and that he earns your support, as I did, and you have faith in him and his ability to continue to steer the community in the right direction.

I certainly hope to be standing here at the next parliament, sometime after 27 August. If I am, I will proudly stand here as the very first member for Spillett. I acknowledge Simon Spillett, who was in the Chamber earlier this afternoon. He is following the election very closely and is tremendously proud of his father, and the electorate being named after him.

Lastly, I thank everyone here in the parliament. None of us know what will happen tomorrow, let alone by 27 August, and certainly not on election night. Many relationships have been forged across the Chamber and, side by side, we have all fought, laughed and cried together. Some of us will not return because of retirement and some because we did not gain the support we needed from our community, which is fair enough; that is the process.

To those who are departing, those who are staying, and the new people we will welcome in August, thank you very much. I have learnt so much from everyone and very much hope I serve Territorians once again in the 13th Assembly.

Ms WALKER (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, this evening I rise to tell a sad story in relation to the passing of a very dear friend of mine from Wallaby Beach, before Easter.

I cannot say her first name, of course, but Ms Gurruwiwi passed away on 23 March 2016. This evening, I wish to place on the record a speech I made at a memorial service held for her at Gulkula, the Garma site, on 17 May 2016. As is Yolngu way, their sorry business, their funeral business, is very different in the Yolngu world to ours. While she passed on 23 March, her memorial service was attended on 17 May and only just this week her funeral service has started.

Her body was released from the morgue at Gove hospital on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday evening, I was pleased to go to Yirrkala and sit with family members as part of that mourning, but also a celebration of her life. She was an incredible woman, and the level of grief amongst all who know her is something I have not witnessed in a while.

I will reread the speech I prepared for Gulkula on 17 May; this is what I said after acknowledging the traditional owners.

I am greatly honoured and humbled to have been invited by family to speak and pay tribute to this strong Galpu woman, who we are here to pay our deepest respects to. I know there are many people here who have stories and memories to share, so I will try not to speak too long, but I will speak from the heart as I remember

Ms Gurruwiwi, and will leave others to detail her extensive accomplishments.

I first met her early in 1997, when I was the newly recruited Nabalco community relations officer and tour guide in training. We met at the old Nambara Arts and Crafts centre operated by YBE. She and Djapirri Mununggirritj both worked there, and on Fridays I would bring through groups of tourists who were keen to buy Yolngu work. They would watch Ms Gurruwiwi as she sat cross-legged painting and listen to Djalu, her brother, and some of the younger men play *yidaki*.

We gelled instantly. She was interested in who I was and what my job was. I told her she was welcome to join the Nabalco tour any time she wanted, but warned her she would have to listen to a little bit of – if you forgive my language – bullshit along the way. She laughed out loud; she thought it was hilarious. I knew she understood exactly the nuances of my job, which was all about public relations. Just a few months ago I heard her repeat that story of how we met to others who were with us, and she laughed just as loud as she did the first time.

From that first day we became friends who would cross paths, and I recognised in her someone who possessed enormous wisdom, authority, dignity, compassion, love, intelligence and an incredible capacity to walk in both the Yolngu and *balanda* worlds. It is, of course, why so many people were attracted to her and her generosity of spirit. She displayed all the hallmarks of a politician, a diplomat or an ambassador. People sought her out for advice and wise counsel and, time and time again, she was the mediator. She was the person who would get things sorted. As a wise Galpu elder, she commanded respect.

She was my teacher and, like all good teachers, she had endless patience, always delighted in seeing her students learn, and provided encouragement and praise, even when I got things terribly wrong in forgetting cultural protocols or badly pronouncing words in Yolngu Matha. She would say, 'No, like this', and would break down the word for me, making me repeat it after her to get my tongue in the right spot in my mouth until I got it right.

In 2008, upon becoming the local member, I had the great honour of being adopted by Naminapu number one, Leon's wife from the Mangalili clan, who knew that I was close to Ms Gurruwiwi, and so adopted me in such a way that I was Ms Gurruwiwi's *yapa*, her sister, and Narmi my *dhuway*.

So it was my *yapa* who I turned to for support in finding my way through the communities and homelands of northeast Arnhem Land. We had a

close friendship; we understood one another. I knew I could ask her anything without feeling stupid and, of course, she was a natural ally as the widow of the late Wesley Lanhupuy, a former Labor member for Arnhem. Her husband held that seat for Labor in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly from 1983 until his sudden passing on 25 August 1995.

It was my *yapa* who first took me, along with Dhopiya, out hunting for *guku*, or honey, a couple of kilometres down the road from Gulkula. I was useless at swinging an axe on that hot October day, but between them they felled a tree and expertly got to the rich sweet *guku*. She showed me how to strip back a small strip of bark, and then tap the end with the head of the axe to create bristles on what was like a little paint brush in order to brush out the *guku*, and then to suck that brush. She delighted in seeing the pleasure I had just discovered in bush honey and the ingenuity with which it was extracted. It is a highly prized bush tucker.

She was the one, along with old-lady Nancy, during a visit to Yinyikay on Melbourne Cup day 2013, who showed me how to cook and prepare stingray with the pink flecks of raw liver mashed through and eaten in small balls. Her love of bush food, *manymak ngatha*, and the importance that she placed on it for her health was paramount. If I was on a trip to Galiwinku and she was unable to accompany me, she would make sure she sent ahead her order for whatever bush *ngatha* was in season, and I would dutifully bring it home. As often as family could provide it, I would be the courier of precious cargo, oysters, turtle and stingray, to her during her lengthy stay in the Royal Darwin Hospital last year.

How is it then, that my *yapa*, a woman who placed such strong value on her health, and her love of *ngarali* to one side – that being cigarettes – and who I knew to be so strong, never a day sick, could leave us so suddenly? She was not old; she was taken way too soon.

I feel so blessed to have been passing through Darwin the night before she passed to have said goodbye to her, kiss her forehead and tell her how much I loved her. I received the inevitable news the following day at Gunbalanya. My only regret for her was that she passed in a foreign place, not on her beloved country in her place at Birritjimi – Wallaby Beach.

Let me I close by saying this, and I have said it before in farewelling other strong leaders, my *yapa* leaves behind an inspirational legacy, which begs to be embraced and built upon. She would not want us to dwell upon her passing, but to turn our sights with hope and optimism to the future, and what needs to be done to make real her

vision for a strong future for Yolngu kids, for *djamarkuli*. My *yapa* was humble and she was strong. She was the rock that stands against time. It was never about her; her hopes and aspirations were always about the next generation.

Wesley, Gabby and Lisa, my *wakus*, you are the children of incredibly strong and talented parents, who will carry on their dreams and aspirations. Lisa, I see so much of your mother in you. Sometimes, I hear you say something and, as I have told you, you sound exactly like your mother. Budat and Mulan, your nanna only wanted the best for you, so make sure you get back to school, complete your education and make her proud. To little Marley and baby Stephanie, I know you will grow up to be strong women in the shadow of her and that you will shine.

We all share in your loss and your grief, but we are here to support you in any way we can. You know, we all know, that she watches over us. I will always remember her with the utmost respect and admiration. I will remember her as someone who possessed great beauty, inside and out, eyes that twinkled, and I will always remember the Elvis Presley ringtone on her phone.

I find constant reminders of her, including rainbows, which I have seen endlessly in this unseasonable weather. As an addendum to this, on Sunday morning I was visited by her totem, a little olive python, in a house that had never seen a snake.

Rest in peace, my *yapa*, *marrkapmirr*. I will always miss you and remember you.

Mr McCARTHY (Barkly): Madam Speaker I acknowledge Pam Dillon, our Barkly Region School Sport NT Coordinator, and the wonderful work that Pam coordinates across the region regarding School Sport NT, our school community sports, and the wonderful educational value of sports in our curriculum. Pam is an excellent organiser and great coordinator. I have seen Pam operate in the field. She has a very distinctive approach and style, and attracts the admiration of the children, the students and the communities where she delivers and coordinates programs.

Some excellent examples of work that Pam coordinates – so we acknowledge the communities, teachers, school support staff and students who all combine under Pam's leadership to celebrate this dynamic element of their educational curriculum.

The students of Elliott School, for instance, had a great natural water adventure at Longreach Waterhole for a week, learning about open water and canoeing. From preschoolers right through to

Grade 5 and 6 students, in a beautiful part of their environment, were working together, having fun, working as teams, and enjoying a fantastic week of extra-curricular sports.

The students at Alpururulam demonstrated their excellent athletic in their annual athletics carnival. It is an excellent school, an excellent community and a great exposition of the skills that can take students on to new platforms and new levels in life.

The Barkly school girls cleaned up at the WillPOWER carnival, a great story, where 400 boys and girls comprising 11 schools from the Barkly Region, and eight from the APY lands, had a sensational carnival. It was WillPOWER's nine-a-side carnival. It was held in Alice Springs, so, once again, those students travelling and participating – a great commitment of families to make sure their kids are well prepared. Big congratulations go to the Tennant Creek High School stars, the girls' team, who won every game they played and were crowned the winners of the girls division, with the Alpururulam girls' team being runners up. That is a great result from Barkly's young people.

Softball fever has hit the Barkly again, softball being a traditional sport played and celebrated in Tennant Creek and the Barkly. There were two separate softball carnivals as part of the Barkly Region school sports. The softball squads competed in Katherine, and for the very first time, at an inter-region softball cup carnival.

The south Barkly Region cup was held over two days at Ampilatwatja, with teams from Alpururulam, Alpara and Ampilatwatja – a great result. The north Barkly Region cup was held in Tennant Creek, with teams from Elliott, Ti Tree and Tennant Creek High School. Once again, there was great softball on show, excellent examples of participation, great sportsmanship and great events.

One of my favourites, and I give a big shout out to Pam Dillon and all the people who support her, was the Barkly Bush Schools Athletics Carnival. This carries on a great tradition. I can speak with authority, being one of the founding members of the east Barkly school sports association. We held our first sports at Brunette Downs school in 1981. The association grew from four schools to 13 schools to 17 schools. So when an officer like Pam Dillon comes to the Barkly and revives a tradition that is truly celebrated and acknowledged by regional and remote communities, it is a fantastic outcome. I apologise to Pam. I was invited to that and was really looking forward to it, but being on the road it did not fit the schedule. Pam, I missed it this time around, but I am looking

forward to the opportunity of attending another one.

Six bush schools travelled into Tennant Creek for the 5th Annual Barkly Bush Schools Athletics Carnival under this new era and regime. It was a sensational carnival, with a host of elements of traditional track and field. It exposes students to new events and opportunities, and displays their natural talent and skills. It is all about fun, but there is that element of competition and that does not go astray. Pam, well done on that outcome.

The Barkly Region school sport under 12 soccer team – that is Pam’s work, taking kids to that higher representative level – celebrated their first championship success. They came away from the NT School Sport under 12 soccer championship in Katherine victorious. The team was composed of players from Tennant Creek Primary and High Schools, and Elliott School.

There needs a special mention of the way Pam encourages and supports the students from the bush to be involved in these activities, which can be very urban based. When you talk about a Barkly team, it really is a team composed of students and participants from all over a massive region in the centre of the Territory. A big thank you to coach Edward Wilson from Canning Creek, and manager Josiah Nuggett from Elliott, who helped guide these students to their victory and in their experiences in Katherine. Good on you, Pam, and to all the people you pull together to make those extracurricular activities meaningful for all our students, our youth, and our future leaders.

The Barkly also has a fine tradition of talented and award-winning musicians. In 2016 the Barkly is again supporting NT Song of the Year Awards entrants. This year a very interesting array of talent is nominated, particularly Eleanor Dixon and her aunt Janey Dixon, for their song, *Everything Was at Peace*. The song is sung in their traditional language, Mudburra, and is a finalist at the upcoming Music NT Song of the Year Awards. That is a great result. We will be listening with very keen ears to the results this year; best of luck to Eleanor and Janey. The song is about connection. It is about young people talking about their connection with land and their interpretation of the old days.

The NT Song of the Year Awards is a Music NT initiative that recognises the fantastic song-writing talents across the Northern Territory. It is a celebration of songwriters in the Territory, and a unique event held under the stars at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. It will be an honour to see Eleanor and Janey, and hopefully Raymond will be there as well. Good luck with that as a finalist, and good luck to the E-

Town Boyz, Alex Butler and Justin Rankine, who have nominated their song in the youth category. Do not forget, there is also the People’s Choice award, so I am sure people in the Barkly will be supporting our local artists.

Speaking of Raymond Dixon, there is a father and daughter duo called Rayella, who, on Territory Day, will be entertaining the crowd at Purkiss Reserve. They are Marlinja-based musicians, a father and daughter duo, and have had national exposure over the last couple of years. On Territory Day 2016, in Tennant Creek Rayella will be backed by the Opera Australia Chamber Orchestra, performing music arranged by Australian composer Iain Grandage. It will be an event to savour under the stars with a big finale of fireworks. Well done, Raymond and Eleanor. You are great ambassadors and a great talent. Good luck in the NT Song of the Year Awards, and we look forward to you entertaining and inspiring us during our Territory Day celebrations in Tennant Creek, in 2016.

Mr STYLES (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about something dear to the hearts of all of us in this Chamber, and that is the people who support us. There are many people whose shoulders we stand on when we present ourselves in this House.

None of us would be here if it were not for the assistance of the dedicated bunch of people who work on our campaigns, in our community, with us in between elections, and ensure we have the very best chance of being re-elected.

Tonight I speak about someone who has been a friend of mine for many years and a great supporter of mine. Sadly, my very good friend, Ron Baker, is in a fight for his life with cancer. We are unsure where he is at with it right now, but Ronnie is one of those blokes who will set out to beat everything. We pray that he has a speedy recovery from his bone cancer. Ronnie Baker, as he is affectionately known to his friends, is someone who believes in everything he does. It is demonstrated because he lives what he believes.

I first met Ron Baker in the education system when I was working as a police officer, and again some years later while I was a school-based police officer at Nightcliff High School in 1990. I had recently lost my wife to cancer and had dropped back to school-based policing from running police stations, being a prosecuting sergeant and a few other things. I went there to start a different phase of my life. I walked into the school without a lot of experience in that area and relied on people to help me get started. From day one, Ron Baker was that person.

Ronnie is one of those down-to-earth guys who has the ability to connect with young people. I learnt a lot from Ron Baker in relation to how you conduct yourself, how you connect with kids and interact with them, as well as how to understand them. He taught me a lot. I think I can put down a lot of my success in school-based policing to those early days when Ron taught me.

Not only was he a dedicated teacher, he is a fierce supporter of the Waratah Football Club. He is also a member of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club, with his beloved World War II Jeep and the trailer that he tows behind it. Of course, being a good Holden man, he always had a Holden ute floating around the place. He was that mate with the ute, and we all like to know someone who has a ute. Madam Speaker, I am sure you are aware of people in the rural area who love having a mate with a ute, especially if your ute breaks down.

Ronnie came along and we formed a very close friendship almost from day one. He eventually supported me in my political aspirations, becoming a member of the Nightcliff/Millner branch in those days. Later, when I moved across to the Sanderson branch, Ronnie came with me. The Sanderson branch changed its name to the North Darwin branch and we looked after the entire northern suburbs. Over the years, Ronnie worked with me at branch level to make sure those branches were vibrant. We had in those days, and probably still do, the most vibrant branch in the Country Liberal Party.

I first ran for election in 1997 with Ronnie's help. In those days he was my number one supporter and team manager. The result was 66 people voted in a way that we preferred they had not. We can never say people voted the wrong way, because it is their choice, but if 66 people had voted a different way we might have seen a different outcome. In 2005 I ran in the seat of Sanderson again. Ron Baker was there, as he was in 2008 and 2012 when we won the seat.

Even from his wheelchair today he is part of our campaign team. He spends a lot of time on the phone arranging things and doing things, as opposed to doing what he did for all those years, going out and putting up corrflutes. In between elections I have barbecue breakfasts in my electorate on Sunday mornings. I forget how many, but countless times Ronnie turned up at my place with my 97-year-old veteran mate, John Moyle. The two of them would come down at 7.30 am and grab the trailer, and we would have a barbecue breakfast.

Those things are invaluable when you are trying to talk to your constituents. One of the best ones we have is at Anula, where we sometimes have 35 constituents turn up. If you try to talk to them over

two or three hours, you cannot do the things that Ron, John and a few other volunteers did. It is so important to have these people.

Come election time they would be running around doing a range of things, such as driving trucks. One of the best memories I have of Ronnie's most active days is the old 1955 Thorogood airport fire engine, which we have as a campaigning vehicle. Ronnie, driving around with about six Territory flags flying from it, looked a bit like Priscilla Queen of the Desert. Ronnie was quite happily seated in the driver's seat, charging around the electorate and town promoting the Country Liberals, with all those big flags flying out the back.

Ronnie has also been our mainstay for almost 20 years of show circuits. When it came time to do the show circuits and anything else that was going on, you would see Ronnie in Katherine, Darwin and as far down as Tennant Creek, such was his commitment and his belief not only in the CLP, but in me as a person. I cannot thank Ronnie enough for what he has done.

It behoves me to talk about people who keep my feet on the ground. Ronnie keeps my feet firmly on the ground. If he thinks I have a point of view that is not consistent with what the electorate is talking about, Ron will be one of the first people to give me that advice. Most politicians are aware that you need to listen to people on the ground. You need to have people who will keep your feet on the ground and make sure you are still in touch with everyone in your community.

The President of the CLP and the rest of the management committee have asked me to pass on their sincere thanks for Ron's active days. I do not know what will transpire in relation to the treatment that Ronnie is undergoing. Leaping in and out of the back of utes and up on trucks may be a little difficult in the future, but he certainly will be part of our team.

I would like to sincerely thank Ron's wife, Rosie, his boys, Justin and Denby, and their kids, Ron's grandchildren, for the time they gave up with their husband, father, and grandfather so that he could support what he believed in. These days there are very few people who stump up, weekend after weekends, for what they believe in, be it back at school, on the weekends when he was Assistant Principal at Nightcliff High School; at Waratah Club, raising money to make sure they survived by running meat tray raffles for them; the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club; his beloved CLP; and of course his family, and the properties he bought for his kids, a bit of acreage with a few mango trees down Elizabeth Valley Road. Thanks, Ronnie, for all the mangoes over the years; they have really been appreciated.

We recognise everything Ron has done. I do not have sufficient time in an adjournment speech to talk about some of the other fantastic things that Ron has done, not only for his community, not only in his political and philosophical beliefs – and especially not to forget the fantastic effort he has put in for me, as a member of this House, to serve my community.

To you, Ronnie Baker, I say a sincere thank you. Thank you to Rosie, Justin, Denby and your entire family for supporting you to support us. On behalf of my wife, Linda Fazldeen, and I, I sincerely thank you, Ronnie. We certainly could not have done it without you. We are here largely because of the work you have done consistently over the 20-plus years you have been part of our team. Thanks, mate.

Mrs PRICE (Stuart): Madam Speaker, the estimates process revealed a Labor opposition that is not ready to govern. It has no idea. We cannot risk a Labor government. So, shame on the Labor members opposite for resorting to political opportunism at the expense of a matter as serious as the fight against domestic violence. I might add that your sister, Thisbe, knows how hard I fight for the women in the communities and how serious domestic violence is there. We should all be working hard together to battle this insidious blight on our society, not making cheap political shots.

Despite the shameful behaviour of the Labor opposition, the Northern Territory community can be assured that this government is committed to the fight against domestic and family violence. The Northern Territory government has become a national leader in addressing domestic and family violence by introducing a range of successful measures with multimillion dollar funding to match.

The government's Safety is Everyone's Right strategy aims to increase the safety of victims and their children, reduce the rates of inter-generational trauma, increase the accountability of perpetrators, and establish integrated service delivery systems. This government is committed to expanding a suite of existing programs that address domestic and family violence, including the Family Safety Framework, the Indigenous Critical Intervention Outreach Service and the men's behavioural change program.

The Family Safety Framework is an action-based, integrated service response to individuals and families who are at risk of homicide or further serious harm. To date, approximately 90% of victims have not been re-referred, indicating a significant reduction in the risk of further serious harm or homicide. The Family Safety Framework is already well-established in Alice Springs and is now also operational in Darwin, Katherine,

Yuendumu, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The framework focuses on sharing information across four government and non-government agencies to protect high-risk victims and their children.

Specialist Indigenous Critical Intervention Outreach Services have now been established in Alice Springs, Darwin, Tennant Creek and Katherine. The services are delivered in 16 Indigenous communities and 29 town camps and aim to reduce the insidious incidents and impact of domestic and family violence, and strengthen the capacity of Indigenous individuals, families and communities to improve their own wellbeing and safety.

To date, 97 agencies across the Northern Territory are signed up to receive electronic referrals through SupportLink, including at least 33 specialist domestic violence services. The strategy has also seen the introduction of the only men's behaviour program in the Northern Territory that identifies women's and children's safety as a core priority of the program, and engages directly with victims to ensure their safety.

My government has committed \$12m over the life of the Safety is Everyone's Right strategy, with the federal government providing \$6m over two years. The pivotal pillars of the Safety is Everyone's Right strategy are prevention, early intervention, protection and safety for victims, rebuilding the lives of victim survivors, accountability, and positive change for perpetrators. Under our strategy, we have demonstrated that it is possible to protect victims and their children from further harm through the Family Safety Framework.

I point out that we have a reporting framework on all policy, which was, for the information of the members opposite, tabled in parliament. Let me assure the House, we are committed to continuing this suite of domestic violence initiatives, which have so far made a real difference in the Territory.

I will also address the transfer of the Domestic Violence Directorate from the Attorney-General's department, and the safe houses and women's shelters from the Department of Children and Families, to the department of Community Services on July 1. The transfer of staff from the Department of Children and Families has been officially signed off. The combination of the directorate, the safe houses and the women's shelters, together with men's and women's policy, provides an opportunity for better integration of policy and service delivery, and renewed focus on protecting domestic violence victims and ensuring perpetrators are held accountable.

The combining of these important services brings an additional 74 positions to the Department of Local Government and Community Services. The

new division within the department will be called Women's/Men's Policy and Domestic Violence Services. The Domestic Violence Directorate's role is to implement the Northern Territory government's Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014–17: Safety is Everyone's Right, provide leadership, coordinate policy and ensure a whole-of-government approach. The directorate is also responsible for ensuring alignment with the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children.

The Office of Men's Policy was established in 2013, and ensures all men are considered in the development of male-specific policies and activities. We have provided \$150 000 per annum for the next four years to support family violence prevention initiatives. This was an Indigenous Males Advisory Council recommendation.

My Office of Women's Policy provides me with policy advice on issues affecting Territory women, concentrating on four key focus areas of action, that is, women's safety, women's health and wellbeing, economic security, and leadership and participation. The Office of Women's Policy provides leadership across government in ensuring gender equality and that Territory women are considered in government policy and programs.

Through community engagement, representing the Northern Territory on national boards and working groups, together with well-established grants programs, the Office of Women's Policy is committed to advancing the social, political, economic and civil status of women across the Territory.

The Domestic Violence Directorate, in partnership with the NGO sector and the NTG departments, led the implementation of the Family Safety Framework, the Indigenous Critical Intervention Outreach Service, the domestic violence specialist children's service, SupportLink, local reference groups and reference groups with non-government organisation partners to develop the prevention framework. Some 30 non-government organisations are currently involved in the strategy.

It was a shame that the opposition did not ask one question on the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. In fact, I believe they never asked a question about AAPA. I am not even sure they would know what AAPA is. How can Indigenous Territorians risk a Labor government when Labor does not care about sacred sites? Labor failed to protect sacred sites 13 times under its leadership. This is simply not good enough; shame on them.

Ms Walker: Shame on you!

Mrs PRICE: Shame on you! I do not believe Labor is serious about protecting sacred sites in the Northern Territory, which is another reason we cannot risk a Labor government. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.